

VLR - 4/28/95 NRHP-7/21/95

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Danville Municipal Building**
other names/site number **VDHR FILE # 108-111-71**

2. Location

street & number **418 Patton Street** N/A not for publication
city or town **Danville** N/A vicinity
state **Virginia** code **VA** county **Danville (city)** code **590** zip code **24543**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] _____ 5. 25. 95 _____
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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 commenting or other official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

- ___ 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): _____

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category

Subcategory

GOVERNMENT

government office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category

Subcategory

GOVERNMENT

government office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	CONCRETE
walls	BRICK
	STONE
roof	ASPHALT
other	METAL

Narrative Description

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

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.)

- X 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.
X 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 a 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 fifty years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1926-1945

Significant Dates

1926

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Heard & Chesterman (architect)
Fuqua Construction Company (builder)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
X 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 #

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property approximately 1.3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	17 643850	4049950	3	
2			4	

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	J. Daniel Pezzoni	date	February 20, 1995
organization	J. Daniel Pezzoni, Preservation Consultant	telephone	(703) 366-0787
street & number	PO Box 7825	zip code	24019-0825
city or town	Roanoke state VA		

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

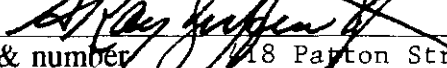
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name  City Manager
street & number 18 Patton Street telephone 804-799-5100
city or town Danville state VA zip code 24541

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

**Danville Municipal Building
Danville (city), Va.**

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Danville Municipal Building is a Classical Revival edifice located at 418 Patton Street in downtown Danville, Virginia. The northwest-facing, three-story (but four-floor) building has a brick and concrete core with an Ionic colonnaded front faced with light gray limestone. A flight of steps rises from Patton Street to three front entries; these open into a lobby ringed with Doric columns and pilasters. Other notable interior spaces include the Corporation Court Room on the fourth floor, which features blind arcaded walls, Corinthian pilasters, clerestory windows, and a skylight.

Building: Exterior

The Danville Municipal Building's front (Patton Street) facade consists of engaged Ionic columns bracketed at the ends by wide Doric piers. Running at the top, below a plain parapet concealing a flat roof, are a dentil cornice and a frieze with the inscription "Municipal Building." Windows and doors fill the spaces between the columns, and metal spandrels with reticulated surfaces link the first- and second-story windows. At the center of the facade are three front entries with bronze doors and triangular and segmental pedimented surrounds. The smooth limestone skin of the front wraps around the ends of the building, continuing the Doric order of the end piers. The rear elevations are faced with light gray brick and are divided by piers. The first or ground level is more apparent to the rear.

The three front entries are linked to Patton Street by a double flight of granite steps. A marble statue of former mayor Harry Wooding stands on an inscribed base between the two flights, which are flanked by limestone plinths and cast iron lamp posts. Terraces extend to each side, bordered by stone balustrades. Two large Lebanon cedars shade the right-hand terrace, which sinks below the level of the street; the raised left-hand terrace has a rusticated concrete foundation. Behind the building, joined to it by a modern concrete plaza, stands a 1975 Courts and Jail Building (not included in the nominated parcel).

Building: Interior

The classical detailing of the exterior also characterizes the public spaces of the interior. The front entries open into an entrance lobby on the second (main) floor with free-standing and engaged round and square Doric columns, rusticated plaster walls with blind arches, enriched dentil cornices (also plaster), marble baseboards, and terrazzo floors with decorative borders. Behind the entrance lobby extends a similarly-detailed stairway lobby that provides access to

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Danville Municipal Building
Danville (city), Va.

Description (continued)

elevators and stairwells, the latter with cast Caen stone newels, ornamental plaster soffits, and-- on the fourth floor--skylights with steel muntins and translucent glass panes. The stairway lobby forms the midpoint of a broad T-shaped central corridor (repeated on the other floors). Offices and meeting rooms open onto this corridor through glass doors with syenite (textured) glass transoms, sidelights, and stained wood surrounds.

The Corporation Court Room, located on the fourth floor, represents the building's main public meeting space. The room is entered via a skylit lobby through a doorway with wood-paneled outer doors and leather-upholstered inner doors. The walls of the two-story room are defined by Corinthian pilasters with what is now blind arcading in the intercolumniations (originally, translucent glass windows occupied the arches). An enriched dentil cornice separates the pilasters and arcading below from alternating blank panels and clerestory windows with reticulated grills above, and a suspended plaster ceiling with a translucent glass skylight. A judge's platform with a reticulated balustrade occupies the end of the court room opposite the main entry.

The functional layout of the building has changed considerably since the first scheme, recorded in the 1925 construction drawings. Originally, the semi-subterranean first floor (once known as the ground floor) contained the police department (with a court room, detention rooms, offices, vaults, store rooms, lounge and muster room, and locker room) and the health department (with offices, laboratories, and sterilizing and cleaning rooms). The police department remains on the first floor, but the health department has been replaced by a voter registration office. The building's second floor originally contained the offices of the city treasurer, commissioner of revenue, and engineer, as well as the meter reading and public utility departments; the floor now contains the city credit union, engineering, community development, and inspections offices, and a public meeting room. The third floor originally contained the office of the city clerk, the council chamber, a committee room, vaults, and miscellaneous offices; it now contains the Real Estate office, Personnel Department, Division of Purchasing, and public school offices. The fourth floor originally contained the Corporation Court Room, surrounded by jury and witness rooms and offices for judges, counsel, and the Commonwealth Attorney. Also on this floor were the offices of the city coroner, civil magistrate, high constable, probation officer, and the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. The Corporation Court Room now serves as the city council chamber; other rooms are used for the city manager's office, a conference room, and a data processing center.

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**Danville Municipal Building
Danville (city), Va.**

Description (continued)

Architectural Analysis

In a historic city center noted for its spatial complexity, the Danville Municipal Building represents a tour de force of civic stagecraft. Heard & Chesterman, the building's architects, deftly employed the raw materials of site and context to powerful effect, following the precedent of the 1873 city courthouse that stood at the same location. Viewed from the intersection of Main and Union streets, the traditional heart of Danville's business district, Heard & Chesterman's building makes an abrupt termination of the canyon-like space of South Union Street. Monumental columns march across this urban wall, calling to mind the classical concept of a phalanx guarding the inner sanctum of the polis. The columns are raised a full story above sidewalk level, exaggerating their height, and they continue beyond the compressed confines of the street, creating an impression of unlimited extent. The strength and authority of the design reinforce the building's primacy as Danville's seat of government.

Integrity Statement

The Danville Municipal Building retains good over-all architectural integrity. The only substantial change to the exterior has been the replacement of the original windows, which were divided into six large panes, with modern tinted glass in a four-pane arrangement. Although these new windows are noticeably different, they nevertheless preserve the large-pane appearance of the original windows. The principal interior spaces are virtually unchanged, or they have been returned to their original character; the Corporation Court Room, for example, has recently had a modern drop ceiling removed, revealing the skylight and upper-wall windows. The condition of the office areas varies; some rooms retain their original finishes or have been restored to their original character; others have drop ceilings, paneling, and other modern alterations. The building is in the midst of a phased interior restoration that will return the office areas to their original appearance as much as practicable.

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**Danville Municipal Building
Danville (city), Va.**

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Danville Municipal Building has played a primary role in the civic life of Danville, Virginia since its construction in 1926-27. The three-story Classical Revival building, designed by the architectural firm of Heard & Chesterman, stands as one of two significant historic government buildings in the city's downtown.¹ For nearly three-quarters of a century, the Danville Municipal Building has provided administration, policing, and judicial and social services to Danville's citizenry.

Justification of Criteria

The Danville Municipal Building is individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in the area of politics and government as the principal civic government building in Danville, Virginia. The building is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of architecture for the sophistication with which it relates to its urban context. The building is presently listed as a contributing resource in two National Register districts, since it stands at the overlapping point of the Danville Tobacco Warehouse and Residential Historic District and the Downtown Danville Historic District. The period of significance for the building extends from 1926, the year construction work on the building began, to 1945, encompassing the early years of its civic function. The Danville Municipal Building is locally significant.

Historical Background

The construction of the Danville Municipal Building in 1926-27 marked the end of a long peripatetic period in the history of city's government. Established in 1793, Danville was first governed by twelve trustees who met in local taverns or other public places to conduct business. The trustees were superseded by an elected council in 1833, and in 1841 a hustings court was established, meeting at first on the ground floor of an early Masonic lodge on Craghead Street.² After the Civil War, Danville's tobacco-based economy boomed and its population increased dramatically, warranting the construction of a substantial city building. In 1873, the city built a Renaissance Revival court house and office building on the site of the present municipal building. Some offices were moved in 1890 to a newly-completed Romanesque Revival city hall at the corner of Main and Floyd streets, dividing Danville's government operations between two buildings located several blocks apart.³ The construction of the 1890 city hall coincided with the annexation of North Danville, which swelled the city's elected body to twelve aldermen and eighteen councilmen in addition to the mayor. This "cumbersome" system was simplified in 1920, resulting in a government of nine councilmen elected at large and a mayor.⁴

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Danville Municipal Building
Danville (city), Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

Danville's continued growth in the early twentieth century, an attendant increase in the responsibilities of government, and a desire for greater efficiency necessitated the consolidation and enlargement of municipal office and court facilities. Consequently, voters passed a \$950,000 bond referendum that included funding for a new municipal building to be built on the site of the 1873 courthouse. A special City Building Committee was created in the Spring of 1925 to supervise planning and construction; at its second meeting on June 18 the committee interviewed seven architectural firms, and on July 10 it selected the Lynchburg and Danville firm of Heard & Chesterman to design the new building.⁵

Lynchburg architect J. Bryant Heard (active 1909-1949) established a Danville branch office in 1916. About 1920 Heard formed an association with another Lynchburger, Aubrey Chesterman, and the two spent their first year together designing replacements for commercial buildings destroyed in Danville's January 1920 Main Street fire.⁶ Without question, Heard & Chesterman's presence in Danville was a key factor in their selection by the Building Committee, but for some reason the committee tried to arrange a collaboration between the local firm and Greensboro, North Carolina architect Harry Barton. When this failed, the committee negotiated a 5% commission with Heard & Chesterman.⁷ By October, the architects had prepared plans for a Classical Revival edifice with an imposing colonnade facing the center of the downtown.

The Building Committee minutes describe the many small modifications made to the plans between the initial site preparations in February 1926 and the building's occupancy in September 1927. In May 1926, the committee chose stone-colored brick from the Cambria Brick Company of Pennsylvania for the outside walls, and a few days later the architects recommended using stone instead of brick as the building's principal facing material. While on a business trip in August, Committee Chairman F. W. Townes happened to look down at the floor of the Chesapeake & Ohio General Offices in Newport News; he liked what he saw, and back in Danville he recommended "Insulite Mastic flooring . . . tan color" be used throughout the Municipal Building. Meanwhile, the Building Committee selected the Fuqua Construction Company of Lynchburg as the general contractor in January 1926, and on July 7 city officials set the cornerstone in place. The stone was "sprinkled with corn, as a symbol of goodness; wine, as a symbol of refreshment; and oil, as a symbol of gladness," part of a "solemn Masonic ceremony" intended to ensure good fortune for the building and its occupants.⁸

Since its completion, the Municipal Building has figured at the center of Danville's civic life. A small but significant addition was made to the building in 1942, when the Exchange Club erected a marble statue of Mayor Wooding on the Patton Street steps. Captain Harry Wooding

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Danville Municipal Building
Danville (city), Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

(1844-1938), elected mayor in 1892, spent the last decade of his career as the Municipal Building's most venerable occupant.

Endnotes

1. The other government building is the 1932 Danville U.S. Post Office and Courthouse.
2. Pezzoni, "Downtown Danville," 8.69; Cahill and Grant, *Victorian Danville*, 93.
3. Pezzoni, "Downtown Danville," 8.69; Cahill and Grant, *Victorian Danville*, 94.
4. Hagan, *Story of Danville*, 36.
5. Cahill and Grant, *Victorian Danville*, 94; *Danville Register*, July 11, 1925; and Danville City Building Committee Minutes.
6. Wells and Dalton, *Virginia Architects*; Chambers, *Lynchburg*, 411-412; and Pezzoni, "Downtown Danville," 8.67.
7. Danville City Building Committee Minutes.
8. Cahill and Grant, *Victorian Danville*, 94-95.

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Danville Municipal Building
Danville (city), Va.

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- Chambers, S. Allen, Jr. *Lynchburg: An Architectural History*. Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1981.
- Danville City Building Committee Minutes, 1925-1929. Microfilm at the Virginia State Library, Richmond.
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**Danville Municipal Building
Danville (city), Va.**

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the Danville Municipal Building nominated parcel are shown on the 1:200-scale map that accompanies this report (Exhibit A).

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the Danville Municipal Building nominated parcel correspond to the present boundaries of the parcel on which the Danville Municipal Building stands.

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Danville Municipal Building
Danville (city), Va.

Section number Photo Page 9

PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs are of:

DANVILLE MUNICIPAL BUILDING
Danville, VA
VDHR # 108-111-71

1. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni (photographer) and Eugene B. Barfield (photo technician)
DATE: 1994
NEGATIVE FILED: Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.
VIEW OF: Front (northwest) elevation as seen from South Union Street; view facing southeast
NEG. NO.: VDHR # 13895
FILE NO.: VDHR # 108-111-71
PHOTO 1 of 5
2. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni (photographer) and Eugene B. Barfield (photo technician)
DATE: 1994
NEGATIVE FILED: Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.
VIEW OF: Rear (southeast) elevation; view facing north
NEG. NO.: VDHR # 13895
FILE NO.: VDHR # 108-111-71
PHOTO 2 of 5
3. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni (photographer) and Eugene B. Barfield (photo technician)
DATE: 1994
NEGATIVE FILED: Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.
VIEW OF: Second-floor entrance lobby, stairway lobby, and corridor; view facing west
NEG. NO.: VDHR # 13895
FILE NO.: VDHR # 108-111-71
PHOTO 3 of 5
4. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni (photographer) and Eugene B. Barfield (photo technician)
DATE: 1994
NEGATIVE FILED: Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.
VIEW OF: Entrance lobby cornice detail; view facing south
NEG. NO.: VDHR # 13894
FILE NO.: VDHR # 108-111-71

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**Danville Municipal Building
Danville (city), Va.**

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Photographs (continued)

PHOTO 4 of 5

5. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni (photographer) and Eugene B. Barfield (photo technician)
DATE: 1994
NEGATIVE FILED: Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.
VIEW OF: Corporation court room; view facing southeast
NEG. NO.: VDHR # 13894
FILE NO.: VDHR # 108-111-71
PHOTO 5 of 5

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Danville Municipal Building
Danville (city), Va.

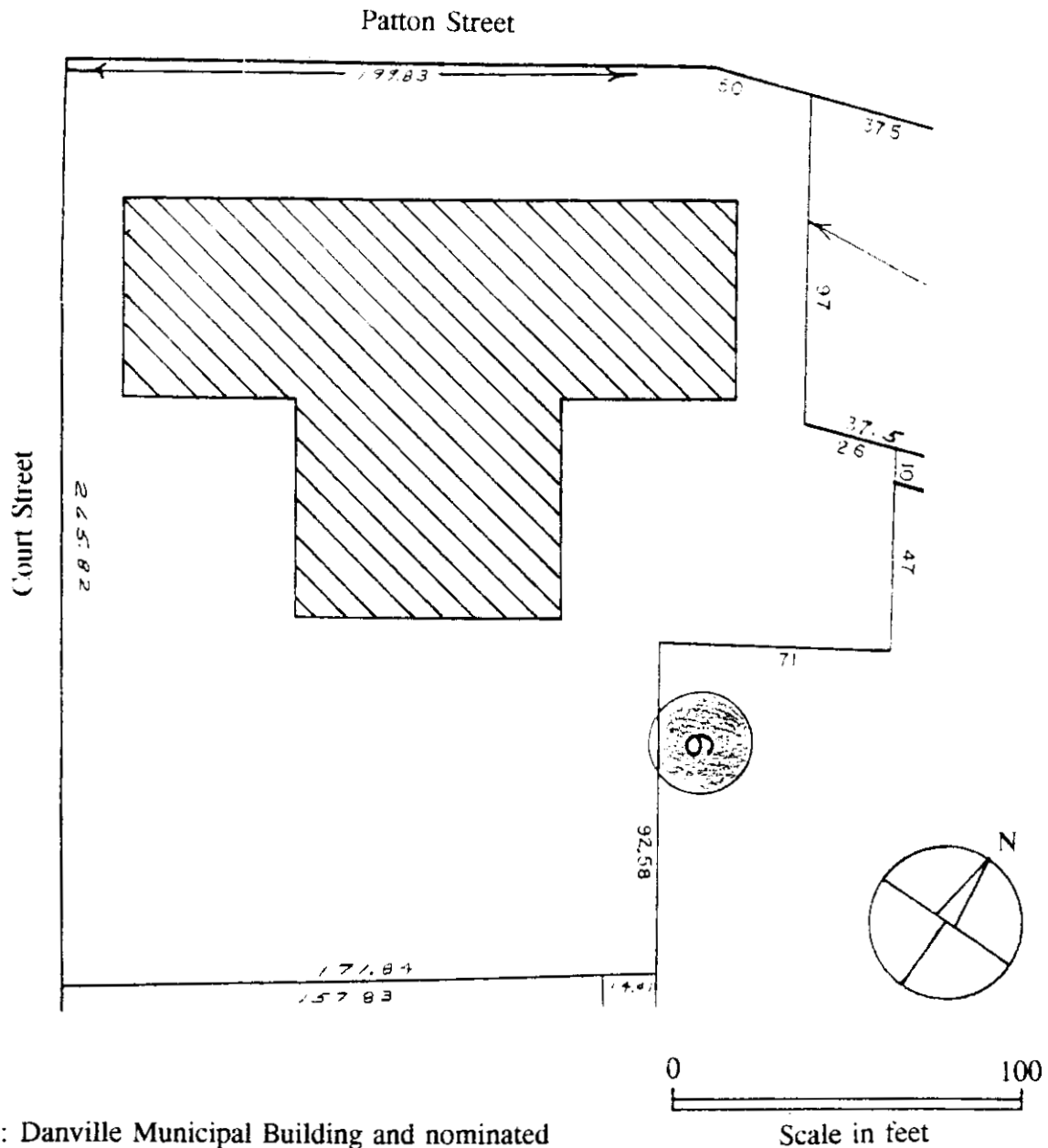
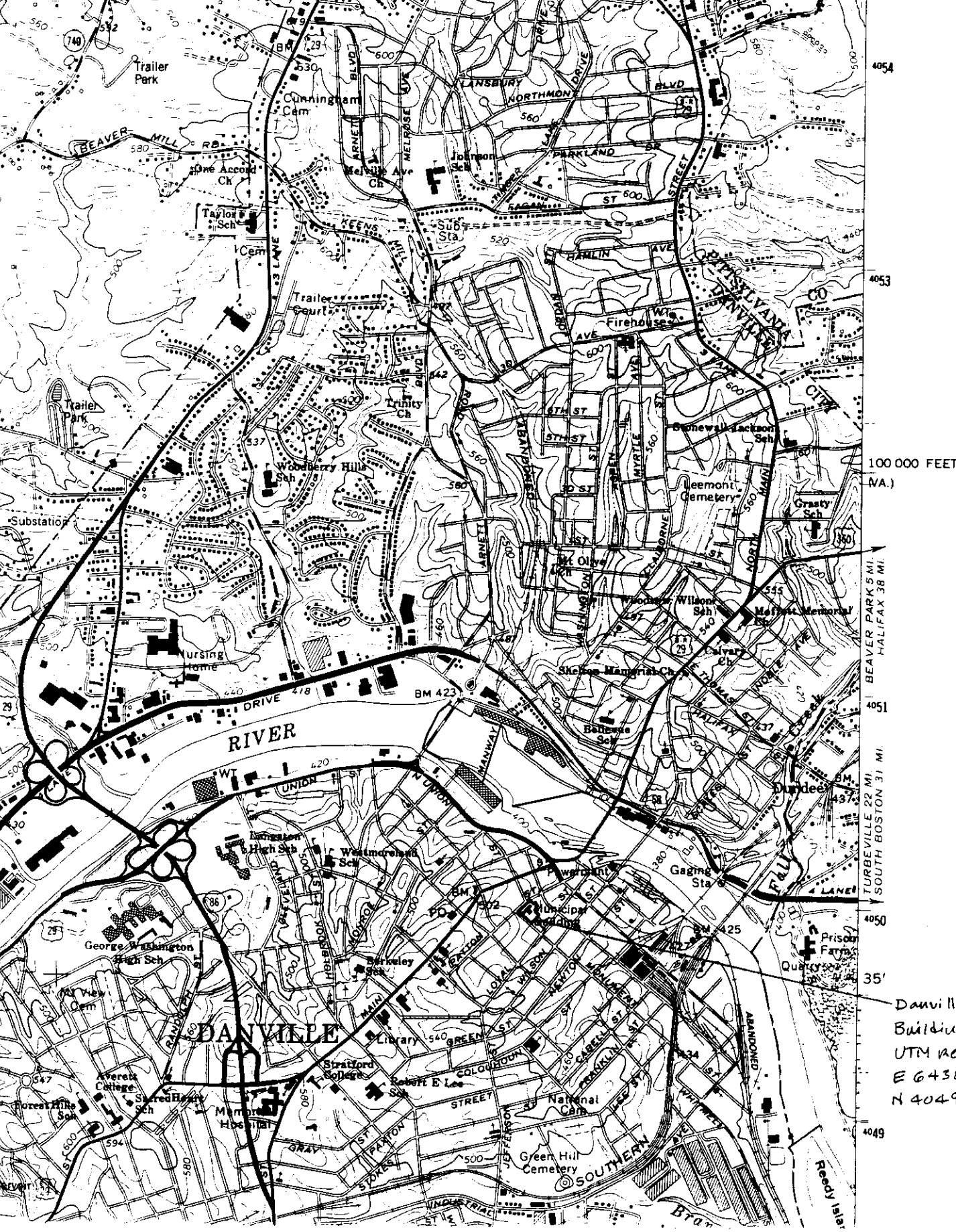


Exhibit A: Danville Municipal Building and nominated parcel. Map taken from City of Danville Property Map 99. Size and placement of building approximate. Scale: 1" = 50'

DANVILLE QUADRANGLE
 VIRGINIA-NORTH CAROLINA
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5157 III NE
 (BLAIRS)

25' 642 643 SWANSONVILLE 14 MI LYNCHBURG 61 MI CHATHAM 14 MI 79° 22' 30" 36° 37' 30"



100 000 FEET
 (N.A.)

BEAVER PARKS MI. 38 MI
 HALIFAX MI.
 SOUTH BOSTON 31 MI
 TURBEVILLE 22 MI.

Danville Municipal
 Building, Danville,
 UTM ref. (zone 17):
 E 643850
 N 4049950