

VLR 12/1/4
NRHP 1/9/15

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 West Radford Commercial Historic District
other names/site number 126-5005

2. Location

street & number 100, 200 and 300 blocks of West Main St. (formerly First Street) not for publication
city or town Radford vicinity _____
state Virginia code VA county none code 750 Zip 24141

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

[Signature] 12/8/04
Signature of certifying official Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources,
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 Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- 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): _____

Signature of Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

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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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 19 </u>	<u> 4 </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> 1 </u>	site
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> 19 </u>	<u> 5 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u> COMMERCE/TRADE </u>	Sub: <u> business, professional </u>
<u> </u>	<u> financial institution </u>
<u> </u>	<u> specialty store, restaurant </u>
<u> DOMESTIC </u>	<u> hotel, multiple dwelling </u>
<u> FUNERARY </u>	<u> mortuary </u>
<u> RECREATION AND CULTURE </u>	<u> theater </u>
<u> GOVERNMENT </u>	<u> post office </u>
<u> TRANSPORTATION </u>	<u> rail-related </u>
<u> INDUSTRY </u>	<u> communications facility </u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u> COMMERCE/TRADE </u>	Sub: <u> business </u>
<u> </u>	<u> specialty store </u>
<u> </u>	<u> restaurant </u>
<u> </u>	<u> professional </u>
<u> FUNERARY </u>	<u> funeral home </u>
<u> DOMESTIC </u>	<u> apartment building </u>
<u> INDUSTRY </u>	<u> communications facility </u>

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7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque _____
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY _____
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style _____

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK, CONCRETE, STONE _____
roof ASPHALT, METAL _____
walls BRICK; CONCRETE _____
other _____

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)

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

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1890-1955

Significant Dates 1890

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder Kennedy, Robert Gray (1850-1913)

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.

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

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property about 8 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 _____ 2 _____

3 _____ 4 _____

See continuation sheet.

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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: Michael F. Kennedy, Architectural Field Surveyor

Organization: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Roanoke Regional Office date Aug. 2004

street & number: 1030 Penmar Ave. SE telephone 540-857-7586

city or town Roanoke state VA zip code 24013

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

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**West Radford Commercial Historic District
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7. Summary Description:

The City of Radford, once known as Central Depot, is located in southwestern Montgomery County, on the New River and the main line of the (former) Norfolk & Western Railroad. The proposed West Radford Commercial Historic District consists of three blocks of West Main Street, with several fine examples of Victorian and early 20th-century commercial buildings. The district is roughly bounded on the north by the railroad, on the east by the U.S. 11 bridge over the New River, on the south by a residential district and on the west by later and less dense development.

Narrative Description:

The proposed district consists of buildings in the 100, 200 and 300 blocks of West Main Street, until recently called First Street, in the West Ward of the City of Radford. In the 100 block, the district comprises buildings on the south side of the street in addition to 125 West Main, which is on the north side. Both sides of the 200 block are included as well as the north side of the 300 block.

The proposed district will consist of 19 contributing buildings and five non-contributing resources. Of the noncontributing resources, one is a building that is simply not old enough to qualify for contributing status, three others, 331 W. Main St., the former Colonial Theatre and the building occupied by Grandma's Memories, might possibly be returned to contributing status if the modern materials covering their original façades can be removed, and one is a recent sculpture garden.

Among the oldest and most interesting buildings are the Radford Trust Co. Building, the Ashmead Building and the Commercial Block.

Site Inventory

Properties in the inventory are organized by street and numerically by address.

Abbreviations used in the inventory include:

CB = contributing building

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NC = noncontributing resource

All buildings face West Main Street (formerly First Street).
The odd-numbered buildings face southeast.

102 W. Main Street

Date: ca. 1925

Thompson Tire

CB

126-5005-0001

This one-story L-shaped building on the corner of West Main and Walker streets may be one of the first in Radford purpose-built for automobiles. It appears in the 1926 Sanborn map as a place for auto repair and sales. It is of brick and concrete construction. The top of the L faces West Main Street, with the long side running along Walker. A flat roof with sloping sides runs along the axes of the L, but is hidden by parapets on the corner of West Main and Walker. The West Main façade has two bays, one small and enclosed and one large and open. The parapeted part of the Walker Street façade (probably the original sales space) has three bays, two small enclosed ones and a large, open one. The open bays meet at the corner to form a tin-ceilinged porte cochere, big enough for two large cars. A massive column at the corner supports two concrete lintels that span the openings. The other columns are brick and the spaces between them infilled with spandrels made up of brick kneewalls along the bottom, large glass panels in the middle and transoms along the top. The rest of the building is divided into repair or storage spaces.

120-122 W. Main St.

Date: ca. 1930

Mullins Funeral Home

CB

126-5005-0002

This appears to have been purpose-built as a funeral home, first showing up on the 1944 Sanborn map marked "undertaker." The basic building is a two-story red-brick foursquare with a hipped roof. A two-story, set-back wing is probably original. It appears in a picture of Seaver Funeral Home in the 1953-54 telephone book. The bricked-in front porch has been added since. The 1953 photo shows a long, gabled hood supported on columns sheltering the front door. An eyebrow dormer in the roof facing West Main Street seems to have become an attic vent.

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Date: ca. 1930 Funeral Home outbuilding **CB**

This small, two-story building matches the funeral home in appearance and materials, but faces the alley. It appears on the 1944 Sanborn map. It is used by the funeral home.

125 W. Main Street **CB** 126-5005-0003
Date: ca. 1955 Shumate Furniture

Shumate Furniture has been the only occupant of this mid-century storefront building, having previously (according to the 1948-49 city directory) been located at 321 First Street. The building is one and a half stories in front and two in the rear, sitting on property that slopes away from the sidewalk. The façade is bisected horizontally by a metal canopy, being brick above and mostly glass below. From a foot above grade to the awning, the façade is glass, being made up of large vertical panels separated by thin mullions. The inset front door is slightly off center. From sidewalk grade up, the building is clad in red, running-bond brick and sits on a foundation of white painted concrete block. The east wall has no windows or doors; the west is relieved only by a small wooden shed addition and adjoining hood over a side entrance. The building has a low-pitch roof behind a stepped parapet.

202-204 W. Main Street
Date: 1939 Telephone Building **CB** 126-5005-0004

Two-story telephone company building in the style of Federal stripped classicism popular in the second quarter of the 20th century; extremely well detailed. The building, which has a concrete foundation, has extensive stone trim including granite water table on the front and sides. The red, Flemish-bond brick walls form vertical panels between the inset two-story window bays topped by a stone string course, a brick parapet and a strong stone coping, while the rear of the building has a running-bond pattern without trim. Three-over-three metal sash windows are flanked by vertical bands of stacked stretcher bricks. The upper and lower windows are separated by panels of stacked brick headers of contrasting buff color, while the inset off-center entry is clearly marked by an advanced pavilion containing a two-story stone frontispiece with molded jambs and a small cornice. The transom contains decorative glazing.¹

A drawing of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co. building appears on the 1942

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Blacksburg, Radford, Christiansburg, Shawsville telephone book over the caption, "Radford's new telephone building." The building has been enlarged considerably since then by adding to the rear, but in a manner nearly identical to the original. But for the addition of a Verizon sign in front and a microwave tower in back, the front elevation looks like the 1942 rendering.

206-210 W. Main Street

Date: ca. 1955 Chadwick Building CB 126-5005-0005

Rather plain late-midcentury one-story commercial building whose salient feature is its brickwork of two-tone buff (1 1/2 by 1 5/8-inch) Roman bricks. Low-pitch roof with parapet.

212 W. Main Street

Date: ca. 1955 Chadwick addition CB 126-5005-0006

Even plainer addition to the building above. The addition mostly keeps the Roman brick, but now in standard red. However, one corner of the front elevation is laid in modular brick up to about shoulder height – evidence probably of either a repair or a mistake. Low-pitch roof with parapet.

213-215 W. Main Street

Date: ca. 1940 CB 126-5005-0007

Two-and-a-half-story brick commercial storefront building with common bond; single and paired one-over-one sash windows, paired along the east side and four evenly spaced single windows in front on the second floor, one small fixed eight-light window in the center of the top floor; original tall store front windows replaced with eight-foot windows and remaining space bricked over, wood entry door for apartments and metal and glass store entry door; flat roof with stepped parapet.²

219 W. Main Street

Date: 1930 CB 126-5005-0008

Two-and-a-half-story, commercial building with center apartment entrance with transom flanked by two storefronts each with recessed entries, one centered, one off-center, masonry string course

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above original storefront location; six unevenly spaced at the attic floor; and shed roof with parapet.³

225 W. Main Street

Date: before 1944 Central Art and Framing **CB** 126-5005-0009

One-story, shallow red-brick building with a picture window and off-center door. It has a low-pitch roof.

218 W. Main Street

Date: before 1944 Garking Tailors & Cleaners **CB** 126-5005-0010

Narrow, two-story storefront of white-painted brick, running bond with a soldier course over the upstairs windows. The first floor has a large central window flanked by two doors; second floor has two one-over-one double-hung windows. The east wall is concrete block. The building has a low-pitch roof behind a stepped parapet. In the 1940s, this building and the one below were a tailoring and dry cleaning shop.

218A W. Main Street

Date: before 1944

Two-story building of concrete block as the building above, but behind 218, facing the alley. It has a low-pitch roof behind a stepped parapet. It is connected to 218 W. Main by a hyphen of concrete block, and the whole has historically been used as a single building. The 1944 Sanborn map shows this building used for dry cleaning and storage. It is now occupied by apartments.

222 W. Main Street

Date: 1932 Legg Mason **CB** 126-5005-0011

Narrow, one-story storefront of red, common-bond brick with plate glass shop windows and a recessed doorway. The façade is topped by a parapet with a raised center section the same height as the parapet next door. Plaque over the door says, "est. 1900, 1932." The sides are beveled concrete block. Though quite different in appearance from 218 W. Main, it appears to wrap around the Garking Tailor building and to be connected to the same hyphen. In the 1940s, it was home to a

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couple of different restaurants.

227-233 W. Main Street

Date: 1925

Concrete Block Building

CB

126-5005-0012

Two-story, two-part rock-faced concrete block commercial/apartment building with four unevenly spaced entrances across the front; one entrance is recessed; windows on two distinct levels indicating two different levels on the second floor; row of single windows with awnings on the west side of the second floor; concrete lintels over doors and windows; smooth concrete block string course at the first and second floors; small, one-window dormer stands out at the top of the façade; interior end chimney on the east side of the building; shallow shed roof with stepped parapet; and metal coping on parapet. The first floor and basement of the east half and the upper floors were built as apartments, with regularly spaced side and rear windows, while the first floor of the west half served a commercial function, with delivery doors at the rear.⁴

237 W. Main Street

Date: ca. 1925

Grandma's Memories

NC

126-5005-0013

One-story commercial brick building with brick side walls which extend to the front to frame the full storefront. Remodeled front in vertical wood siding has a recessed center entry. The building is capped by a shallow shed roof with a cornice at the front and a stepped side parapet that extends to the rear. An early shed porch with turned posts extends across the rear façade sheltering a three-bay façade with a door in the easternmost bay. There are four conventional two-over-two sash windows on the east elevation to the rear and two more on the rear elevation.⁵

239-243 W. Main Street

Date: ca. 1915

CB

126-5005-0014

Two-story corner commercial building with brick walls. On the south (West Main Street) façade, a centered gable crowns a projecting pavilion containing a second-floor window over a segmentally arched entry with centered double leaf doors. The pavilion is flanked by glass storefronts. The east unit has a recessed entry; the west unit has a beveled corner entry supported by a round metal column. A shingled pent roof on the south façade separates the two floors. There are fixed replacement storefront windows on first floor. The second floor has the original one-over-one

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sash windows. On the south façade, the center of five windows is capped by a segmental arch; the others are capped by flat arches made up by alternating combinations of one rowlock on one soldier and one soldier on one rowlock. The first floor of the west façade is marked by two brick infill panels near the front, where there was once plate glass. Toward the rear is a single-door arched entry in a shallow entry pavilion and, closer to the back of the building, a double-width arched window. The second floor has 11 windows, 10 of which are capped by the aforementioned flat arch; the window over the arched entrance is capped by a segmental arch. There is a box cornice around the building covered by a hipped roof. The east side of the rear wall is protected by and the second floor reached by a two-story porch with turned posts on the upper floor.⁶

301 W. Main Street

Date: before 1890 Radford Trust Co. Building **CB** 126-5005-0015

Originally the headquarters of the Radford Trust Co., a finance company dedicated to the development of the city during its 1890s boom period. The building, one of the earliest large structures erected in the city's West Ward, was designed by Philadelphia architect Robert Gray Kennedy. Kennedy's perspective sketch of the building (originally intended to be two matching pavilions) was published in the Radford Enterprise in 1890. Especially fine brownstone carvings at the front corner entry to building, ornamental wrought iron grillwork and projecting upper-level bays add to the Romanesque character of the building. It served as the West End Hotel in first two decades of the 20th century and Delp's Hotel in the 1920s; it declined by the 1940s, being used as storage and as a rooming house; and was rehabilitated by the present owners in 1980s for apartments, retail and office uses.⁷

Inside, the original first-floor vault survives in excellent condition, though the door now bears the name of the current owner's business. Outside, the two-story porch on the east elevation looks the same as it does in a photograph of the building when it was the West End Hotel.

301 W. Main Street, rear

Date: ca. 1900 West End Hotel kitchen **CB** 126-5005-0016

This is a small, one-story brick outbuilding connected by a hyphen to the Radford Trust Co. building. It has a gable roof of standing-seam copper with a verdigris patina. The gable end has

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two one-over-one windows with operable shutters. The front elevation has an off-center door with two windows on one side and one on the other. This building shows up on the 1902 Sanborn map as a kitchen for the West End Hotel and is listed as a kitchen through 1926. By 1944, it was being used for storage.

307 W. Main Street

Date: ca. 1988

New River Uniserv

NC 126-5005-0017

Contemporary one-and-a-half story building with a red brick façade, a front-gable roof and arched windows meant to complement the Radford Trust Co. building. An arched inset door is on the left with three arched windows (each made up of two one-over-one sashes joined under a semicircle) to the right. The attic level separated by a cornice and graced by two small one-over-one windows. The sides and back of the building are stucco.

300 block W. Main Street

Sculpture Garden

NC 126-5005-0018

The once-vacant lot between 307 and 309 W. Main St. is the site of a temporary sculpture garden featuring works by Radford University art students. The sculptures, of expanded polystyrene covered by cement, are contained on two sides by a wall of the same construction. The wall is about 8 feet high and penetrated by a dozen arched openings. The polystyrene was donated by Radva, the owner and main tenant of the Radford Trust Co. building.

311 W. Main Street

Date: 1890

Ashmead Building

CB 126-5005-0019

The Ashmead Building, a three-story brick structure, was built in 1890. Its classically inspired façade incorporates several unusual features in its pedimented central bay: an overscaled, shaped parapet; a recessed balcony highlighted by a wrought-iron rail and a polychrome brickwork arch; an integral metal (bronze?) plaque signifying the structure as a component of the "Ashmead Buildings"; and the main entrance to the upper floors. Although the building suffered damage to its façade's upper levels, it was repaired relatively early in the 20th century. (The damaged area is readily apparent due

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to changes in brickwork and windows.) It is among the most prominent historic commercial buildings in the city.⁸

319-323 W. Main Street

Date: ca. 1915 Colonial Theatre NC 126-5005-0020

Hiding under gray and white remodel siding and a quasi-mansard roof is the Colonial Theatre. As early as 1913, the Sanborn maps show a long, narrow "moving picture" house adjacent to the Ashmead Building. By 1920, the maps show a bigger building dubbed the Colonial Theatre with two storefronts flanking a central passage to the theater, which spans the width of the building behind the storefronts. The theater has a balcony. By the 1940s, it had become the State Theater and ceased operation as such about 1953. Today, little can be seen of the historic exterior. Only on the rear of the building is there a gap in the cladding where one can see the original red brick and arched windows and doorways similar to those on the Commercial Block.

331 W. Main Street

Date: Before 1944 NC 126-5005-0021

Two-story, red-brick storefront with a recessed center door flanked by display windows. Entrance to second-story apartments is on the right. The second story has four evenly spaced double-hung windows. The recent brick façade has four mousetooth courses about 18 inches below the parapet, which hides a low-pitch roof. This was the home of Shumate Furniture in the 1940s.

337 W. Main Street

Date: 1913 Commercial Block CB 126-5005-0022

This building is marked "from plans" on the 1913 Sanborn map and was designed to match the building next door (341 W. Main). The ground level was retail space and the upper floors were apartments. The retail space on the ground floor retains its original decorative pressed metal ceiling, one of the most ornate and best-preserved examples found in Radford's commercial buildings. The ceiling's pattern layout also indicates the original display window configuration, which had been altered in the 1950s when the current display windows were installed. The building is undergoing rehabilitation.⁹

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341 W. Main Street

Date: before 1908 Commercial Block (Reed's Auto Parts) **CB** 126-5005-0023

This three-story, six-bay, mixed-use (commercial and domestic) building appears on the 1908 Sanborn map. Its arched windows and door openings, a projecting pressed-metal cornice, and a glazed and paneled door to the upper floors are among the surviving original features. The ground floor space served as a hardware store for much of the 20th century and still retains its high ceiling. Upper levels were used for rental apartments in the historic period. Many original features (finishes, floor plans, fixtures, etc.) survive, although the spaces are currently undergoing rehabilitation.¹⁰

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8. Statement of Significance

Summary

The proposed West Radford Commercial Historic District embodies the development of small-town commercial centers from the late Victorian Era through the first half of the 20th century. Due to its proximity to a succession of railroad and automobile bridges across the New River, it served the shopping and entertainment needs of much of eastern Pulaski County as well as the West Ward of Radford for decades. With the ascension of the automobile, the area took on a new importance, with most of Radford's auto dealerships being located in or near the district from the 1920s through 1950s. The district contains a number of fine buildings. The level of architectural detail and craftsmanship in the ca. 1890 Radford Trust Co. Building and the 1939 Telephone Building is extraordinary in the region. Most of the buildings have been in constant use since they were built. Only one major building has been lost since the end of the period of significance.

Justification of Criteria

The district is eligible at the local level of significance under criterion A in the area of Commerce and under criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance is 1890 to 1955.

Historical Background

From its beginning as cluster of buildings around a railroad station in 1890, through the end of its period of significance 50 years ago, the proposed West Radford Commercial Historic District has been marked by the economic and technological events that shaped the nation as a whole.

The Romanesque-revival Radford Trust Co. Building at 301 W. Main St., as befitting the confidence of the Gilded Age, was originally planned as one of a pair of buildings. Its twin was never built, a likely victim of the Panic of 1893. By 1896, in fact, the building had become a hotel serving rail travelers, a role it served for more than 30 years.

The 20th century brought new means of communication and transportation: the telephone, the movies and the automobile. Each left its mark on the West Radford Commercial Historic District. By 1913, there was a moving picture house at 319 W. Main and by 1920, it had more than doubled in size to become the Colonial Theatre, a new kind of building housing a new kind of art form. A new form of transportation, the automobile, also gave rise to new types of buildings. At 102 W. Main St., Thompson Tire still services cars in bays that were built in the latter days of the Model T. From the

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1920s to the 1950s, most of Radford's auto dealers were located in the first four blocks of West Main Street. As early as 1926, there was a telephone exchange sharing a building at 126 W. Main St. with a car dealership. As telephones became more popular, The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co. built a fine new building at 202 W. Main St. in 1939. Though since expanded, it still serves C&P's successor, Verizon.

The end of World War II brought new prosperity and a new look in commercial buildings. Shumate Furniture at 125 W. Main St. and the Chadwick Building at 206 W. Main St. exemplify the new less-cluttered look.

A full history of the district must begin before the Civil War, with the city's namesake.

Antebellum Period (1831-1860)-Civil War (1861-1865)

The West Ward of Radford began on a tract of land that was part of the Dr. John Blair Radford property west of Connelly's Run on the southeast bank of the New River, just west of the growing town of Central Depot. Dr. Radford came to the area in the 1830s and married the daughter of a prominent local landholder.

Substantial settlement in the community did not begin until after 1854, when the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad arrived. The population of Central Depot rose from 30 in 1854 to nearly 100 in 1856, when the railroad was completed to Bristol and regular service was instituted. The railroad crossed the New River west of Connelly's Run as it passed in front of the Radford property.

During the Civil War, Gabriel C. Wharton (1828-1906), a Confederate colonel (later a brigadier general) and former railroad civil engineer, met and married Dr. Radford's daughter, Anne Rebecca Radford (1843?-1890). They are said to have built and occupied a small cottage near the south end of the railroad bridge soon after the war.

Reconstruction and Growth (1866-1916)

Central Depot (1866-1880)

In the census of 1870 Gabriel Wharton, listed as a civil engineer, was the third wealthiest landowner in the area. Radford was the wealthiest.¹¹ The Radfords and Whartons had strong interests in the village of New River Depot across the river from their property, at the north end

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of the railroad bridge.

Deeded 554 acres on the river by the Radfords in 1869, the Whartons also owned substantial farmlands near New River Depot and had considerable business and social interests there.

During the war, Wharton had noted evidence of the huge coal deposits of western Virginia. He secured a charter in 1871 for the New River Railroad, Mining and Manufacturing Co., which was to build a railroad from New River Depot along the river into the coalfields to bring coal and iron ore to the village for use or sale. It was to be part of a large-scale exploitation of metal ores and coal deposits throughout the region, and one that would take advantage of the community's location at the junction of two rail lines. Wharton's plan stagnated after the Panic of 1873.

The depression did not, however, keep the Whartons from constructing a large and impressive home about 1875. Called Glencoe (126-0045), it is now a local history museum, located on West Main Street between Wadsworth and Robertson Streets, a few blocks west of the proposed historic district. Gabriel Wharton served in the postwar period as one of the community's strongest leaders, at one time representing Montgomery County in the Virginia General Assembly.

Steel Rail Industrialization and Urbanization (1881-1916)

In 1881, the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Ohio Railroad, successor to the Virginia and Tennessee, was purchased by a Philadelphia banking house. The company was renamed the Norfolk and Western Railroad. The spur to the coalfields proposed by Gen. Wharton was built and Central Depot boomed. It was incorporated as the town of Central City in 1887 and received a post office in 1888. In 1890 the town was renamed in honor of John Blair Radford.

Northern speculators allied themselves with local landowners and formed land companies that subdivided much of the best land adjacent to the town into streets and lots. The area west of Connelly's Run was laid out in lots soon after its purchase. In the 1890s, the railroad showed its faith in the area by commissioning a substantial new stone passenger station, an office building, and a grand hotel, the architecturally sophisticated Radford Inn.¹²

In concert with the improvements made by the railroad company, public projects were undertaken, including construction of new bridges over the New River and Connelly's Run, the provision of graded streets, electricity, waterworks, and public transportation in the form of a street car. A new, curving railroad bridge was built in front of the Wharton property in 1888. Inclusion of the growing

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population west of town permitted a city charter and in 1892 the City of Radford came into being with the west and east wards. Each had its own post offices and depots.

Major industries were chiefly located along the river west of Connelly's Run, including the Radford Pipe and Foundry Co., chartered in 1891; the Radford Stove and Range Works, the Radford Iron and Steel Co., and a knitting mill.

A number of imposing buildings were built in the West Ward of the city by new banking companies, industrial concerns, and institutions. In 1890, Wharton, with the help of the Radford Land and Improvement Co. built a three-and-one-half story hotel on the corner of the tract at First and Wadsworth Streets. When the hotel failed after the Panic of 1893, it was acquired by the city for use as a courthouse.¹³ The city suffered severely from the depression, and the West Ward never recovered the momentum of investment it had previously known. The survival and continued growth of Radford can be principally attributed to its strategic position at an important rail junction.

An informal rivalry grew up between the east and west wards as the city developed. Commercial areas in each ward were focused on the railroad stations, although the East Ward became the chief commercial center and the West Ward focused primarily on industry.¹⁴

A glance at the 1891 Sanborn-Perris Map demonstrates the West Ward's focus on rail transportation and real estate. There were only three buildings in the 100 block of 1st Street (now West Main). The Norfolk and Western offices were across the street from today's Thompson Tire, but fronted on the railroad. The passenger station was behind modern-day Shumate Furniture. Sited on the corner of 1st and Randolph Streets and only recently razed, the Randolph Block's many incarnations over the years have reflected the changing fortunes of the neighborhood. Here in the boom preceding the Panic of 1893, it housed real estate offices. In the 200 block, the only building on the north side of the street was The Radford Inn, which sat squarely in the middle of the block. Across the street, there were only clusters of small offices on each end of the block. Of the three buildings on the north side of the 300 block, two of them, the Radford Trust Co. building and the Ashmead Building, still stand. A tiny office building that sat between them is gone. The beginnings of a utility infrastructure are evidenced by a 12-inch water main that ran under the middle of 1st Street.

By 1896, the big building on the north side of the 200 block was gone and the Randolph Block had become the Radford Inn. The Radford Trust had become a post office, bank, offices and a

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restaurant. The Ashmead Building had a general store in front and billiards in the back.

By 1902, the south side of the 200 block showed more development, with the addition of a large retail-and-rental building in the middle of the block. A couple of names had changed: the Randolph Block was now the Thorne Hotel instead of the Radford Inn; and the Radford Trust Co. was now the West End Hotel with a separate kitchen joined to the main building by a hyphen. The kitchen and hyphen stand today.

By 1908, the mutable Randolph Block had gone from hotel to retail space. On the 300 block, the first half of the Commercial Block (still listed as vacant) had gone up on the corner of 1st and Kent Streets.

The 1913 map shows more public and commercial buildings in the West Ward. The Radford Water Power Co., the municipal hydroelectric utility, had an office across the street from the Ashmead Building. Next door to the Ashmead was a long, narrow building marked "moving pictures." A couple of lots down the street, the other half of the Commercial Block was drawn in, marked "from plans." The new building would have an elevator. The former railroad offices had become tenements.

World War I to World War II (1917-1945)

Radford's population increased throughout this period. In 1900 it stood at 3,300. By 1920 it was about 4,600 and by 1940 it had grown to 7,000. Industrial and transportation activity remained Radford's principal source of employment and growth during the period. Heavy and light industry dominated the landscape in the West Ward. In 1929, there were 15 major industrial enterprises active in Radford, including an iron and steel production plant, a chemical plant, and the railroad repair shop [Humbert 1929:71-72]. Most of these industries, other than the railroad shop, were located in the West Ward.

The Radford Army Ammunition Plant (the Radford Arsenal) was built in 1940-41. After America's entry into World War II, people flooded to the region to look for work at the plant and whole subdivisions were built to accommodate them.

Commerce continued to focus on narrow commercial buildings on contiguous lots in the downtown sections of each ward. New buildings continually replaced old buildings or were added on the periphery. The West Ward became a collection of major and minor buildings. By 1917, it included four attorney's offices, one bank, one billiard room, one tobacco shop, one specialty clothier, two

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dentists, one druggist, two dry good stores, one furniture dealer, one service garage, 10 general stores, six grocers, two hotels, one livery stable, one meat market, one milliner, one musical instruments store, one newspaper publisher, two physicians, two plumbers, one restaurant, two tailors, and one undertaker [Giles: 1994, 37].

In the proposed West Radford Commercial Historic District, the north side of the 200 block finally showed some development by 1920, the first since the original Radford Inn vanished from the maps in 1896. The three-part commercial building at 243-239 West Main had gone up across Fairfax Street (now Harvey Street) from the Radford Trust Co. (Delp's Hotel).

The long, narrow moving-picture house beside the Ashmead Building had become the much larger Colonial Theatre, with a central entrance flanked by two storefronts leading to the theater proper, with stage and balcony, which occupied the back half of the building. Though hidden by much exterior remodeling, this building still stands.

By 1926, the automobile was beginning to make its mark on the district. The building that is now Thompson Tire shows up on the Sanborn map as an auto sales and repair shop. Just across Walker Street was a garage that held 20 cars. It first appeared on the 1920 map. The redoubtable Randolph Block was now an automotive sales and repair shop. It also housed a telephone exchange.

The north side of the 200 block continued to develop. A one-story storefront, now Grandma's Memories, and the Concrete Block Building had gone up, along with a post office and drugstore at 219 W. Main St.

The next time the Sanborn map was updated, in 1944, there were no cars for sale, but the repair business must have been good as people tried to extend the life of their prewar cars. The Thompson Tire building was now Mitchell Motor Sales and the Randolph Block was Central Chevrolet. Just outside the district, across Walker Street, the 20-car garage had been replaced by a new auto sales and service building that, in postwar fashion, sat back from the property line to provide parking on all sides.

Advances in telephone communication accompanied the expansion of automobile service. Dials and four-digit numbers had largely replaced local operators. The little exchange that occupied part of the Randolph Block in 1926 had moved across Randolph Street and into the new Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co. building. A few other small buildings helped fill out the south side of the 200 block. The largest of these, a tailor shop and laundry, still stands at 218-222 W. Main St.

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The north side of the block reached its present form with the addition, now 213 W. Main St., to the post office and the completion of a tiny infill building (Central Art and Framing) on the other.

In the 300 block, a two-story furniture store was erected between the Commercial Block and the State Theater, formerly the Colonial Theatre.

The New Dominion (1946-present)

After World War II, Radford experienced the loss of about one-quarter of its population, from a high of about 12,000 residents in 1943 to only 9,026 in 1950.¹⁵ The city has grown since then, boasting a population of 15,859 in 2000. Throughout the 20th century, the city and civic associations continued to promote and support industrial and commercial business. Many of the large employers that had characterized manufacturing since Radford's founding as city continued to operate through the third quarter of the century.¹⁶

The West Radford Historic District has changed little architecturally over the past 50 years. The only major building that has been lost is the Randolph Block, which was torn down about 1999. A few buildings were built in the postwar period, most notably Shumate Furniture at 125 W. Main St. Some historic buildings, such as the Colonial Theatre, are hidden behind modern facades, but in whole, the district is remarkably intact. The district is commercially vibrant. All the buildings except one, (126-5005-0006) at 210-212 W. Main Street, are either in use or undergoing rehabilitation.

¹ Gibson Worsham, 1999 survey, former DHR ID No. 126-0100.

² Worsham, 1999 survey, former DHR ID No. 126-0087.

³ Worsham, 1996 survey, former DHR ID No. 126-0088.

⁴ Worsham, 1996 survey, former DHR ID No. 126-0089.

⁵ Worsham, 1996 survey, former DHR ID No. 126-0090.

⁶ Worsham, 1996 survey, former DHR ID No. 126-0091.

⁷ From Giles, Leslie A., *A Preliminary Reconnaissance Survey of Historic Architecture in the City of Radford, Virginia*, Oct. 1994, pp 78-79.

⁸ Giles, p. 79.

⁹ Giles, p. 80.

¹⁰ Giles, p. 73.

¹¹ 1870 Census quoted in Killen 2.

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¹² Tatman and Moss; Wells.

¹³ Anderson, 25.

¹⁴ To this point, all of the Historical Background section is excerpted from Worsham, Gibson. *A Supplemental Survey of Historic Architecture in the West Ward of the City of Radford*. 1996, pp.4-7.

¹⁵ Elmer D. Johnson, *Radford Then and Now: A Pictorial History*. Radford: The American Bicentennial Commission of Radford, Virginia, 1975, p 63, cited in Giles 1994:46

¹⁶ Worsham, *A Supplemental Survey of Historic Architecture in the West Ward of the City of Radford*, p. 10.

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10.

UTM Reference Points	Zone	Easting	Northing
A 17 537600 4109600	B 17	537870	4109800
D 17 537970 4109780	E 17	537990	4109750
G 17 537740 4109630	H 17	537620	4109550
	C 17	537900	4109750
	F 17	537780	4109580

Verbal Boundary Description

The proposed district consists of buildings in the 100, 200 and 300 blocks of West Main Street, until recently called First Street, in the West Ward of the City of Radford. In the 100 block, the district comprises buildings on the south side of the street in addition to 125 West Main, which is on the north. Both sides of the 200 block are included as well as the north side of the 300 block.

The boundary of the nominated historic district is shown on the accompanying map, "West Radford Commercial Historic District." It is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: A 17 537600 4109600, B 17 537870 4109800, C 17 537900 4109750, D 17 537970 4109780, E 17 537990 4109750, F 17 537780 4109580, G 17 537740 4109630, H 17 537620 4109550.

Boundary Justification

The proposed West Radford Commercial Historic is roughly bounded on the north by the railroad, to the east by the U.S. 11 bridge over the New River, to the south by a residential district and to the west by later and less dense development. Within that rough boundary, it is further defined by the presence of contiguous buildings from the period of significance.

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Photographs

All photographs are of:

West Radford Commercial Historic District, Radford, Virginia,
126-5005.

Date: May 2004

Photographer: Michael Kennedy

Location of negatives: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

1. VIEW OF: North (front) and east façades of Thompson Tire building, 102 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0001. Neg. No. 21592.
2. VIEW OF: Mullins Funeral Home, 120 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0002. Neg. No. 21594.
3. VIEW OF: South (front) façade of Shumate Furniture Co., 125 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0003. Neg. No. 21593.
4. VIEW OF: North (front) façade of C&P Telephone Co. (Verizon) building, 202 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0004. Neg. No. 21592.
5. VIEW OF: North (front) façade of Chadwick Building, 206-210 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0005 and 0006. Neg. No. 21594.
6. VIEW OF: South (front) façade of 213-219 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0009. Neg. No. 21594.
7. OBLIQUE VIEW OF: South (front) façade of 213-219 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0009. Neg. No. 21594.
8. VIEW OF: East side of, 218-218A W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0007 and 0008. Neg. No. 21594.
9. VIEW OF: North (front) façade of, 218-222 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0007 and 0008. Neg. No. 21594.
10. VIEW OF: South (front) façades of, 227-241 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0012, -0013 and 0014. Neg. No. 21594.

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11. VIEW OF: South (front) façade of 239-243 W. Main St., Radford VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0014. Neg. No. 21594.
12. VIEW OF: South (front) and east façades of Radford Trust Co. building, 301 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0015. Neg. No. 21593.
13. DETAIL OF: East façade at corner arch, Radford Trust Co. building, 301 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0015. Neg. No. 21593.
14. DETAIL OF: South (front) façade, Radford Trust Co. building, 301 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0015. Neg. No. 21593.
15. VIEW OF: South (front) façade of Ashmead Building, 311 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0019. Neg. No. 21593.
16. DETAIL OF: South (front) façade of Ashmead Building, 311 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0019. Neg. No. 21593.
17. VIEW OF: South (front) façade of old Colonial Theatre building, 311 W. Main St., Radford, VA, showing remodeled facade. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0020. Neg. No. 21594.
18. VIEW OF: South (front) façade of Commercial Block, 337-341 W. Main St., Radford, VA. West Radford Commercial Historic District, 126-5005-0022 and 126-5005-0023. Neg. No. 21594.

NEW RIVER

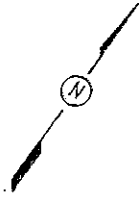
West Radford Commercial Historic District

RADFORD, VIRGINIA
DHR No. 126-5005

ROANOKE REGIONAL
PRESERVATION OFFICE
VA DEPT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
MAP BY: MICHAEL F. KENNEDY
JULY 2004
DATUM: CITY OF RADFORD GIS

50' 100'

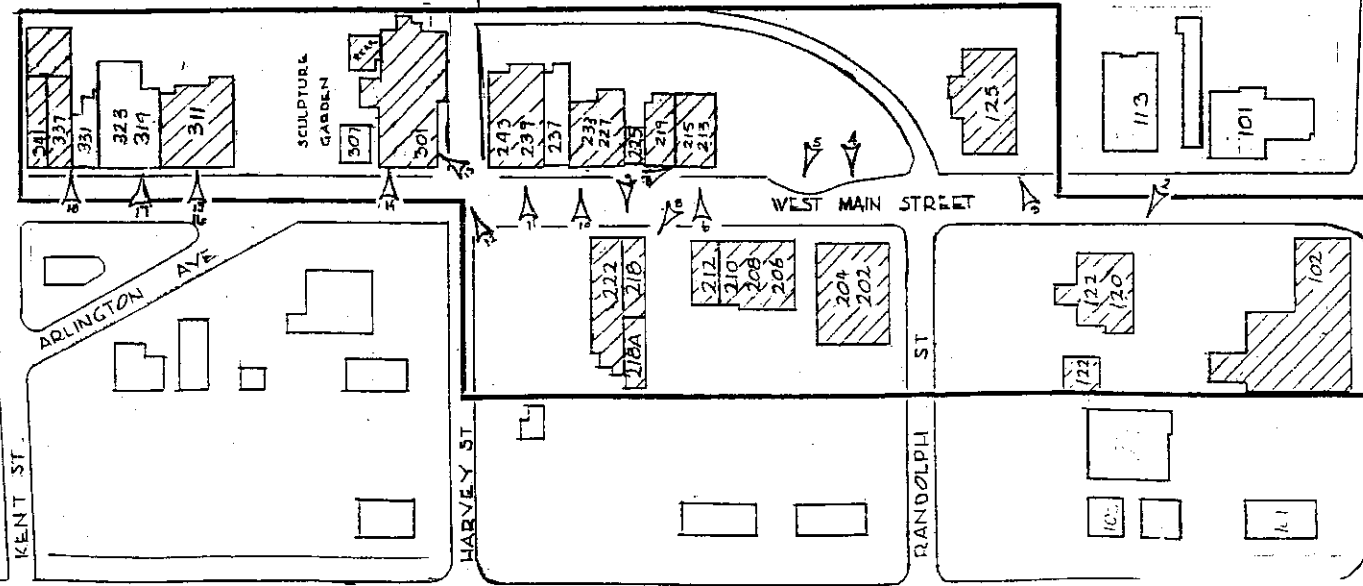
CONTRIBUTING NONCONTRIBUTING



NORFOLK

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

11



District Boundary

KENT ST.

ADLINGTON AVE

HARVEY ST.

RANDOLPH ST.

WALKER ST.

WEST MAIN STREET

SCULPTURE GARDEN

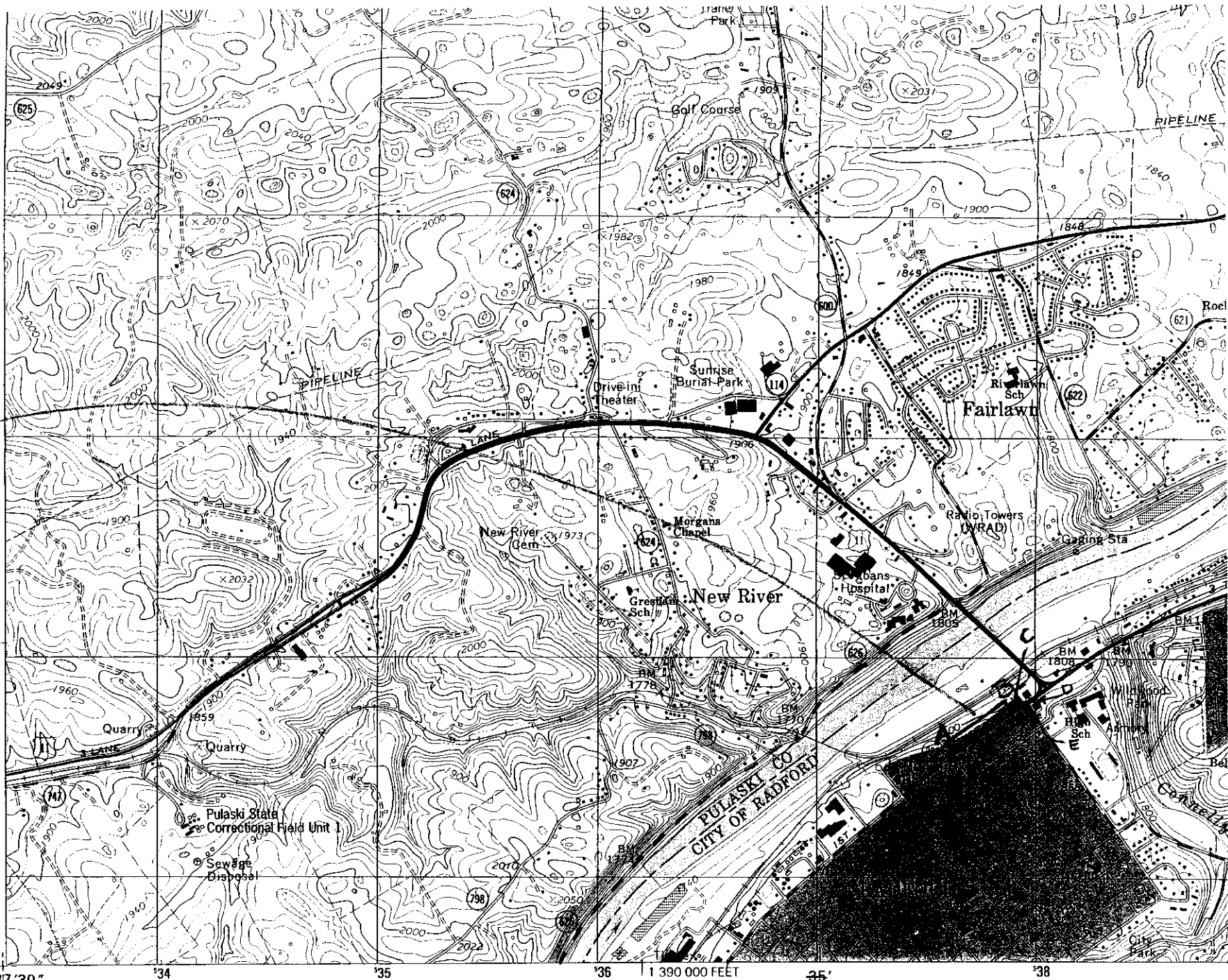
PAVING NORTH
SIDE
WEST RADFORD
COMMERCIAL
HISTORIC
DISTRICT

RADFORD, VA 300 000
FEET

UTM REFERENCES

- A/17/537600/4109600
- B/17/537870/4109800
- C/17/537900/4109750
- D/17/537970/4109780
- E/17/537990/4109750

- F/17/537780/4109580
- G/17/537740/4109630
- H/17/537620/4109550



37°07'30"
80°37'30"

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
 Topography compiled 1963. Planimetry derived from imagery taken
 1982 and other sources. Photoinspected using imagery dated 1998;
 no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control
 current as of 1965. Boundaries, other than corporate, verified 2000
 North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and

