Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
VIRGINIA	
COUNTY:	
STAUNTON (in city)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON:
WHARF AREA PRESERVATION ZONE

AND/OR HISTORIC:
WHARF AREA PRESERVATION ZONE

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
see continuation sheet

CITY OR TOWN:
STAUNTON James Kenneth Robinson, Seventh District Congressman

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
VIRGINIA	51	(in city)	790

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
[X] District [ ] Building [ ] Site [ ] Structure [ ] Object	[ ] Public [ ] Private [X] Both	Public Acquisition: [ ] In Process [ ] Being Considered	[X] Occupied [ ] Unoccupied [ ] Preservation work in progress	Yes: [ ] Restricted [X] Unrestricted [ ] No

PRESENT USE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

[ ] Agricultural	[ ] Government	[ ] Park	[ ] Transportation	[ ] Comments
[X] Commercial	[ ] Industrial	[ ] Private Residence	[ ] Other *(Specify)*	
[ ] Educational	[ ] Military	[ ] Religious		
[ ] Entertainment	[ ] Museum	[ ] Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Multiple ownership

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Staunton	Virginia	51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Augusta County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Staunton	Virginia	51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1971 [ ] Federal [X] State [ ] County [ ] Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Richmond	Virginia	51

STATE: VIRGINIA
COUNTY: STAUNTON (in city)
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☐ Excellent	☒ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	☐ Altered	X Unaltered		☐ Moved	☒ Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(If known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located against the base of Staunton's Sears Hill, the Wharf Area is a compact warehouse and commercial district that generally encompasses Middlebrook Avenue between South Lewis Street and South New Street, and a block of South Augusta Street between Middlebrook Avenue and Johnson Street. The block of Middlebrook Avenue between South Lewis Street and South Augusta Street forms a kind of small trapezoidal piazza surrounded by a variety of commercial architecture. Lining the north side of the block is a row of small, attached late-nineteenth century warehouses that vary between two and three stories in height. The architectural treatment of the warehouses diverges widely: some have very simple brick fronts broken only by plain window openings and doors, while others are ornamented with rich brickwork details such as corbeled cornices and elaborated window surrounds. The rich brickwork ornamentation on the small warehouse at 5 Middlebrook Avenue is a superior example of its type. This block of warehouses faces across the space onto the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad passenger station and freight depot. The somewhat robust passenger station, which exhibits a blending of classical and bungaloid details, closes the vista at the south end of South Augusta Street. A principal focal point for the area is the former American Hotel building located at the northeast corner of Middlebrook Avenue and South Augusta Street. Though now used as a warehouse, this simple but imposing Greek Revival structure is a rare example of the earliest hotels built in the nation.

East of South Augusta Street on Middlebrook Avenue is a small, late-nineteenth structure, formerly a garment factory, and the vast White Star Mills building which forms the eastern edge of the Wharf Area. Silhouetted against Sears Hill, the trapezoidal-shaped four-story mill building is a major downtown Staunton landmark.

The block of South Augusta Street leading into the Wharf Area is lined with two and three-story late-nineteenth century commercial structures. Most of the buildings on this narrow street feature rich Italianate cornices, elaborate window treatments and metal shop fronts. The Simmons Parts Company at 119-123 South Augusta Street is embellished with particularly fine cast-iron architectural ornaments. The facade of the commercial building across the street at 120-124 South Augusta Street is an unusual example of wood used to resemble both masonry and metallic forms. The highly original detailing on this building has a somewhat oriental flavor.

The historic appearance of the Wharf Area is further enhanced by the survival in some sections of Belgian Block paving, brick paving, and stone curbs. It is likely that most of Middlebrook Avenue was originally surfaced with Belgian block, but the major part of it is now covered with sheet asphalt.

The following inventory provides a brief architectural description of the buildings included in the Wharf Area Preservation Zone.

Middlebrook Avenue:

Cast Iron Footbridge to Sears Hill
Middlebrook Avenue: Cast iron, Pratt and Warren truss construction.
Late-nineteenth century.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

2. The Wharf Area Preservation Zone includes all properties with frontage on Middlebrook Avenue between S. New Street and S. Lewis Street, as well as all properties with frontage on S. Augusta Street between Johnson Street and Middlebrook Avenue. + see Continuation sheet #5

7. Chesapeake and Ohio Freight Depot
Middlebrook Avenue: Brick and frame, one story shed with second story frame addition, gable roof, about six-bay long. Late-nineteenth century.

Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad Station
Middlebrook Avenue: Brick and stucco, one-and-one-half stories, low hipped roof, eight-bay front, overhanging roof with exposed rafter ends and brackets, dormer on west side, frontispiece with triple arcade, stone trim, pilasters, decorative mullions. Bungaloid; built 1902.

Railroad Telegraph House
Middlebrook Avenue: Brick and frame, two stories, gable roof, one-bay first floor and four-bay second floor, imbricated shingles in gable, penting on gable end and exposed rafter ends, teeth motif brick course through first floor, brick chimney with corbeled neck, multi square-pane transom over window. Queen Anne; late-nineteenth century.

Erskine Building
1-3 Middlebrook Avenue: Brick, three stories, flat roof, seven-bay front, open arcade lights first floor, molded stone cornice, windows tripled, castellated motifs. Built 1904.

5 Middlebrook Avenue: Brick, two stories, flat roof, three-bay front, ornately corbeled cornice, facade divided by pilasters and belt courses, windows recessed into segmental hood moldings. Circa 1890.

7-9 Middlebrook Avenue: Brick, three stories, flat roof, four-bay front, corbeled cornice, string courses are extended around the tops of the segmental arched windows. Circa 1900.

11-13 Middlebrook Avenue: Brick, two stories, flat roof, five-bay front, bracketed cornice, string courses are extended around the tops of the segmental arched windows, sawn scroll-work lintels, brick teeth motif below sills and in cornice. Late-nineteenth century.

15 Middlebrook Avenue: Brick, two stories, flat roof, three-bay front, heavily molded cornice supported by brackets, wooden lintels with faceted corner blocks and wooden sills. Late-nineteenth century.

17 Middlebrook Avenue: Brick, two stories, flat roof, three-bay front, corbeled cornice, striated pilasters rest on belt course, segmental arched

7.
windows, three-panel molded double door. Circa 1900.

19-21 Middlebrook Avenue: Brick, two stories, flat roof, six-bay front divided into a pair of three-bay units, corbeled cornice, pilasters bind ends and mark the center, store fronts on first floor. Circa 1900.

23 and 25 Middlebrook Avenue: Brick, two-and-one-half stories, flat roof, six-bay front divided into a pair of three-bay units, solid parapet with recessed panels, segmental arch of windows filled with sawn scroll-work lintels, enlarged central bays used for loading. Circa 1900.

27 Middlebrook Avenue: Brick, two stories, flat roof, three-bay front, solid parapet with recessed panels, segmental arch of windows filled with sawn scroll-work lintels, enlarged central bay used for loading. Circa 1900.

29 Middlebrook Avenue: Brick, three stories, flat roof, three-bay front, stepped gable front, segmental arched windows, enlarged central bays used for loading. Circa 1900.

Fultz's Lumber Yard
44 Middlebrook Avenue: Brick, two stories, flat roof, four-bay front plus one-bay diagonally cut recessed entrance, solid parapet, molded cornice, stone lintels and sills, round arch vehicle entrances. Late-nineteenth century.

South Augusta Street:

John Burns Building
108-114, 116-118 South Augusta Street: Brick, three stories, flat roof, thirteen-bay front, bracketed cornice, flat and arched hood moldings, projecting sills. Italianate; built 1874.

111-113 South Augusta Street: Brick, two stories, flat roof, four-bay front, heavily molded metal cornice ornamented with brackets, modillions, finials and bosses, arcade of windows, cast iron store front. Late-nineteenth century.

115-117 South Augusta Street: Brick, two stories, flat roof, six-bay front, heavy metal cornice, second story window arcade with corbeled head surround, first story segmental head surrounds. Circa 1900. demolished 1979 all cont. street #5

119-123 South Augusta Street: Brick, two stories, flat roof, six-bay front, molded metal cornice with supporting brackets, rope motif metal hood moldings, cast iron first floor store front with modillion cornice and ornamental pilasters. Late-nineteenth century.

120-124 South Augusta Street: Wood facade, three stories, flat roof, five-bay front, bracketed cornice, windows with wood segmental arch lintels and sawn scroll-work, windows flanked by fluted panels giving pilaster effect. Late-nineteenth century.

7.

American Hotel
125 South Augusta Street: Brick, three stories, deck-on-hipped roof, eight-bay front, molded cornice, frontispiece emphasized by pilasters and crowning pediment flanked by chimneys. Greek Revival; circa 1854; west end bay added.

South New Street:

~~15, 17, 19~~ 112 South New Street: Brick, two stories, flat roof, three-bay front, bracketed cornice, with drop pendants, corbeled string courses are extended around heads of segmental arch windows, sawn scroll-work lintels, coursed limestone rubble foundation. Late-nineteenth century.

White Star Mills
121, 123, 125 South New Street: Brick with coursed rough-hewn ashlar foundation, four stories, flat roof, six-bay front, triple band corbeled cornice, paired bays divided into three recessed sections, segmental arch windows. Circa 1900.

additional inventory on cont. sheet #5

8.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Wharf developed a colorful character built around the commercial ventures of the commission merchants, wholesale grocers, saloons, distilleries and liveries. Surviving from this period of the 1880's is the Erskine Miller building located at 5 Middlebrook Avenue. During the 1880's Augusta County had a reknowned wild game supply and the Wharf with it's wealth of commission merchants was undoubtedly the point from which game was shipped to the hotels of Washington and Baltimore. Staunton also by this time had become a major railway break between Washington and Cincinnati, putting the American Hotel in a convenient location for passengers seeking food and rest on this long trip. In 1890 it is said that more passengers embarked and disembarked at Staunton's Chesapeake & Ohio station than at any other point on the line except Richmond. The American Hotel accomodated one hundred and fifty guests and in 1878 the daily rates ranged from two to two and a half dollars.

Introduced in 1890, street cars drawn by mustang mules supplied an added method of transportation running from the railway station up Augusta Street. Also in 1890 the Staunton Development Company was established with the intent of linking the coal and iron of the areas to the west of Staunton with the local limestone. The company office was located in the western side of what had been the American Hotel and the remainder of the building was transformed into the Staunton Shoe Factory. The new development company backed by northern and western capitalists, was headed by Mr. Erskine Miller who was both president and chief executive officer. On April 30, 1890, the Staunton Vindicator reported that a train destroyed the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway station; "Mowing it down, as grass, and snapping off the six inch iron columns, used as roof supports, for the distance of three hundred feet, as if they were mere pipe stems. The front roof of the passenger station, the windows and the front wall of the east baggage room was completely wrecked."

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 15th Century
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 17th Century
- [ ] 18th Century
- [X] 19th Century
- [X] 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)*

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- [ ] Aboriginal
- [ ] Prehistoric
- [ ] Historic
- [ ] Agriculture
- [X] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [X] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [X] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape Architecture
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [X] Transportation
- [X] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other *(Specify)* _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wharf Area survives as an unusually picturesque and excellently preserved example of a Turn-of-the-Century warehouse and commercial district. Proceeding south on South Augusta Street or climbing east on Middlebrook Avenue, one is drawn through rows of late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century storefronts and into an elongated plaza framed by small warehouses and serviced by three access roads and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. The area most likely gained its name by being a district developed for the purpose of facilitating the exchange of the town's goods. Replacing less substantial wooden stores which were destroyed by fires and increased prosperity, the buildings of the Wharf are a visual manifestation of the remarkable growth of Staunton in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the early development of the area, all attention was focused towards the railroad as it increasingly became the force behind the entire city's progress.

During the 1830's the town of Staunton was hardly more than a village with a population of about two thousand and it was not until the Virginia Central Rialroad reached the town in 1852 that real commercial growth began. The advent of the railroad changed the economic structure of Staunton for it made it possible for a merchant to cut by one third the cost of goods previously brought in by pack trains. In return the new line of communication opened up the Tidewater market to the farmers of Augusta County. The growth brought about by the railroad helped to initiate the building of the American Hotel in the heart of what was to become the Wharf Area. The still-standing American Hotel building, it would seem, has witnessed the growth of this commercial district, originally part of A.H.H. Stuart's "Meadow". This building as it appears on an 1857 panoramic view of Staunton had a front gable, Ionic porch and cupola. It is said that when General Grant passed through Staunton in 1870, he was entertained by the Stonewall Brigade on the porch of the American Hotel.

During the War between the States, the Wharf Area came to play an essential part in the operation of Staunton as a military post, supply depot, training and hospital center. Along South Augusta Street arsenals were established and quartermaster and commissary warehouses were set up in easy distance from the railroad. The economic and commercial growth of Staunton continued despite the War, and from the United States census we find a thirty-two percent increase in population between 1860 and 1870. Although the Panic of 1873 was a blow to the business community of the Wharf Area, there was prosperity enough to erect the elaborate Burns Building in 1874 on the site of three earlier wooden buildings.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8.
From pictures in the Chamber of Commerce book put out by the South Publishing Co. in 1893, it appears that the building at 7-9 Middlebrook Avenue postdates this publication. The present Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Station dates from 1902, and the type of brick employed in its construction was also used in the Erskine Building, built in 1904, directly across from the station.

Although it is perhaps not as active as in former years, there has been little alteration to mar the rich character of the Wharf, an area which since the mid-nineteenth century has been of vital importance to the history and growth of the city of Staunton.

9.
Brice, Marshall Moore, "Augusta County During the Civil War," Augusta Historical Bulletin, Vol. I, no. 2 (1965) pp. 5-19.
Clem, Gladys B., It Happened Around Staunton in Virginia, McClure Printing Co., Staunton, Virginia, 1964.
Gordon, Armistead C., Staunton, Virginia Its Past, Present and Future, The South Publishing Company, New York, 1893.
Hotchkiss, Jed, The City of Staunton, Augusta Co., Virginia and the Surrounding Country, Spectator Steam Printing-House, Staunton, Virginia, 1878.
Tams, William Purviance, "Recollections of Augusta County" Augusta Historical Bulletin, Vol. I, no. 1 (1965) pp. 7-28.
Files of Richard M. Hamrick, Jr.
215 Fillmore Street, Staunton, Virginia 24401.
Files of the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET.

* all cont. sheet #5 + #6

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY									OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE						LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds				Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	38 °	08 '	55 "	79 °	04'	30"				°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	38 °	08 '	55 "	79 °	04'	16"									
SE	38 °	08 '	47 "	79 °	04'	16"									
SW	38 °	08 '	47 "	79 °	04'	30"									

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than 10 acres. - 7a.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE: December, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond

STATE: Virginia

CODE: 51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name _____

Title James W. Moody, Jr., Director Va. Historic Landmarks Commission

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

_____
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

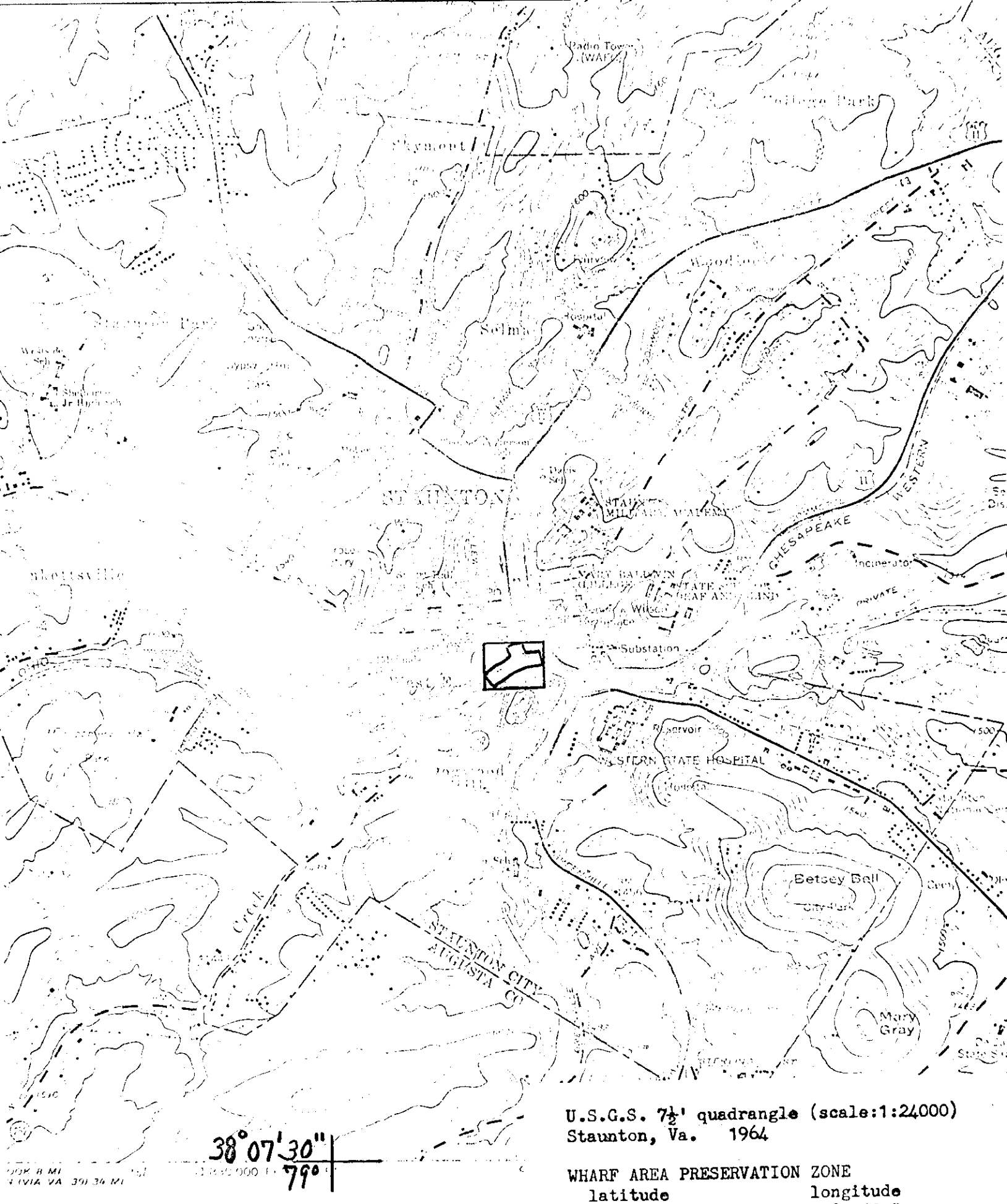
Date _____

ATTEST:

_____
Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Staunton, Va. 1964

WHARF AREA PRESERVATION ZONE

latitude	longitude
NW38°08'55"	79°04'30"
NE38°08'55"	79°04'16"
SE38°08'47"	79°04'16"
SW38°08'47"	79°04'30"

WHARF AREA PRESERVATION ZONE

City of Staunton, Va. 1949
1:1250