(Rev. 10-90)
NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

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 **Downtown Chilhowie Historic District**
other names/site number 189-0001

2. Location

street & number Main Street, South Whitetop Road, and Lee Highway not for publication N/A
city or town Chilhowie vicinity N/A
state Virginia code VA county Smyth code 173 Zip 24319

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.)

H. Alexander Wise, Jr. 12/28/99
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 _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

X private
___ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

___ building(s)
X district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
__11_	__1__	buildings
___0_	__0__	sites
___0_	__0__	structures
___0_	__0__	objects
__11_	__1__	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: _COMMERCE/TRADE_____ Sub: Business_____
__ COMMERCE/TRADE___ ___ Restaurant_____
___GOVERNMENT_____ __ Post Office_____
___SOCIAL_____ __ _ Meeting Hall_____
___SUBSISTENCE/AGRICULTURE Food Storage_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: _COMMERCE/TRADE_____ Sub: Business_____
___VACANT_____ Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY: Beaux Arts___

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
foundation __CONCRETE_____
roof _____ASPHALT_ _____
walls _____BRICK_____

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.)

____ 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)
__ARCHITECTURE_____
__COMMERCE _____

Period of Significance _1900-1949_____

Significant Dates _1913__

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
_____N\A_____

Cultural Affiliation __N/A_____

Architect/Builder __Unknown_____

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
_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: __Library of Virginia, Richmond,. Virginia_____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ___2_____

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

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17 439210	4072500	2	__ _____	_____
3	__ _____	_____	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: Gibson Worsham, principal

Organization: Gibson Worsham, Architect date August 10, 1999

street & number: 3145 Yellow Sulphur Road telephone (540) 552-4730

city or town Christiansburg state VA zip code 24073

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.0. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

7. Summary Description:

The town of Chilhowie, Virginia, is a small commercial center along the Interstate 81 corridor in Smyth County in southwest Virginia. In 1995-1996, the town was partially inventoried as part of a limited reconnaissance-level survey of Smyth County's historic architectural properties. The survey documented four sites within the Chilhowie Historic District, one of three districts identified as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In winter-spring 1998-1999, the eight remaining properties within the proposed district were inventoried. The district comprises most of the surviving historic commercial center of Chilhowie. It includes the commercial properties lining the principal block of Main Street and buildings on Lee Highway to the north.

Narrative Description

Chilhowie's historic settlement patterns have been influenced to a great extent by the area's geographical features. The village of Greever's Switch grew up in a broad valley on the banks of the Middle Fork of the Holston River along the main transportation routes through the area. The Town House, an early two-story log house that served as a tavern along the Wilderness Road, was one of the first structures. The advent of the railroad in the mid-nineteenth century stimulated the construction of the first industries and stores in the area. The switch on the railroad probably was built near the crossing of the Middle Fork of the Holston River by a local road. A number of substantial brick and weatherboarded houses were built by farming families nearby, including the Sanders House (ca 1819) and the antebellum Greever House.

Steel Rail Industrialization and Urbanization (1881-1916)

The village of Greever's Switch began as a community of houses and stores less than a mile from the historic route of the Wilderness Road. The village buildings faced the railroad from the north and south. The main road, known as the Old Stage Road today, ran across the fields 1/4 mile to the north of the village. The community's principal place of worship church, the Chilhowie Methodist Church was built in 1893 at the intersection of the stage road and a new macadamized side road connecting it to the village, as shown in a road order map of 1894. The side road (now known as Church Street) turned to parallel the railroad near McCready's Store. The depot, Greever's Store, and the Post Office were the only other buildings shown.

Summary Description (continued)

An 1899 map shows a block of commercial buildings facing the railroad several blocks west of Church Street. A second line of lots had been laid out on the north side of an alley running behind the commercial block (now known as Main Street). To the east of Church Street was the Virginia Paving Brick kilns and clay beds. After the fire of 1909 destroyed the commercial block, the stores were rebuilt facing the alley that now became the new Main Street.

The **Chilhowie Hardware Company [189-0001-005]** one of the first structure to be built facing Main Street after the 1909 fire. The new, two-story, brick, double commercial building has been considerably altered but retains the fine Luxfer glass transom above the storefronts. The second-floor windows are arched with central keystones. The **Morris Furniture Company Building [189-0001-006]** and the **Heniger Grocery and Dry Goods Store [189-0001-007]** to the east were rebuilt soon after the fire on their original sites, but now also facing north. The two-story, brick Morris Store has a replacement storefront surmounted by arch-headed second-floor windows. The original transom of ribbed glass extends across the first-floor front. Heniger's Store retains its early plate glass storefront and a red brick, running-bond second-floor facade with every tenth row of brick of a contrasting greenish color. All three buildings are good, conventional examples of regional commercial architecture.

The first building on the north side of Main Street was the new, two-story, brick building for the **National Bank of Chilhowie [189-0001-001]**, built in 1909. It was also the most elaborate and architecturally sophisticated building ever built in Chilhowie, as would be appropriate for a bank as the most powerful commercial enterprise in the town. The Beaux-Arts-style influenced building has heavily emphasized classical detailing. The first- and second-floor windows on the one-bay front and the three-bay west side are contained within full-height red brick arches and surrounded by cream-colored brick. The facades are articulated with exaggerated rustication and voussoirs. The rusticated outer bays of the building are treated as solid masonry masses. They contain low entry doors with large diamond inserts near the top of the wall above each. The building is topped with a modillion cornice and a paneled brick parapet. The architect has not been identified.

Summary Description (continued)

The **Chilhowie Drug Company [189-0001-009]** was built in the middle of the north side of the block in 1916. It held the rooms of the Chilhowie Masonic Lodge #25 upstairs for many years. The elaborate two-story brick double commercial building has brick jack arches and keystones. It has an arch-topped parapet above and a tile-floored inset entry. The second storefront in the structure held the Tate Ford Motor Dealership.

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

The lots in the historic district were filled with commercial buildings during this period. A two-story double store building appeared next door to the bank **(189-0001-002)** . This housed the Snavely Grocery Store and the Chilhowie Post Office. The next building, the plainly detailed **Bonham Motor Company [189-0001-010]**, was built in about 1920. The **Bonham Cold Storage Building (189-0001-004)** was constructed in about the same year across the street. The three-story building has a very simple brick facade buts stands out in the block because of its small proportions. The first floor is filled by an off-center storefront, the second and third floors each by two casement windows, while an inset panel defines the parapet.

The New Dominion (1946-Present)

Although the town's population continued to grow after the end of World War II, rather than invest in new buildings or demolish the existing stock of commercial buildings, merchants and building owners chose, in many cases, to modernize the exteriors of the existing building stock. Often this took the form of a new aluminum storefront and sign. Several stores received this treatment, only slightly altering the appearance of the streetscape.

The opening of the Lee Highway (Route 11) in about 1930 to the rear of the buildings on the north side of Main Street altered the town's design and usage, encouraging new businesses to opened on the periphery of the district. The gabled, brick, Colonial Revival-style **Southern Air Restaurant [189-0001-011]** was built in 1947 facing the Lee Highway. Other, less consciously designed buildings were built in and around the edges of the district during the mid-twentieth century, including the noncontributing **Southwest Insurance Agency [189-0001-012]** built in 1960. The construction of Interstate 81 to the immediate south of the district further changed the

Summary Description (continued)

dynamics of commerce in the town. The buildings have been the subjects of preservation efforts since that time, as the owners have struggled to find appropriate uses for them.

Site Inventory

Properties in the inventory are organized by street and numerically by address. Entries list the name of the property, the approximate date of construction, secondary resources, and their VDHR survey number. The sites listed below are identified on the attached Downtown Chilhowie Historic District map.

Abbreviations used in the inventory include:
CB = contributing building
NB = noncontributing building

Main Street

121 **National Bank of Chilhowie** 189-0001-001 Date: 1909 **CB**
Contributing, two-story, three-bay, brick, bank building, built in 1909, incorporating a combination of early 20th-century Revival styles. The flat roof has a parapet with central peak and a deeply molded Classical-Revival cornice with modillions at the attic level. The central bay also features a Classical-Revival detail in the modified thermal window with three double-hung sash windows over a single, fixed picture window. A segmental-arched two-story surround of light-colored brick with keystone is repeated in the three side bays. The building also features a belt course of light-colored brick at the attic level with decorative panels at the corners, a dark red brick facade modulated with raised horizontal bands and exaggerated voussoirs over the window and door openings.

131 **Chilhowie Post Office/Snavely Grocery Bldg.** 189-0001-002 Date: 1920s **CB**
Contributing, two-story, brick, commercial building with a stepped parapet roof with a concrete coping repeated in a projecting belt course at the attic level. Vertical stretchers cover this area with a central decorative panel of cast concrete with diagonal-patterned brickwork design that echoes the window glazing. A concrete belt course also delineates the second story. The

Main Street (continued)

building is composed of two storefronts with diamond-paned transoms and a central single leaf entrance to the interior stairs and second floor. The second story windows consist of a single central window flanked by two groups of three windows. These are double-hung sash with a five-light upper sash with central diamond panes over a two-light lower sash.

170 **Vance Hardware** 189-0001-003 Date: 1920s **CB**
Contributing, brick commercial building consisting of the original portion on the west side and a one-story, long shed-roofed side addition on the east. The original section of this large warehouse-type building has a low-pitched gable roof hidden by a stepped parapet gable roof. Two bands of corbelled brick detailing, one above the second story and one across the top section of the parapet distinguish this facade. Four panels inset in the brick further emphasize the brick detailing. A row of eight one-over-one arched sash windows spans the second story.

120 **Bonham Cold Storage Building** 189-0001-004 Date: 1920 ca **CB**
Contributing, three-story, brick, commercial building with very simple brick detailing. It stands apart from the rest of the buildings on the block because the floor heights are disproportionately small in comparison to the adjacent buildings. A stepped panel inset in the brickwork defines the entablature. Two wood casement windows on each of the second and third levels have brick arches supporting the window opening. This two-bay storefront is slightly off-center, the left bay is larger than the right.

112 -118 **Chilhowie Hardware** 189-0001-005 Date: 1910 **CB**
Contributing, two-story, brick, double commercial building with poured concrete foundation visible at side; 6-course American bond; replaced plate glass storefront has recessed, single-leaf, entrance doors placed at each end, Luxfer glass transom across the building on the street level with metal beam exposed above the transom. Double-leaf wood doors with arched openings and large transoms are found in the rear. The second-floor windows are arched with concrete sills and keystones, the keystones visible only in the front, and vinyl one-over-one windows infill the original openings.

Main Street (continued)

126 **Morris's Furniture Store and Mortuary** 189-0001-006 Date: 1910-15 **CB**
Contributing, two-story, masonry, commercial building with seven-course American-bond textured brick facade. A plate-glass storefront and the second occupy the first floor by double-hung sash windows with arched heads and brick sills. A central recessed entry with a wide single-leaf wood and a square glass panel door in front and central double-leaf wood and glass panel doors in rear. A transom of ribbed translucent glass extends across the storefront. The first-floor storefront windows have been replaced with modern metal ones and the second-floor windows have been replaced with vinyl one-over-one sash.

132 **Heniger's Grocery and Dry Goods Store** 189-0001-007 Date: 1910-15 **CB**
Contributing, two-story, commercial building with asymmetrical fenestration, a textured red brick facade of running bond with every tenth row of a contrasting greenish sand color, a recessed entry with a transom above, ceramic tile floor, and a wood ceiling. The metal storefront windows appear to be original. The transom, which is above the door and storefront windows, has been boarded up.

172 **The Vance Company, Inc.** 189-0001-008 Date: 1930 ca **CB**
Contributing, two-story, seven-course American bond brick commercial building with central recessed entry flanked by replacement storefront windows on first floor and painted Luxfer glass transom with soldier row above storefront, metal awning windows on second floor, decorative soldier row at top of principal facade; and a metal coping on the parapet concealing a shed roof.

147 **Chilhowie Drug Company** 189-0001-009 Date: 1916 **CB**
Contributing, elaborate, two-story, seven-course American bond brick, double commercial building with off-center, recessed, double-leaf, wood and glass entry doors, a single-leaf entrance to the second floor beside the storefront doors with the entrance area floor composed of small round tiles featuring the letters C D Co., a wood and glass multi-light storefront window, one-over-one sash windows on the second floor topped with brick jack arches and concrete keystones, on one of which is inscribed the date 1916, brick corbeling at the top of the principal facade, and an off-center arched, stepped parapet with concrete coping; around the shed roof.

Main Street (continued)

141 **Bonham Motor Company** 189-0001-010 Date: 1930 **CB**
Contributing, two-story brick-clad garage with steel frame structural system (beams were placed between the two flanking buildings), masonry front of seven-course American bond, replaced first-floor door and garage door, two-over-two sash windows, and a stepped parapet in front of the shed roof.

Lee Highway

124 Southern Air Restaurant 189-0001-011 Date: 1947 **CB**
Contributing, one and 1/2-story, masonry restaurant built similar to a "Cape Cod" house. Running bond brick covers the facade, a central entry door of wood with an eight-light glass panel and transom are flanked by large plate glass windows with transoms, six-over-six sash windows are along the side, and in front are two gable-roofed dormers with sash windows. A central interior brick chimney with corbelled cap rises from the gable roof.

South Whitetop Road

115 **Southwest Insurance Agency** 189-0001-012 Date: 1960 ca **NB**
Noncontributing two-story, brick-faced office building with entrance door flanked by added sash windows on first floor; triple metal sash windows in center of second floor; and ceramic tile coping on a plain parapet shed roof. Door to north side leads to second-floor stair.

Statement of Significance

The Downtown Chilhowie Historic District meets the standards for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C as an historic commercial area exhibiting the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century development of a local industrial and commercial center. The exclusively commercial buildings primarily date from a period of significance from ca. 1900 to 1930, during which time new, popular building designs gradually replaced traditional forms, although there was remarkable continuity of form and location for the various corresponding building types. A further period of significance extends from 1931 to 1949, when one significant new structure was built and the storefronts of many of the existing commercial buildings were altered as the town's business owners responded to the Great Depression and the stylistic changes of the World War II-era with a modernization effort. A significant date is 1913, the year of the town's incorporation.

The predominant historic period represented by the surveyed resources is that of Reconstruction and Growth (1866-1916), reflecting the era of Chilhowie's founding in the late nineteenth century and during which time industrial, commercial, and residential growth transformed the community from a depot village to a small regional center. Commercial buildings were the exclusively documented resource type. Although multiple dwellings, commercial buildings, mixed-use buildings, fraternal lodges, churches, and schools are located in the vicinity, the proposed boundaries, based on the visual continuity and physical integrity of the district, included only the commercial section of Chilhowie. Areas of significance include commerce, architecture, and transportation. All of the properties in the district are significant as commercial resources. The district's resource include one architecturally significant building (the National Bank of Chilhowie, 189-0001-001) and one closely related to the transportation theme (Southern Air Restaurant, 189-0001-011).

Historical Background

The Smyth County area was settled in the mid-eighteenth century, as part of the division of the lands beyond the Alleghany Mountains after the mid-1740s. The first surveying expedition was led by James Patton in 1748 to enter lands granted to Patton in 1745. His colleagues on the trip included Thomas Walker, John Buchanan, and Charles Campbell. Tracts were entered on the South and Middle Forks of the Holston River. The area that was to become Chilhowie was originally known

Statement of Significance (continued)

as the "Townhouse" after Patton designated it as the site of a future settlement in 1748.[1] Permanent settlement of the region dates to the period following the French and Indian War as earlier settlers returned and new families felt safe to venture into the region. A Stalnaker family was located near the Town House tract by 1769. Ownership of the Townhouse itself passed from Patton to his son-in-law, James Thompson. Thompson's heirs sold it to James Sanders.[2] The area grew rapidly in population in the post-Revolutionary period. In 1789, the Virginia General Assembly ordered the opening of a new road over the Cumberland Mountains to Kentucky. Known as the Wilderness Road and passing the Town House, this became the principal route traveled by large numbers of settlers moving west. The landscape of the valleys along water courses like the Middle Fork of the Holston were characterized by small, multiple-crop farms.

By the early nineteenth century the Town House was enlarged to serve as a tavern, post office, and stagecoach stop on the Wilderness Road. Ownership passed from James Sanders to Col. Robert Beattie. James Greever built a large brick house west of the Town House in the early nineteenth century. He was the son of Philip Greever, an early settler of German background.[3] A small mineral water spa was opened in the second decade of the century about two miles north of the Town House.

Antebellum Period (1831-1860)

This period is marked by the formation of Smyth County in 1832. Named in honor of General Alexander Smyth, a prominent politician from the area, the new county was formed from portions of Washington and Wythe counties. Thomas Hume's land on the Middle Fork northeast of the Chilhowie area was selected as the site of a county seat, named in honor of General Francis Marion of Revolutionary War fame. The county's population in 1835 was between 6,000 and 7,000 persons, including 100 free blacks and 1400 slaves.[4] Smyth County's official population in 1839 was 8,162.

The need for better transportation routes was a primary issue of concern during this period. Southwest Virginians felt cut off from the markets of the eastern seaboard by the mountains and the lack of an effective internal transportation system. Prior to 1850, the best means for transporting goods to market was by bateaux from the North Fork to Tennessee.

Statement of Significance (continued)

The frustration of the region's producers resulted eventually in the incorporation of the Southwestern Turnpike in 1846, a macadamized road which approximated the route of the old Wilderness Road. It extended as far as Seven-Mile Ford, just east of Chilhowie, in 1851 when work was suspended.[5] The Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, chartered in 1849, eclipsed the Southwestern Turnpike. The railroad was completed to Bristol by 1856 and a branch line extended to Saltville. Commerce and industry grew at an accelerated pace after the opening of the railroad. By, 1854 the county had seven sawmills, three iron furnaces, one iron foundry, one salt furnace, and two tanneries.[6]

With the arrival of the railroad in 1856, a village began to grow up near the Town House. The community was known as Greever's Switch. A mineral water resort, Chilhowie Springs, was incorporated nearby in 1856. The spa, which stood west of Greever's Switch, responded to increased tourism potential caused by the arrival of the railroad. The name Chilhowie was said to have been the Indian name for the Middle Fork Valley, meaning "valley of many deer". By 1858, the Liberty Academy was established to serve the children in the dispersed community in the vicinity of Greever's Switch and the sulphur springs whose parents could afford a private education. The small institution survived until the late nineteenth century, when private academies were often replaced by public schools.[7]

Civil War (1861-1865)

The Civil War adversely affected Greever's Switch in a number of ways. The Virginia and Tennessee Railroad served as an important supply link for the Confederate Army and its destruction was a frequent goal of Union incursions. Stoneman's Raid of 1864 was focused on the salt works west of Greever's Switch and on the lead mines in Wythe County, but succeeded in destroying the rail system that provided transportation for the products of local industry.

Reconstruction and Growth (1866-1916)

Initial Growth (1866-1880)

The population of Smyth County escalated after the war by 36% from a population of

Statement of Significance (continued)

8,952 in 1860 to 12,160 in 1880. With the repair of the transportation system and the eventual recovery from other war-related damages, it appears that Smyth County was to continue the period of prosperity it was beginning to enjoy before the Civil War into the twentieth century.

The bridges and railroad lines that were so vital to the county's prosperity were quickly repaired. The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of rail mergers and interstate commerce marking a rush to connect the resources of the west with the manufacturing and shipping points along the east coast. In 1870, the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad was reorganized as the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Ohio Railroad, which was to become part of the Norfolk and Western Railway in 1881. Smyth County industries recovered from the setbacks of the war and reached a height of development during this period. In addition to the already established salt works, gristmills, and iron works, numerous new industries opened throughout the county.[8]

The Greever's Switch area experienced real growth after the Civil War. Minter Jackson, who also established a pottery plant, which took advantage of the fine clays in the immediate vicinity of Greever's Switch, built the first store. The shop produced crocks, jugs, and other kinds of pottery.[9] It was the first local industry. Major Michael Tate came to Greever's Switch soon after the end of the Civil War. He accumulated a large farm including the Chilhowie Sulphur Spring's property and established a steam mill near the tracks in the town in 1882.[10]

Steel Rail Industrialization and Urbanization (1881-1916)

In February 1881, the AM&O Railroad was sold to a private banking house in Philadelphia. The company was renamed the Norfolk & Western Railway and the track replaced with new steel rail which promoted increased industrial development. The new railroad introduced an era of coal and freight transportation, accelerated industrialization, and industrial/urban population growth. Widespread enthusiasm for the region's economic potential encouraged speculative development in western Virginia.[11]

Statement of Significance (continued)

The land where the historic district is located was part of the Town House holdings of the Beattie family. The property had passed from Col. Robert Beattie through his son, Claiborne Watkins Beattie and his grandson, Alonzo Watkins Beattie, to a second Claiborne Watkins Beattie. He deeded land for a depot along the railroad to the Norfolk and Western Railroad in 1887.[12] In 1890, George Palmer founded the Virginia Paving and Sewer Pipe Company, primarily a brick manufacturing plant, at the town, using the same clay as the earlier pottery factory. An Englishman, E. J. Rutland, was employed to manage the plant. Paving bricks made there were shipped across the country. The company operated until 1910.[13] Early businesses included Greever's Store and McCready's Store. Other businesses in the period included Hiram Heniger's Store known in the 1890s as the Chilhowie Department Store, a soda fountain run by Don Asbury, and Lewis Waddle's Jewelry Store. These businesses were not organized in an urban format, but were scattered between the tracks and the river.[14]

Michael Tate and George Palmer succeeded in changing the name of the town to Chilhowie in 1888 or 1889.[15] The town continued to grow as a center for trade and service for the extensive agricultural lands along the Middle and South Fork Valleys. James L. Vance built a livery stable around 1890 north of the tracks. He also sold farm equipment, fertilizer, and seed. The business grew with the addition of partners and was incorporated as James L. Vance and Co. in 1907. I n 1908, a new brick building was erected and, in 1913, the company became a agent for Ford cars.[16] It became a leading supplier of farm supplies as well as a source of information on the latest developments in agricultural research, working closely with the experimental station of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Virginia's land-grant college in Blacksburg, Virginia.

As was the case in many small towns of the period, the first decade of the century saw the founding of a local bank. The Bank of Chilhowie, founded in 1905, was reorganized in 1907 as the National Bank of Chilhowie. It survived the Great Depression, and operated independently until the 1970s, with prominent local citizens as directors.[17] Michael Tate's steam mill was incorporated as the Chilhowie Milling Company in 1897.[18] Hezekiah Love Bonham, whose grandfather had come to the area many years before from Loudon County, operated a substantial lumber business in town.[19] He also founded an important orchard and apple processing plant in the early 1900s.

Statement of Significance (continued)

C. W. Beattie began to sell lots in the 1890s to create a small town. The first stores and houses faced the railroad tracks. Bob Greever opened a store in about 1890. Brick being a readily available material in Chilhowie, he built a brick house and a brick general store across from the depot between the railroad and the river. Soon after, James H. Carner arrived in Chilhowie from Bristol. He built the Carner House, an L-shaped frame hotel and store across the macadamized road from the depot on the same side of the tracks.[20]

A block of brick commercial buildings grew up in the early twentieth century on Beattie's land north of the depot. The surveys for the numbered lots were made for C. W. Beattie in the late 1890s [Beattie collection]. The first store to the west was W. H. Copenhaver's Hardware Store, the Bank of Chilhowie next, then the furniture and undertaking establishment of James Morris, John Heniger's Grocery and Dry Goods Store, and finally a drug store operated by a series of merchants. James Morris's survey for lots 20-22 on block No. 3 was dated 1899.[21] The brick row of stores faced the tracks. A well and pump behind the bank served all the stores in the town and anyone else who had no well of his own. The impressive block of stores were made up of a series of single, double, and triple unit buildings with cast iron and wooden storefronts, brick second floors topped by ornamental pressed-metal cornices.

When the Baptist and Christian churches were organized, meetings were first held in the rooms above one of these stores. The Methodist Church, built in 1893, was the first constructed, followed by the Christian church in 1898, and the Baptist church in 1901. The Baptist and Christian churches were both located in the area of the historic district, but have been demolished. Several civic, service, and social groups were established in the city during the period, including the Chilhowie Masonic Lodge.

In 1909 the brick commercial block burned. When rebuilding, the merchants turned the fronts of the new buildings to the rear (north) facing a newly created Main Street. It is said that W. H. Copenhaver (owner of site 189-0001-005) was the first to realize the benefits of reorienting his building. Another range of lots had been laid out along the north side of Main Street years earlier across from them and the historic district took its present form, although it took nearly two decades time for all the lots to be filled with new brick buildings.

Statement of Significance (continued)

W. H. Copenhaver rebuilt the **Chilhowie Hardware Company [189-0001-005]** facing north to Main Street immediately. The **Morris Furniture Company Building [189-0001-00**]and the **Heniger Grocery and Dry Goods Store [189-0001-00]** to the east were rebuilt soon after the fire on their original sites, but also facing north. The first building on the north side of Main Street was the elaborate, two-story, brick building for the **National Bank of Chilhowie [189-0001-001]**, built in 1909. As was appropriate for a bank, it was the town's most substantial and carefully designed structure. Dr. Dan Sanders, whose father had operated the earlier drugstore facing the railroad, had the **Chilhowie Drug Company [189-0001-009]** built in 1916 in the middle of the north side of Main Street. Rooms on the second floor housed the Chilhowie Masonic Lodge #25 for many years. Adjoining the Chilhowie Drug Company in the same building was the Tate Ford Motor Company with a lawyer's office upstairs.[22]

The town was incorporated in 1913 [Cole 60]. A large residential area grew up to the east of the commercial section, since development to the north was precluded by the Beattie Town House farm in that direction. With the development of the block of commercial buildings lining Main Street, Chilhowie took on the appearance of a successful and "booming" regional commercial and industrial center.

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

The historic district was filled in and took on much of its present appearance during this era. Early in the period H. L. Bonham built a two-story double commercial building next door to the bank **(189-0001-002)** . This housed the Snavely Grocery Store and the Chilhowie Post Office. It was separated by a vacant lot from the Chilhowie Drug Company. The next building, the **Bonham Motor Company [189-0001-010]**, was built in about 1920 by H. L. Bonham to fill in the lot between the post office building and the Chilhowie Drug Company. Across the street, Bonham built the **Bonham Cold Storage Building (189-0001-004)** in about the same year to store the apples produced by his orchards.[23]

James D. Tate and Q. A. Eller and renamed Tate, Eller And Company, Inc purchased the James L. Vance Company, incorporated in 1907 as a fertilizer, seed, and farm machinery store. At the same time the Chilhowie Hardware Company was acquired by a group of investors.

Statement of Significance (continued)

The company expanded into other markets with branch stores. The two businesses merged in 1926 under the name of the Vance Company. This profitable farm supply store chain had branches from Abingdon to Pulaski and operated until it was sold in 1969. Buildings associated with it are the large, brick, gabled, commercial **Vance Company Building[189-0001-003]** and the conventional brick commercial **Vance Company Building #2[189-0001-008]**.

The first census to include Chilhowie was in 1920, when the population stood at 572. It increased modestly through the period. It grew to 712 by 1930 and 889 by 1940.[24] Industrial and transportation activity remained Chilhowie's principal source of employment and growth during the period between the world wars. Few of the industries were located in the proposed historic district. Recreation was provided by a variety of resources, including a ball park, but the tennis court that stood in the 1920s on the site of the **Bonham Motor Company [189-0001-010]** was the only site in the district related to that theme. The town was home to a number of successful businessmen, who built for their families a series of impressive and expensive houses along the highway on the outskirts of the town.

The New Dominion (1946-Present)

After the end of World War II, Chilhowie continued its gradual growth in population. The town swelled from 889 in 1940 to 1,022 in 1950. By 1980, it stood at 1,265.[25] Locally based commercial enterprises continued to serve the citizens from the centrally located business area. After the middle of the century, rather than invest in new buildings or demolish the existing stock of commercial buildings, merchants and building owners chose, in many cases, to modernize the exteriors of the classical revival building stock. Often this took the form of a new aluminum storefront or a large metal grille applied over the entire building. Several stores received this treatment, modestly transforming the streetscape. The two churches along Main Street were demolished.

Radical reorienting of the town's streets in the period caused new business to be opened on the periphery of the district. The Lee Highway was opened to the rear of the buildings on the north side of Main Street in about 1930. The **Southern Air Restaurant [189-0001-011]** was built in 1947 facing the Lee Highway, where it was readily accessible to passing traffic. The Colonial-

Statement of Significance (continued)

style building appealed to the passing tourist by its modest reference to the architectural forms made popular by the restoration of Williamsburg by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. The Chilhowie Milling Company burned in 1993.[26]

Competition from the automobile and long-distance air travel led to the closing of the rail passenger station in 1971. The construction of Interstate 81 just south of the town at about the same time changed the commercial dynamics of the town. The opening of new offices, specialty shops, restaurants, and other businesses serving the local population has softened the loss of traditional commerce downtown. The principal commercial anchor for the downtown is the historic **Vance Company Building [189-0001-003]** that has been acquired by Berry Enterprises, who continue to operate it as a successful farm supply company.

Endnotes

1 Sayers, Elizabeth Lemmon. *Smyth County, Virginia: Volume One, Pathfinders and Patriots, Prehistory to 1832.* Marion, Virginia: Smyth County Historical and Museum Society, 1983.

2 Mattie Frazier Cole, *A Story of the Settling and Growth of Chilhowie*, Marion: Tucker Printing, 1993, 7.

3 Cole 1993: 7-11.

4 Joseph Martin, *A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia, and the District of Columbia*, Charlottesville: Moseley and Tompkins, 1836, 435.

5 Goodridge Wilson, *Smyth County History and Traditions,* Centennial Celebration of Smyth County, Virginia, 1932, 225.

6 Richard Edwards, ed, *Statistical Gazetteer of Virginia, Embracing Important Topographical and Historical Information From Recent and Original Sources, Together with the Results of the Last Census Population, in Most Cases, to 1854*, Richmond: Richard Edwards, 1855, 381.

7 Cole 1993: 22-28.

8 Hill Studio, *Historic Architectural Survey of Smyth County, Virginia,* Survey Report for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Smyth County Board of Supervisors, 1997, Appendix F.

9 Cole 1993: 22.

10 Cole 1993: 56.

11 Fishwick, Marshall W. "Boom Days in Virginia." *The Iron Worker* 12:4 (Spring 1959) 8-11.

12 Cole 1993: 7, 31.

Endnotes (continued)

13 Cole 1993: 22.

14 Cole 1993: 35.

15 Cole 1993: 30-31.

16 Cole 1993: 56.

17 National Bank of Chilhowie, "Our 70th Anniversary," brochure, ca. 1977.

18 Cole 1993: 61.

19 Cole 1993: 53.

20 Cole 1993: 35-43.

21 Beattie Family Papers, collection of Kathryn C. Beattie, Chilhowie, Virginia.

22 Edna Love and Kathryn C. Beattie, interview, Chilhowie, Virginia, 23 April 1999.

23 Love and Beattie, interview.

24 U. S. Census, Smyth County, Virginia, 1920, 1930, 1940, microfilm.

25 U.S. Census, Smyth County, Virginia, 1940, 1950, 1980, microfilm.

26 Cole 1993: 72.

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1950. Fifteenth Census. Smyth County, Virginia. Microfilm.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Boundaries for the proposed historic district (Figure 1) begin at the northwest corner of lot 53D3-(A)-61 at the intersection of Lee Highway and South Whitetop Road and proceeding southeast along the northeast side of Whitetop Road to a point at the southern corner of the lot numbered 53D3-(A)-96 in the tax maps of the county on the northwest side of the Norfolk Southern Railroad line, continuing northeast with the southeastern property line of lots 96, 93, and 92 to a point at the east corner of lot # 53D3-(A)-92, thence northwest with the northeast side of this lot, crossing Main Street, and continuing with the northeast side of lot# 53D3-(A)-101, thence north to a point at the north corner of lot# 53D3-(A)-66 at the intersection of Lee Highway and Walton Street, thence with the northwest lines of lots 66, 65, 64, 63, and 61 to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries were selected to include all structures, which contribute to the historic character of the district, and to exclude areas of visual change in the post-1949 era.

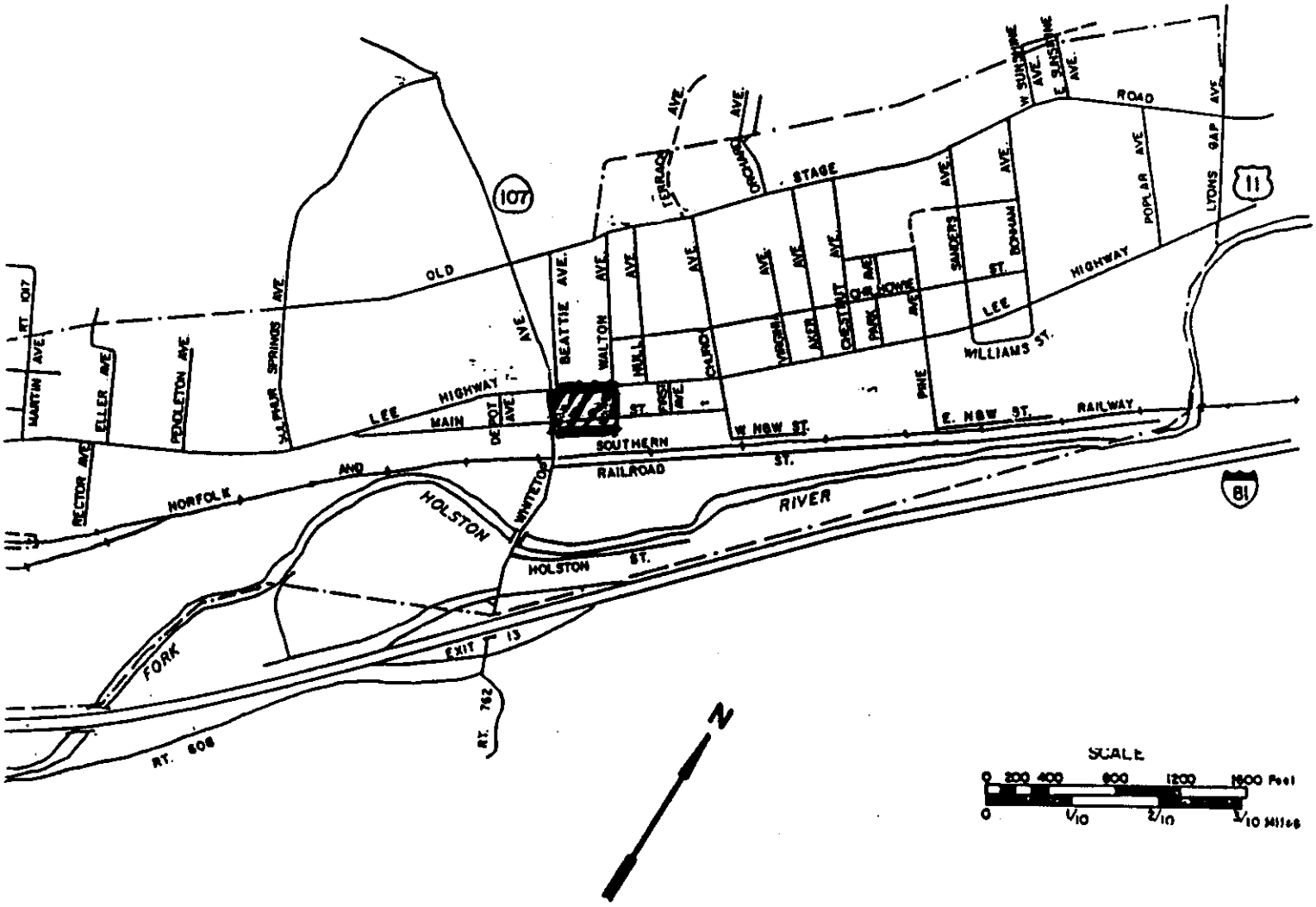


Exhibit A: Project Location

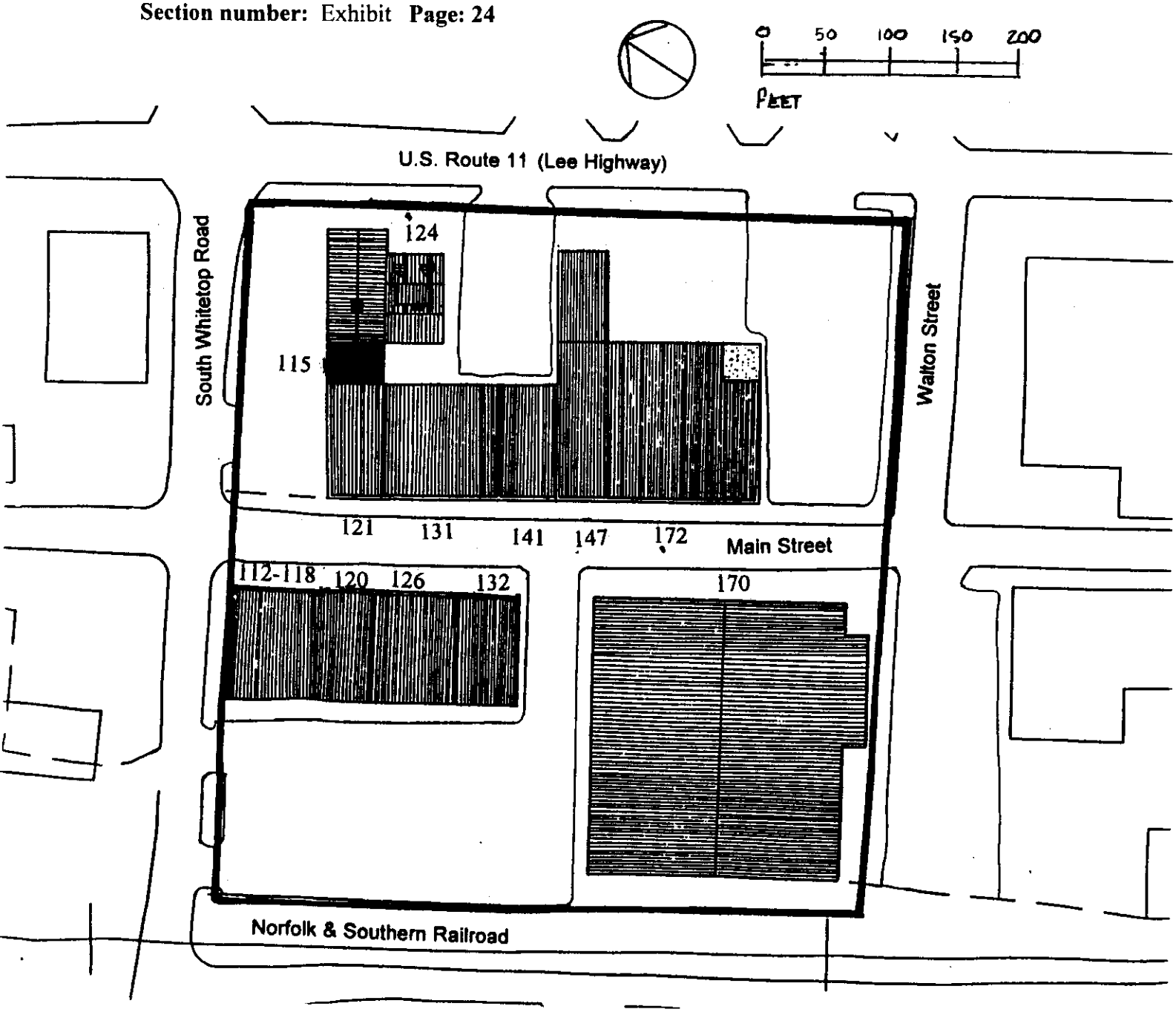
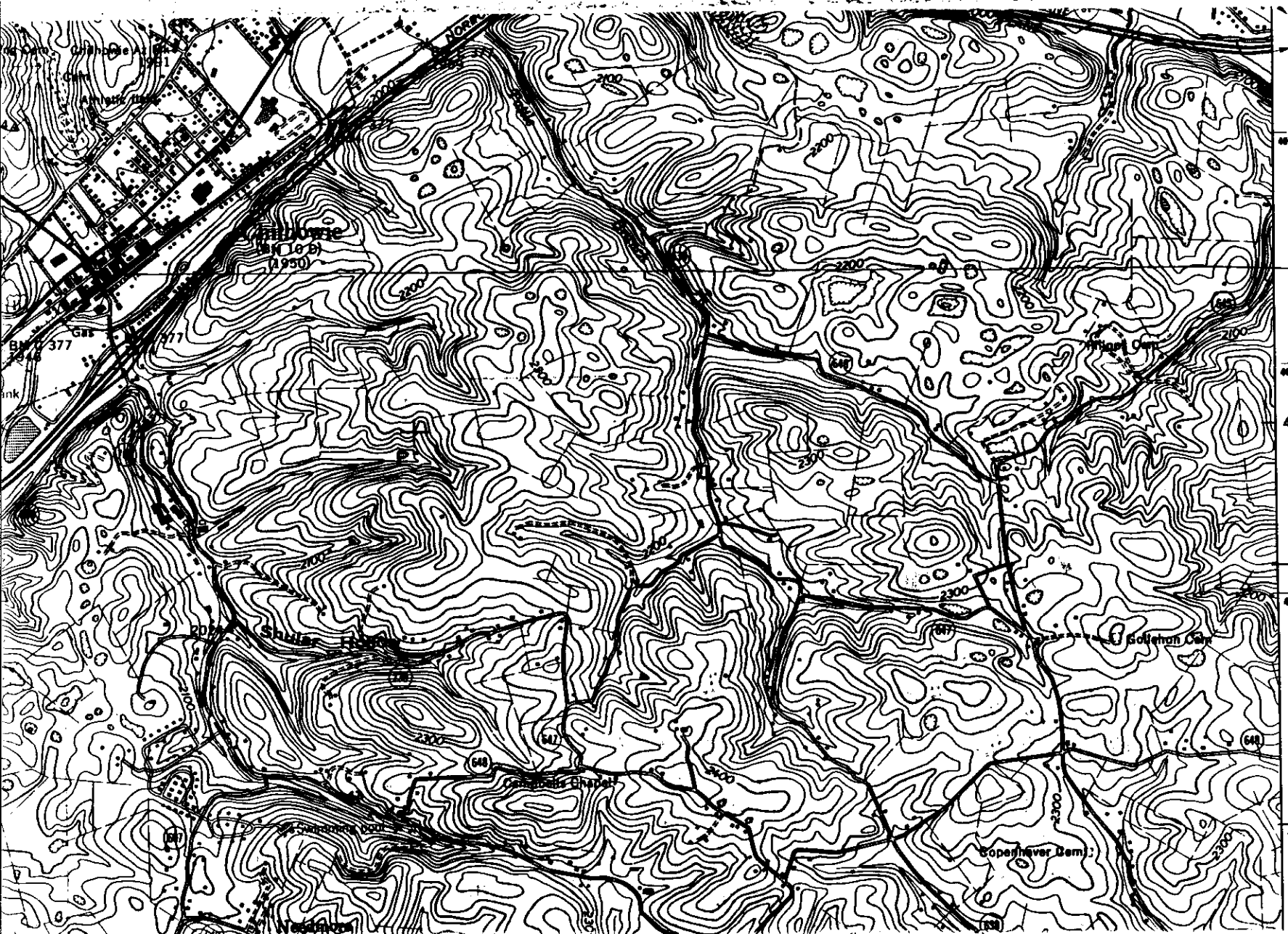


Exhibit B: District Boundaries (Noncontributing buildings shown in black)



Rainbow
Chilhowie
Historic District
SMYTH CO., VA
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