

**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 **Buena Vista Downtown Historic District**
other names/site number VDHR File No. 103-5055

2. Location

street & number principally 2000 & 2100 blocks of Magnolia Ave. and adj. blocks not for publication N/A
city or town Buena Vista vicinity N/A
state Virginia code VA county Buena Vista (Independent City) code 530 zip code 24416

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 8/11/09
Signature of certifying official Date
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

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

Signature of commenting official/Title 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] Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper
Date of Action 9.30.09

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>38</u>	<u>8</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>3</u> objects
<u>39</u>	<u>14</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

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</u>	Sub: <u>business</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>specialty store</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>department store</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>financial institution</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>warehouse</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>COMMERCE</u>	Sub: <u>business</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>specialty store</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>department store</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>financial institution</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>warehouse</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

- Second Empire
- Classical Revival
- (see continuation sheet)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Stone, Brick, Concrete
- roof Slate, Metal, Asphalt
- walls Brick, Stone, Wood, Concrete, Metal, Stucco
- other Glass, Vinyl

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

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District

Buena Vista, Virginia

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)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMERCE
GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance 1889-1959

Significant Dates 1889

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Wetmore, James A.

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

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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(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 # _____

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District

Buena Vista, Virginia

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency

- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property approximately 10 acres

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

Zone	Easting	Northing									
1	17	644780	4	17	6447600	2	17	645100	4	17	645140
3	17	645140	4	17	645140	3	17	645140	4	17	644840
4	17	644840	4	17	644840	4	17	644840	4	17	644840

 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.)

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title J. Daniel Pezzoni

organization Landmark Preservation Associates date March 5, 2009

street & number 6 Houston Street telephone (540) 464-5315

city or town Lexington state VA zip code 24450

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Additional Documentation

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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)

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Property Owner

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

name Tim Reamer, Director of Economic Development, City of Buena Vista (contact)

street & number 2039 Sycamore Avenue telephone (540) 261-8616

city or town Buena Vista state VA zip code 24416

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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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 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 National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 1

Historic Functions (continued)

COMMERCE: restaurant
SOCIAL: meeting hall
GOVERNMENT: city hall
GOVERNMENT: post office
EDUCATION: school
HEALTH CARE: clinic
LANDSCAPE: street furniture/object
DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

Current Functions (continued)

COMMERCE: restaurant
SOCIAL: meeting hall
GOVERNMENT: post office
LANDSCAPE: park
LANDSCAPE: street furniture/object
DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

Architectural Classification (continued)

Colonial Revival
Tudor Revival
Moderne

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 2

Description (continued)

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Buena Vista Downtown Historic District encompasses the historic central business district of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia. The nominated area of approximately ten acres follows two of the city's main commercial arteries—Sycamore and Magnolia avenues—for several blocks, and includes a portion of the downtown's principal cross street—21st Street—and portions of 20th Street and Forest Avenue. The district is bounded by railroad tracks and non-contributing development on the west side, and by largely historic development of residential character on the north, east, and south sides. The district topography is generally level with an elevation just over 1,800 feet above sea level, sloping gradually to the northeast. The level topography is due to the fact that the downtown area of Buena Vista was laid out on a river bottom on the east side of the Maury River, a tributary of the James. Visible across the Maury River to the west are steep wooded bluffs; to the east are the flanks of the Blue Ridge Mountains; and to the north is a hill on which is situated the 1890-91 Hotel Buena Vista, which is highly visible from the downtown.

The district includes a total of fifty-three resources. Of these, thirty-nine or 74 percent are contributing and fourteen or 26 percent are noncontributing. The contributing resources are principally buildings of masonry construction (brick, cinder block, and stone) and one or two stories in height. There are also one two-and-a-half-story contributing building and one three-story contributing building. Six of the district's surviving buildings were constructed during Buena Vista's economic boom in 1889 and 1890. Others were built during the 1900 to 1920 period and the 1940 to 1959 period, with a few constructed during intervening years. Most of the contributing buildings were built for commercial and/or office functions, although a few, such as the Buena Vista Post Office and the Buena Vista War Memorial Building, were more civic in function, and the Buena Vista Company Building served as the city hall for most of the historic period. The presence of multiple narrow, vacant lots is likely the result of some developers preferring such narrow lots to boost sales. Acquiring multiple adjacent lots to achieve the desired parcel size may have been a convenience for lot purchasers. In construction and style the commercial buildings are representative of their period, with characteristic details such as corbelled and patterned brickwork, sawn wood and pressed metal parapet and storefront cornices, and storefronts with large display windows and recessed entries. Party wall construction is common, and rear alley elevations are generally utilitarian in character. The noncontributing resources are principally buildings constructed after 1959, but they include a few historic buildings that are noncontributing on account of alteration, as well as two prefabricated modern car shelters, two modern signs, a modern gazebo, and a modern clock.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 3

Description (continued)

Building dates and functions are derived primarily from Sanborn maps published in March 1894, January 1899, November 1904, August 1908, January 1915, August 1921, November 1928, and June 1945 (corrected 1928 map). Another source cited frequently in the inventory is Francis W. Lynn's history, *Buena Vista: The Bud Not Yet Blossomed* (Lexington, Va.: The News-Gazette, 1992). Mr. Lynn also provided information on many individual buildings. The Buena Vista Records of Partnerships Book 1 provided information on business tenants beginning in the early 1940s. Used, but cited only by date, are the *Lexington-Buena Vista-Natural Bridge-Glasgow-Brownsburg December 1963 Telephone Directory*, the *1974 Lexington Buena Vista (Rockbridge County, Va.) City Directory*, *The Parrimac* yearbooks of Buena Vista's Parry McCluer High School (various 1940s to 1960s editions), the *Maid of the Mountains* yearbooks of Buena Vista's Southern Seminary (various 1920s to 1960s editions), and VamaNet, the Virginia Mass Appraisal Network website (note: many VamaNet addresses appear to be inaccurate).

Inventory

The following inventory was ordered alphabetically by street name, then numerically by street address. Determinations of contributing (CB) and non-contributing (NB) were made based on the Areas of Significance (Architecture, Commerce, Government) and the Period of Significance (1889-1959). Resources noted as NB, therefore, were either built outside the period of significance or have no integrity left to represent the relevant areas and period of significance.

128 West 21st Street. Peoples Bank of Buena Vista. 1907. 103-5055-0001. CB.

The Classical Revival two-story brick building with parapet shed roof has recently (2008) had a modern façade removed to reveal the original front. The front features blond brick on the first story, red brick in the second story, and a blond brick parapet with decorative lozenge panels outlined in red brick. The first story has three elliptical archways, each with cast stone voussoirs. Originally the left and right archways were large windows with the center archway containing recessed entries to the building's various commercial and office spaces. The center arch has traces of the painted words "The Peoples Bank." Behind the arches are a partly recessed and angled aluminum and glass wall (almost flush in the west archway) and a raised flagstone pavement. At the northeast corner, facing the alley, is a baskethandle archway created in the 1960s. In the second story front are three tripartite windows with cast stone lintels with keystone motifs. There are traces above the first and second stories and at the top of the parapet of former pressed metal cornices. Other features include painted brick on the side and rear elevations, 1/1 sashes, a brick-veneered cinder block rear addition for a bank vault, and parging on the west side where the former Lehman Building once adjoined.

The Peoples Bank of Buena Vista, Inc., was chartered in February 1906 and soon opened at a temporary location. The bank purchased the site in early 1907. When its bank building was

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 4

Description (continued)

completed later in the year it also housed the post office, which had been deprived of its location in the Colonnade Building across the street when that building burned in March 1907.

Advertisements in a 1909 newspaper noted that the building also housed the offices of dentist Dr. R. W. Williams and lawyers R. H. Willis and A. W. Robertson. After the post office moved out a millinery shop occupied the vacated space on the east side of the building. Later occupants were a doctor office and Mildred's Beauty Shop (both on the second floor) and Central Fidelity Bank (after 1974). The façade was first altered before 1955. In the 1960s the building's first story was given a modernistic arcaded treatment and a windowless tile façade was added above. The building flooded in the mid-1980s and has stood vacant since that time. It is currently (March 2009) in the process of rehabilitation as the Buena Vista branch of Community Bank.

131-141 West 21st Street. Dickinson Building (east part). Ca. 1907. 103-5055-0002. CB.

The two-story building has a parapet shed roof and is constructed of brick laid in 1:5 American bond. The brick on the front has a honey color; that on the east side is more red in color, and used three lots of brick in slightly different colors; and the brick on the rear is salmon color. The front second story features embayed surfaces with corbel and dogtooth courses at the top and segmental-arch openings in the parapet, most of which have decorative brick infill but the two westernmost with screens. The second-story windows on the front, east side, and back have segmental heads and wood 1/1 sashes. The three storefronts have been altered, although the second-floor entry between the 131 and middle storefronts retains an original dentil cornice and transoms and an original or early wood-framed glass door. The 131 storefront has recent vinyl-sided infill, a recessed entry, a multi-pane window, a Bank of Botetourt ATM, a pent awning, and a tall transom with translucent glass. The 135 storefront has recessed and angled aluminum-framed plate glass and a surround of light blue-green enameled metal panels dating to the mid-twentieth century. The 141 storefront has recessed and angled aluminum-framed plate glass and a modern metal panel surround.

The original building at the location was the Hotel Colonnade, built in 1890, an impressive three-story brick building with the post office and four stores on the first floor and hotel rooms on the second and third floors. Buena Vista's first city offices opened in the building in 1892. The building burned in 1907 and was replaced with the present building by August 1908, according to Sanborn maps. Brick from the 1890 building may have been reused, as suggested by different brick lots used in the construction of the east elevation, and a tooled limestone pilaster base next to the second-floor entry may also come from the 1890 building. Historic photos indicate the present building was originally part of a single commercial block that included 149 West 21st. Occupants in 1908 were a dry goods store (131), a drug store (135), and a dry goods and clothing store (141). A 1909 photograph in Francis Lynn's history (p. 51) shows part of the storefront of 131, with a dentil cornice like the one that survives over the adjacent

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 5

Description (continued)

second-floor entry, and the words "Rhodes" and "Dry Goods" on the awning that shaded the storefront. This business, known as Rhodes and Cosby in 1909, was later known as Joe Cosby's store or Cosby's Store, which occupied 131 in 1924 (Lynn, p. 87). In later years a department store occupied 131. In 1974 131 was occupied by the Jane Colby Outlet Store, 135 by the Shirley and Brown Drugstore (an occupant of the building since at least 1909), and 141 by the Columbia Gas Company of Virginia. Currently Mariner Media (131), Fitness Junction (13X), and Hamilton Personnel Services (141).

149 West 21st Street. Dickinson Building (west part). Ca. 1907. 103-5055-0003. CB.

The two-story building has a parapet shed roof and is constructed of brick laid in 1:5 American bond. The brickwork on the second story of the front and west elevations is painted white, and it appears to have been relaid in the mid-twentieth century, whereas the salmon brick across the rear second story is unpainted. The windowless front second story is divided into two recessed bays with corbel and dogtooth courses across the top. The west second story has narrow metal-framed windows from the mid-twentieth century, and the rear second story has one original segmental-arch window and several later windows. A one-story flat-roofed modern addition with a drive-up teller window and canopy extends across the rear. The first-story front and west sides has a ca. 1949 Moderne facing of Indiana limestone panels above a dark green stone base with a recessed aluminum and plate glass storefront, a metal pent awning, and an ATM machine. The ATM machines occupies the location of an former entry which had a Moderne surround.

The original building at the location was the Hotel Colonnade, a three-story brick building with the post office and four stores on the first floor and hotel rooms on the second and third floors. The present building was built after the hotel burned in 1907 and appears in the August 1908 Sanborn map. A 1909 newspaper article identifies it as the west part of the Dickinson Building, presumably named for T. T. Dickinson, a bank director and owner (with his brother) of a department store located in the building. Historic photos show the building as almost identical in character to the present appearance to the east part of the building at 131-141 West 21st. The corner space formerly had round-arch windows and entries on the first story rather than storefronts, features associated with its original function as the Manufacturers and Merchants Bank. A Masonic lodge met in the upstairs, and lodge use may explain the fact that the second story was modified to remove the windows. The street-level façade was apparently remodeled in 1949, presumably for the First National Bank, which occupied the building in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, with a subsequent remodeling to the current appearance. The second story was remodeled after 1957. Currently Bank of America.

211 West 21st Street. Ca. 1950. 103-5055-0004. CB.

The two-story building has a parapet shed roof and is constructed of brick laid in 1:6 American

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 6

Description (continued)

bond. The brick is stuccoed on the front above a metal mansard awning (a continuation of the awning from the adjacent building at 2101 Sycamore). In the front second story and on the back are industrial metal-framed windows. Other features include a ceramic parapet coping, and, to the rear, a second-story freight door opening and first-story glass block windows and an entry with a replacement door. Rowland's Jewelry was located here in 1957, the Lomax Flower Shop in 1963, and the Serv-N-Save Fabric Shop in 1974. Currently J&C's Upholstery Shop.

215 West 21st Street. Buena Vista Cleaners Building. Ca. 1950. 103-5055-0005. CB.

The one-story building has a parapet shed or flat roof and a painted stretcher-bond brick façade. Other features include a storefront with plate glass windows below narrow glass block transoms, an entry with a modern Colonial Revival fluted surround, and a dentil molding over the windows and entry. An original entry at the west corner of the building has been bricked up. Buena Vista Cleaners occupied the building in the 1950s and 1960s and the Lomax Flower and Gift Shop was the occupant in 1974. Currently James Allen Printing.

221 West 21st Street. Ca. 1950. 103-5055-0006. NB.

The one-story building, presumably of masonry construction, has a parapet flat or shed roof and a vinyl-clad façade with an entry with a modern replacement door and plate glass windows with fake shutters under a canvas awning. Tax consultant S. Adraina Whiteside had his office in the building in 1974. Currently James Todd Jones Attorney (a business established in 1977) and Maury River Title Agency.

227 West 21st Street. Myers and Gilkeson Building. 1890. 103-5055-0007. CB.

The three-story building has a parapet shed roof and is constructed of brick laid in 1:5 and 1:6 American bond. The building is notable as one of the city's best-preserved commercial buildings from the years of initial urban development; for its height—it is the only one of the city's several three-story historic commercial buildings to survive; and for its ornamental cast-iron storefront surround and traces of early painted signage. The signage is extensive, albeit faded. The front signage, which is not shown on the earliest photograph of the building but was in place by 1909, consists of the name "Myers & Gilkeson" above the third-story windows with segmental eyebrow-like motifs above. The word "Hardware" appears below the third-story windows, and goods carried by the store filling in the eight spaces between and next to the six total second- and third-story windows, with principally building supplies in the third story (sash, doors, blinds, builders supplies) and other items such as roofing, fencing, plows, iron pipe, glass, nails, razors, etc. in the second story (some of these words are no longer discernable due to fading but appear in historic photos). The painting is done in black, white, yellow, and possibly green and includes underlines and other flourishes. The east side is also extensively painted with the word "Hardware" at the top (partially missing, suggesting the third story has been partially removed)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 7

Description (continued)

and an advertisement for Bull Durham tobacco below. On the west side are traces of painted signage reading H. L. Gilkeson Sporting Goods and an advertisement for Coca Cola.

The ornamental cast-iron storefront surround is largely intact although the storefront itself was altered in the second half of the twentieth century. The surround features pilasters with decorative capitals and middle bands with sunburst and trefoil ornamentation, and a cornice with carved wood end blocks. The storefront has multi-pane display windows flanking a center entry with double wood and glass panel doors under a hipped awning. The building has multiple segmental-arch window openings, some boarded up but most with wood 2/2 sashes. The first-story west side has small windows set high on the wall. A long metal fire escape stair extends from the third story to the ground on the west side.

Lexington businessman Henry H. Myers, the senior partner in the firm of Myers and Gilkeson, acquired the lot in a series of transactions beginning March 28, 1890. The deed from the Buena Vista Company required that the building be three stories in height, of brick construction, and have a "handsome front." A May 1 deed noted that the building was under construction. The foundation and cellar pit are pictured in a July 5, 1890, article on Buena Vista in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (the photo was likely taken in the spring of 1890). Myers and Gilkeson opened for business in the building in September 1890 (earlier they had operated out of the Myers Building at 2161-2163 Magnolia.) Early photos show that the eyebrow-like painting at the top filled the spaces between the ornate brackets of the original cornice, which has been replaced by a brick extension of the parapet. The storefront was sheltered by a permanent awning on slender posts, and a wood stair rose on the west side in place of the present metal stair. A photo on page 90 of Francis Lynn's history, possibly taken in the early 1890s, shows the storefront with paneled aprons under the display windows and decorative mullions (perhaps cast iron) between the panes of glass and the recessed center entry. Harry L. Gilkeson, the other partner in the firm, is shown in the photo with two Gilkeson ladies. The hardware store may have been a branch of the hardware, saddlery, and wagon business A. M. Nelson and Company, which included the partners H. H. Myers, A. M. Nelson of Roanoke, and W. H. Gilkeson of Culpeper. Sporting goods, housewares, and notions were offered by the store in addition to its principal line of building supplies. Local tradition states that the Bull Durham advertisement formerly included an anatomically detailed depiction of a bull that some ladies in town found offensive. In later years a general store occupied the first floor and apartments are indicated for the upper floors. The Mace Furniture Company occupied the building in 1963 and Carpet Outlet occupied the building in 1974. Currently vacant.

2019 Forest Avenue. Robey Garage. 1916. 103-5055-0008. CB.

The large one-story building has an original south section constructed of 1:6 American-bond

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 8

Description (continued)

brickwork with brick and brick-faced cinder block additions on the north side. The original section features a gable/hip roof sheathed with shingle-pattern metal. A stepped parapet hides the west gable end and the east hip rises behind a flat false front with decorative zigzag corbelling. There are six-pane and 6/6 windows on the south elevation as well as multiple small windows that have been bricked up. (The small windows are reminiscent of the openings provided for horses in the stables of the era.) Also on the south elevation are traces of penciling under the eaves and a Star Sprinkler Company alarm. On the west end are windows attached to an elaborate sprinkler system with deflection plates over the windows (the system was probably intended to protect a hotel formerly located directly across the alley). The poured concrete foundation has concrete-infilled doors and windows and, on the south side, tongue-and-groove freight or garage doors. The front end of the original section was removed to create a covered gas station drive-through, probably in the 1930s or 1940s, and the corner reinforced as a concrete pillar. The north additions have large plate glass and aluminum display windows (perhaps for a former showroom) and, at the north end, a wood and glass garage door and large glass block windows. The north elevation has nine garage bays, one of which has a wood and glass garage door, the other with metal and glass doors that appear to be replacements.

In 1890 W. T. Robey and Brother built a frame livery stable at the site. Historic photos show this to have been a simple weatherboard-sided frame building. Robey later described his business as “established in 1890 with four horses.” The stable was well situated to provide mounts and conveyances to guests of the Palace (later Marlbrook) Hotel, which stood at the adjacent corner of Magnolia Avenue and East 20th Street. In 1916, according to VamaNet (between 1915 and 1921, according to Sanborn maps), the livery stable was replaced by the original south part of the present brick building, which is labeled on the 1921 map as a repair shop and automobile garage with a capacity of thirty cars. An attached livery stable and wagon shed continued to provide the older forms of transportation to clients, and the multiple openings on the south elevation suggest the brick section may have housed horses initially. A first addition was made on the north side between 1921 and 1928 (the stable was discontinued during the same period). In 1928 the business advertised “cars for hire” in the Southern Seminary yearbook. By 1945 the brick-faced cinder block sections of the building had been constructed along Forest Avenue and in subsequent years the rear cinder block additions were completed. Auto sales had become a prominent aspect of the business by the 1940s. A 1936 photograph in Francis Lynn’s history (p. 89) shows the back of the building with the present stepped parapet. The business was apparently known as Robey’s Garage (sometimes spelled Roby’s Garage) or Robey Motor Company. Currently Courtesy Ford Mercury.

a. Sign. Ca. 2000. **NB** Object. Large modernistic metal construction with an elliptical sign and the Ford logo.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Description (continued)

2045 Forest Avenue. McCormick and Sons Farm and Garden Store. 1945. 103-5055-0009. CB.

The one-story cinder block building has a stretcher-bond brick veneer façade with a stepped false front that screens an asphalt-shingled front-gable roof. Other features include a wood-framed glass door flanked by large plate glass and aluminum display windows with translucent transoms, industrial metal-frame side windows, and evidence that the rear part of the building is an early extension. E. McCormick and Sons operated its farm and garden store in the building in 1957. According to the McCormick family, the building was constructed in 1945. Currently Renew-Crete Systems.

2071 Forest Avenue. Buena Vista Post Office. 1930. 103-0007; 103-5055-0010. CB.

The one-story Colonial Revival building is constructed of English-bond brickwork with Indiana limestone trim and understated brick quoins. The hip roof, which is screened by a low brick parapet, is sheathed by variegated purple and green slate shingles. The dominant feature is an Indiana limestone portico on four Corinthian columns with rectangular pilasters of similar character against the building wall. The iron railings between the columns and leading down the front steps have small urn finials. The pediment has horizontal and raking denticulation above bands of tendril and lozenge carving, and the inscription "United States Post Office" on the entablature. The portico base, which is treated to simulate ashlar masonry, has granite column bases and a quarry tile floor. The wall inside the portico is stuccoed as a background for a stone entry surround with fluted pilasters, a denticulated cornice, and a center frieze tablet. Above the replacement double glass and aluminum doors is a large multipane transom. Flanking the portico and on the sides of the building are large wood 12/12 windows with stone jack-arch lintels with keystones. The windows have molded stone sills, and between them and the denticulated cornice above are decorative stone panels. Surrounding the building are various light wells and a north basement entry supplied with pipe railings. The cornerstone identifies James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect. To the rear is a brick-veneer wing and a covered loading dock that appear to have been added in the 1950s or 1960s. A concrete handicap ramp on the south side is designed to harmonize with the building. The lawn around the building is demarcated by a concrete curb.

1913 Magnolia Avenue. Shewey Supply Company Store. Ca. 1950. 103-5055-0011. CB.

The one-story building has a parapet shed roof and cinder block construction faced with textured and painted stretcher-bond brick on the south, north, and east sides. The large plate glass and aluminum display windows have translucent transoms and brick aprons that step back in order to slightly recess the windows. Some window openings are covered with T1-11 siding. There is an angled corner entry under a small shed roof supported by decorative brackets and with shaped rafter ends. Other

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 10

Description (continued)

features include small rectangular openings in the parapet, a signage panel in the south parapet, and a secondary entrance at the north end of the east side under a modern hipped metal awning and a signage panel painted with the inscription "Loughhead building supply." A short section of cinder block wall connects the southwest corner to the adjacent warehouse. The hardware store of the Shewey Supply Company occupied this corner for many years before World War II. The present store building does not appear to be shown in its present form on the 1945 Sanborn map, although that could be an error in mapping. Currently Cindy's Stuff.

a. Warehouse. Ca. 1950. **CB.** The one-story painted cinder block building has a metal-sheathed front-gable roof, metal-framed industrial casement windows, wood and metal freight or garage doors on rollers, vinyl siding over wood in the gables, and a brick flue near the ridge.

b. Shed. Late 20th c. **NB.** The building supplies storage shed has two sections. The east or front section, which was in existence by 1980, has corrugated metal siding and a metal-sheathed gable roof. The long back section has a corrugated metal gable roof, wood and T1-11 siding, and an asphalt-shingled awning over the multiple doors and openings on the south side.

1953 Magnolia Avenue. Buena Vista War Memorial Building. 1954. 103-5055-0012. CB.

The one-story Moderne building has a parapet shed or flat roof and cinder block construction with a stretcher-bond brick veneer with occasional stretcher-header courses. The entry has double-leaf wood-framed glass doors contained in a deep recess. The recess is in a façade element that projects in front of and above the front elevation. Over the recess is a glass block transom, a circular glass and metal sign suspended from a standard, and a recessed panel with basketweave brickwork. Bronze plaques flank the recess. The left plaque has the name of the building; the right plaque lists servicemen who died in conflicts from World War 1 through Vietnam. On the front elevation are tall, metal-framed, stack-pane windows. South and north side windows were bricked up in the late twentieth century. A lower wing, perhaps an added kitchen, extends from the southwest back corner and has a small rear frame vestibule, perhaps an enclosed porch. A brick, metal, and concrete handicap ramp was added to the front in the late twentieth century. The building has a poured concrete foundation. The Floyd Davidson (or Floyd-Davidson) Post No. 126 of the American Legion, organized in 1920, was named after sodiers C. Rudolph Floyd and Elbert Davidson, who died in World War I. The Post's early activities centered mainly on assistance to disabled veterans and their dependents, but tree-planting campaigns and boy scouts support were other activities. The building, also known as the American Legion War Memorial Building, opened in January 1955, and has provided meeting space for city residents ever since.

a. Sign. Ca. 2000. **NB** Object. Constructed of brick with an illuminated signage panel. The present sign may replace another, smaller sign at the same location.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 11

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Description (continued)

1973 Magnolia Avenue. Glass's Service Station. Ca. 1935. 103-5055-0013. CB.

The Tudor Revival one-story service station has an asphalt-shingled cross-gable roof and textured stucco over frame or masonry construction. The front gable engages a drive-through on rectangular pillars, and it has a pent with exposed rafter ends. Originally the pillars extended above the roofline and were topped by globe-shaped elements, possibly light fixtures. A short roofed but open-sided hyphen connects to a ca. 1960 repair garage of cinder block construction with two vehicle bays with modern metal and glass garage doors, a parapet shed roof, a rear cinder block flue, and a modern prefab metal shed added to the rear. Other features include 1/1 and fixed windows, an interior brick flue, and exposed rafter ends. Dan Glass ran this station in 1956. Thomas Cash operated it as the Buena Vista Amoco Station in 1958, apparently under lease for Glass. The building was operated as Sheltman's Amoco Service Station in the late twentieth century. Currently Blue Ridge Auto Center.

2013 Magnolia Avenue. Page and Son Building. 1920. 103-5055-0014. CB.

The one-story building has a parapet shed roof and is constructed of brick laid in 1:6 American bond. The parapet is divided into short and long bays with decorative corbelling below rectangular vents and a pressed metal cornice with decorative end elements with rounded tops and the inscription "Page & Son." The present aluminum and plate glass storefront dates to 1966 or 1967 and is shaded by a canvas awning. The original storefront had a prism glass transom; inside there was formerly a mezzanine. The stepped side parapets have ceramic copings and brick flues. Two cinder block additions extend the building to the alley. The building was built for Lloyd Page Sr. in 1920 to serve as a print shop and the office of Page's *Buena Vista News*. A 1936 photograph in Francis Lynn's history (p. 89) shows the back of the building with two tall two-over-two windows to each side of an entry (presumably the large windows were intended to provide illumination for the print work inside). Lloyd Page Jr. published the newspaper until about 1990; the paper was later acquired by the *Rockbridge Weekly*. The building was flooded to a depth of five feet during Hurricane Camille in 1969. Mike and Pat Ohleger purchased the building in 2006 and opened the Uncorked wine shop here in 2007.

2027 Magnolia Avenue. Ca. 1945. 103-5055-0015. CB.

The one-story cinder block building has a stretcher-bond brick veneer façade and a parapet shed roof. The storefront features aluminum and plate glass display windows flanking a recessed entry. Other features include a ceramic parapet coping and a wainscot-like vinyl cladding on the south side. A building, presumably this one, is identified as a store on the 1945 Sanborn map. Currently Aaron's (south part).

2028 Magnolia Avenue. Causey Cleaners Building. Ca. 1950. 103-5055-0016. CB.

The two-story cinder block building has a permastone front and a metal-sheathed parapet shed roof.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 12

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Description (continued)

In the second story is a large picture window with smaller side windows (possibly casements). The much-altered storefront features plate glass windows and modern doors under an original suspended awning with a fluted aluminum fascia. The first story extends back to the alley but the second story extends only a third to a half of the way back. On the alley are two garage bays, one with an original wood and glass overhead garage door. The building was occupied by Dwight E. Causey's Causey Cleaners in 1963 and by Yelverton Cleaners in 1974. It appears to have been built as a cleaners. In recent years the building housed Cindy's Stuff. It is currently vacant.

2037 Magnolia Avenue. Chamberlin Building. 1890. 103-5055-0017. CB.

The two-story building is constructed of mostly 1:5 American bond brick with a mid-twentieth century brick façade. The façade is featureless above the storefront, which has aluminum and plate glass display windows and a recessed entry. The parapet shed roof has a ceramic coping. On the north side, where the original ca. 1890 brickwork is most visible, there is a pattern of red and purple brickwork that may represent the use of different brick lots in construction, as well as bricked up segmental-arch windows. A ca. 1950 two-story cinder block rear addition has a suspended loading dock awning.

C. A. Chamberlin Jr. opened his "fancy grocery store" Chamberlin and Company in the building on December 1, 1890, a date that presumably represents completion of the building. He had established his business on Factory Street in May 1890. A photo from the early 1890s shows the building with a bracketed pressed metal cornice that formed a peaked cresting at the middle flanked by urns. The Clothing House store was the early or original occupant of the north store space and the Chamberlin and Company occupied the south store space. The building is identified as a furniture store on the 1894 Sanborn map, although two of its three storefronts were vacant that year. Activity had picked up by 1899 when a stove store, hay and feed store, tailor, and warehouse are shown as occupants. R. A. DePriest, whose name may have appeared in the former cornice cresting, ran the stove store with sidelines in tin working, slate roofing, painting, plumbing, and the installation of home heating systems. In 1908 DePriest's stove store remained but the other spaces were used by a plumbing shop and a Chinese laundry. A moving pictures theater occupied the south half in the 1920s. In 1945 the northernmost of the three store spaces was identified as selling wallpaper and paint, and a two-story storage addition had been made to the rear. The rear cinder block addition replaces a two-story frame addition of similar form that was in existence in the 1890s and may have been original. The Dollar General Store occupied the building in 1974. Currently Aaron's (north part).

2040 Magnolia Avenue. Peebles Department Store (former). 1969. 103-5055-0018. NB.

The large and low one-story building is constructed of cinder block with a stretcher-bond brick

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 13

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Description (continued)

vener across the front. There are long ranges of aluminum and plate glass display windows interrupted by two recessed entry bays which feature modernist pylon-like supports. Other features include a ceramic parapet coping and a permanent cantilevered awning. It is possible the south end of the building is an early addition, or the building's original section. The building occupies the site of the early twentieth-century Rockbridge Theatre. In 1963 Peebles Department Store appears to have occupied the former theater building. Peebles advertised as "Buena Vista's Largest and Most Complete Department Store." Wilford P. Ramsey acquired the property in 1968 and a dramatic increase in the value of buildings on the lots suggests the construction of the present building in 1969. Currently Magnolia Mall.

2043 Magnolia Avenue. Ca. 1955. 103-5055-0019. NB.

The one-story cinder block building has a parapet roof, a recessed modernist façade with a stretcher and stack-bond brick veneer, a cantilevered bay window with vinyl sheathing and a large picture window, and an asphalt-shingled mansard awning. Decker's Barber Shop was located at this address in 1974. Considering the building's small size, a barber shop may have been the original use. The building is currently vacant.

2047 Magnolia Avenue. Ca. 1950. 103-5055-0020. CB.

The two-story building is constructed of cinder block with a random American bond veneer on the front. The parapet shed roof has a slightly raised section of parapet on the front. The 1/1 windows in the front second story are vinyl replacements. A suspended metal awning shelters the reworked storefront, which features Neo-Victorian wooden elements such as pilasters with Corinthian capitals, segmental window heads, and dentil moldings. The recessed plate glass and aluminum entry may date to original construction. A one-story cinder block and plywood addition extends to the rear. In 1974 the building was occupied by the Electronic Center Service and in recent years it housed Alexander's restaurant.

2055 Magnolia Avenue. Royer's Restaurant. Ca. 1940. 103-5055-0021. CB.

The one-story building has original 1:5 American bond brickwork on the south side elevation and modern variegated brown and honey-colored stretcher-bond brickwork on the front. Other features include plate glass and aluminum display windows and entries, jalousie transoms over the entries, an illuminated awning, a ceramic coping on the front parapet of the parapet shed roof, and a cinder block rear elevation. The 1945 Sanborn map shows the building as a restaurant. Royer's Restaurant, founded ca. 1929, also known as the Town House Café, occupied the location in the 1950s and 1960s and billed itself as a cafeteria in 1969. The Western Auto Associate Store was located here in 1974. The apparently original façade brickwork was hidden with siding in the 1960s but has since been revealed. Currently Original Italian Restaurant.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 14

Description (continued)

a. Car shelter. Late 20th c. **NB** Structure. Prefab metal.

2062 Magnolia Avenue. 1960s. 103-5055-0022. NB.

The one-story cinder block building has a stretcher-bond veneer on the front, aluminum and plate glass windows and a recessed entry, and a ceramic coping on the front roof parapet. Scottie Discount Stores occupied the building in 1974. Currently E-Z Cash.

2066 Magnolia Avenue. Ca. 1921. 103-5055-0023. CB.

The two-story building has a stone first story and a frame second story with a false-fronted front-gable roof. The second story has vinyl siding on the front and asphalt-shingle siding—perhaps original—on the north side. A second-story porch, apparently a rebuilding of a porch that existed in 1945, extends along the south side to provide access to apartments from the back alley. The false front has brackets at each top corner and remnants of a wood cornice. The second-story windows have replacement vinyl sashes. The wood storefront cornice has decorative terminations and spans across a tall transom. Two entries flank a center display window, each entry in a recess with a curved glass block side. The building, identified as a store, is shown as “from plans” on the 1921 Sanborn map. A 1947 photograph in Francis Lynn’s history (p. 73) shows the front of the building with the present curved glass block and the earlier storefront cornice, transom, and false front. The second-story asphalt shingles continued across the front at the time, and the stone construction of the first story was still visible on the sides. The State Alcoholic Beverage Commission Store No. 162 occupied the building in 1963 and 1974, and the Moderne storefront remodeling may date to the opening of the ABC Store here in the 1940s. Currently Commonwealth Mortgage Group.

2067 Magnolia Avenue. Bibee’s Super Market. 1940. 103-5055-0024. CB.

The two-story building has textured stretcher-bond brickwork on the front and lighter colored brick on the sides. The front-gable roof is hidden behind a stepped front parapet. In the second-story are 6/6 vinyl replacement windows with fake muntins. An early suspended metal awning shades a storefront with aluminum and plate glass display windows flanking double recessed entries. The present storefront, which dates to the third quarter of the twentieth century, replaces an original storefront with a tall translucent glass transom and a different configuration of entrances. There are mail boxes for the two first-story stores and two second-story apartments. To the rear is a two-story vinyl-sided section. A store and bowling alley occupied the building in 1945. Bibee’s Super Market was in the building by 1949. In the 1950s a large neon sign depicting a female shopper projected from the façade. The Mack’s Stores Inc. department store was located here in 1974. Currently Tropical Sands Tanning (2067A) and Brown Deer Framing (2067B).

2073 Magnolia Avenue. Ca. 1952. 103-5055-0025. CB.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 15

Description (continued)

The one-story cinder block building has a stretcher-bond front veneer of textured pink brick and a ceramic coping on the front parapet. A suspended metal awning shelters aluminum and glass display windows and a recessed entry. Over the awning projects an illuminated octagonal metal and glass or plastic sign. A building is shown here on the 1945 Sanborn map, and in 1950 it had painted standard brick construction. The VamaNet website lists the date as 1952, so it is possible an earlier building was replaced by the present one that year. The First Exchange Bank of Virginia operated a branch office here in 1974. Currently State Farm Insurance.

2076 Magnolia Avenue. W. W. Mac Company Building. 1959. 103-5055-0026. CB.

The one-story building has a veneer of red and dark gray stretcher-bond brick over cinder block and a parapet flat roof with a ceramic coping. The storefront features aluminum and plate glass display windows flanking two recessed entries. The W. W. Mac Company variety store occupied the building in 1963 and the Family Dollar Store occupied the building in 1974. Currently Sports of all Sorts (south half), Ladies First (north half), and Bald Bear Outdoors (storefront at back of building opening onto East 21st Street).

2077 Magnolia Avenue. Advocate Building. 1889. 103-5055-0027. CB.

The two-story building of painted 1:5 American-bond brick has a parapet shed roof with pronounced decorative corbelling in the parapet. The second-story front, which is embayed, and the second story on the long north elevation have multiple segmental-arch windows with replacement vinyl sashes. Some of these openings may actually be former entries. The storefront on Magnolia dates to the mid-twentieth century and has plate glass and aluminum display windows and a recessed entry under a cantilevered awning. The multiple storefronts facing West 21st Street are more original in character, some with decorative wood cornices and wood display window and entry surrounds. Other features include star-shaped tie rod anchors and at least one second-story entry on the south side served by a modern wood porch and stair to the alley.

The *Buena Vista Advocate* is believed to have published its first issue in the building on December 13, 1889, and the inaugural issue has an advertisement for Mrs. W. H. Wolfe's boarding house in the "Advocate Building." J. W. Blackburn and others owned the building in 1891. Blackburn served briefly as Buena Vista's first mayor in early 1890. An early twentieth-century photograph in Francis Lynn's history (p. 88) shows the building with a storefront with large display windows opening onto Magnolia, and one or more large balconies, supported by posts, projecting over the sidewalk along West 21st Street. The balconies would have been consistent with use of the upstairs rooms as lodgings. One of the side shop spaces was occupied by the Lanum family jewelry shop before 1910 and possibly from the establishment of the firm in 1890. W. H. Lanum founded the company and was succeeded by his son John Henry Lanum Sr. and his grandson J. H. Lanum Jr. (d. 1996). The Lanum family has owned the building for many years but refers to it as the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 16

Description (continued)

Dixon Building after G. H. Dixon, the owner in the mid-twentieth century. The 1894 Sanborn map shows "hand printing" in the store space fronting on Magnolia (this would have been the *Advocate* office) and offices and a plumbing shop (but no jewelry shop) in the spaces fronting on 21st Street. In 1909 the building was known as the Showalter Building and was the location of the Showalter and Souder Grocery. The grocery, which presumably occupied the storefront on Magnolia, carried groceries, candy, fruit, vegetables, and Sucrene Dairy and Horse Feed. The front store space was later occupied by a butcher shop (possibly known as Mitchell's Market), by High's Ice Cream shop in the 1960s and 1970s, and recently by the Pedlar's Child Art Studio and Gallery. Store spaces and addressed doors facing West 21st Street include 106 (vacant), 110 (stair entry to second floor), 114 (Gifts 4 You 2 See), 118 (Just-a-Nibble Bakery and Café, formerly Lanum's Jeweler), and 122 (Kut 'N Up).

2110 Magnolia Avenue. Buena Vista Company Building. 1890. 103-0003; 103-5055-0028. CB.

The Second Empire style building is one of Buena Vista's preeminent architectural landmarks. The 1:5 American-bond brick building rises two stories to an attic story contained in the mansard roof. The roof is sheathed with slate shingles in square-edged and diamond-shaped courses and defined at its top and bottom by metal cornices (the lower cornice is supported by intermittent wooden brackets). Pedimented dormers project from the sides of the mansard, each articulated with decorative projecting wooden corner boards, and brick chimneys with large corbelled caps rise at various points. At the center of the front (west) elevation a brick tower rises through the roof, capped by a truncated pyramidal roof with small pedimented gables at the base of each of its four sides. The tympanums are sheathed with tongue-and-groove boards and have round louvered vents. The third story of the tower has an embayed face with corbelling at the top and flaring brickwork at its base. The first and second stories have large segmental-arch window openings with gauged arches of pressed brick, milled mullions, and 1/1 wood sashes. The west entry has double-leaf panel doors and a transom painted with the inscription "Buena Vista Co. Offices." It is sheltered by a small hipped roof on strut-like brackets and with slate sheathing and a diminutive front gable. The south side entry has a transom and a modern anodized aluminum and tinted glass door and sidelights. On the back are two one-story brick wings. The smaller south wing, which was used as a records vault, has a shallow-pitched gable roof. The larger north wing, which was the jail, has a flat roof. A change in brick color indicates the jail wing was enlarged at least once.

In October 1889 the Buena Vista Company announced it would erect an office building to replace the provisional office it occupied in the Factory Street area of town. The architect is at present unknown. Upon completion of the office building in May 1890 the Buena Vista Company moved into the downstairs, which it shared with the offices of the Buena Vista Iron Company and the Fire Clay Company. Real estate firms moved into offices on the second and third (attic) floors. The City of Buena Vista acquired the building and occupied it as a city hall and courthouse in early

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 17

Description (continued)

1895. An iron-clad “lock up” was built behind the building about 1900 and stood until it was replaced by the present jail wing (after 1945). The fireproof vault wing was added in the 1920s. The city offices vacated the building for the current municipal building in 1970. Demolition of the building was considered, but instead the city found new uses for the building such as the public library, which moved in in 1971, and the Chamber of Commerce, which was an occupant in 1974. Renovations were undertaken in 1989 and the present dark red and green trim colors adopted. Currently Buena Vista Public Library. The building is individually listed in the state and national registers.

a. Wall and drinking fountain. Ca. 1940. **CB** Structure. At the sidewalk corner of Magnolia and East 21st is a low wall of quarter-circular form constructed of sandstone river cobbles. At the center the stonework projects and creates an alcove for an ornate cast iron drinking fountain inscribed on the foot pedal with the name Murdock Manufacturing and Supply Company, Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1989 the Buena Vista Woman’s Club raised money to replace the fountain, but the current fountain appears to be the same one that has stood at the location since at least 1971.

b. Clock. Late 20th c. **NB** Object. Black-painted cast iron clock on a fluted post with a scrolled cresting and the inscription “City of Buena Vista” in gold-painted letters. The clock was manufactured by the Verdin Company of Cincinnati, Ohio. Between the clock and the front entry is a plaque on the ground commemorating a 1992 centennial time capsule.

2117 Magnolia Avenue. Park and concession stand. Late 20th c. 103-5055-0029. NB.

The park at the northwest corner of Magnolia and West 21st was created after the demolition of a boom-era brick commercial block. The park has planting beds formed by cinder block pavers. Its principal feature is a one-story restaurant (Franks for the Memories) assembled from prefabricated frame storage buildings. These have T1-11 siding, asphalt-shingle gable roofs, and concrete footers. A tent-like eating area projects from the front. The park occupies the site of the three-story brick Bank Building built in 1889-90 and torn down in the late twentieth century.

a. Gazebo. Ca. 1990. **NB** Structure. Octagonal form, asphalt-shingled pyramidal roof, wood posts, brackets, and sawn balusters.

2122 Magnolia Avenue. Coiner Building. Ca. 1905. 103-5055-0030. CB.

The two-story building has a stretcher-bond pressed brick façade and 1:6 American-bond sides and rear. The parapet shed roof has a bracketed pressed metal cornice with lozenge plaques between the brackets and the name “Coiner” in the center panel. Below this is decorative corbelling in the form of interlaced arches reminiscent of machicolation, with stucco infill and possibly terra-cotta detail. The second-story front windows have gauged jack arches of buff brick with keystones and impost

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 18

Description (continued)

blocks that appear to be cast stone. These windows have 2/2 sashes, as do the side and rear second-story windows, which have concrete lintels and sills as well. The aluminum and plate glass storefront, which dates to the 1960s or 1970s, features a suspended metal awning, a recessed entry, and a storefront transom covered with metal panels. It retains a concrete base or apron under the display windows that is scored to simulate masonry and may be part of the original storefront. On the north side is the ghost of a former two-story wing that may not have extended all the way to the front. Currently on this elevation is a modern one-story frame warehouse or garden center wing with T1-11 siding, an asphalt-shingled side-gable roof, and a front porch on treated wood posts. On the south side are high first-story windows indicative of former wall shelving on the interior. On the back elevation is a double-leaf freight entry with a blocked or painted over transom, a second-story entry formerly served by a stair and possibly a porch, and first-story windows with iron bars and upper, transom-like windows. The building first appears on the 1908 Sanborn map, labeled as a general store with a permanent one-story awning across the front and an exterior stair on the north side. Coiner's Hardware occupied the building in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s and was operated by V. H. Coiner in 1942. Coiner leased the building to Dickinson's Hardware in 1952 and Douty's Hardware in 1958. From the 1960s or 1970s until recently the building was known as Buena Vista Hardware. The side addition was made between 1980 and 1992.

a. Garage. Ca. 1920. **CB.** The one-story building of buff stretcher-bond brick construction has a metal-sheathed front-gable roof and wooden shed additions. The garage first appears on the 1921 Sanborn map.

2127-2131 Magnolia Avenue. Seay's Drugstore. 1957. 103-5055-0031. CB.

The one-story cinder block building has a permastone façade and a parapet flat roof with a ceramic coping. The two aluminum and plate glass storefronts reflect the division of the building into two stores. Each storefront has display windows flanking center entries with transoms, and they are sheltered by a cantilevered awning of Wrightian design with a stucco ceiling and recessed lights. The building has painted cinder block elevations on the rear and south side (the north side adjoins 2137 Magnolia). There are two rear entries under a corrugated metal shed awning. Seay's Drugstore vacated their location at the northwest corner of Magnolia and West 21st and moved here in 1957, where the store remained through 1974. Currently Becky's Country Casuals and Family Dentistry.

a. Car shelter. Late 20th c. **NB** Structure. Prefab metal.

2137 Magnolia Avenue. Virginia Markets Grocery. Ca. 1957. 103-5055-0032. CB.

The modernist one-story cinder block building has a stretcher-bond brick veneer and a parapet flat roof. A defining feature is a tall brick pylon that rises above the entry at the northeast corner, formerly used for signage. The display windows facing the street are Neo-Victorian in character,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 19

Description (continued)

with varnished tongue-and-groove-style wood sheathing and moldings. They are shaded by a canvas awning. The corner entry has a plate glass and anodized aluminum door and windows. The rear and partial south side elevations have painted cinder block walls. There is a small handicap ramp at the rear northwest corner. The rear elevation has a shed-roofed cinder block wing with plywood covering its door and windows and a mural showing sunflowers. There are two high glass block windows on the south elevation. "Class of 89" is written into a sidewalk along the alley and there are rear planting beds constructed of landscaping timbers. Virginia Markets, Inc., advertised as "Buena Vista's Newest and Most Modern Super Market" in 1957. Later occupants were Carolyn Hedrick's dress shop (the front windows were renovated in the late 1980s or early 1990s for the dress shop), and the Magnolia Center for the mentally disabled. The Maury River Senior Center (MRSC) opened in the building in March 2005.

2155-2157 Magnolia Avenue. Buena Vista Masonic Building. Ca. 1910. 103-5055-0033. CB.

The two-story building has a parapet shed roof and is constructed with a buff brick random-course American-bond façade and red brick in at least two lots on other elevations. The façade is capped by a pressed metal modillion cornice with fleur-de-lis motifs and bead-and-reel moldings. There are three divisions of the second-story façade: two large divisions corresponding to the double stores below and a narrow center bay above the street entrance to the second floor. The bays are recessed, with red brick corbelling at the top and forming segmental arches over the 1/1 second-story windows. The storefronts and center entry have simple wood cornices and canvas awnings. Both storefronts were altered during the mid-twentieth century, and have plate glass and aluminum windows and recessed entries and brick aprons. The 2157 storefront retains its original centered entry configuration whereas the 2155 storefront entry was shifted to one side. Illuminated signs above the second-floor street entry announce Buena Vista Lodge No. 186 and Rockbridge Lodge No. 125. The south side elevation has segmental-arch second-story windows and small high first-story windows. The windows on the rear elevation are bricked up and there are replacement doors and an added concrete fire escape.

The building was built between 1908 and 1915. It housed a hardware store in the south half and a print shop in the north half in 1915. In 1921 the building was identified as the "Public School Primary Department," indicating short-term use as an elementary school. In 1928 the post office occupied 2155 and a store occupied 2157. McCormick's Meat Market occupied 2155 and J. D. Copper occupied 2157 in the early 1940s. Rowland Jewelry occupied the building in the 1950s and 1960s. Valley Jewelers and the American Finance Corp. occupied the building in 1974. Currently the Nationwide/Hoffman Insurance Agency (2155), vacant (2157), and the two Masonic lodges on the second floor.

2159 Magnolia Avenue. Ladies Specialty Shoppe. Mid-20th c. 103-5055-0034. CB.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 20

Description (continued)

The one-story cinder block building has a stretcher-bond brick front and a parapet flat roof with a ceramic coping. A wood and plywood cantilevered awning shades an aluminum and plate glass storefront with a recessed entry. An illuminated sign that projects from the front parapet reads "Dollar Deal" in faded letters. The unpainted cinder block rear elevation has an entry with an overhead sign reading Ladies Specialty Shop. Miss Lena J. Finley's Ladies Specialty Shoppe sold dresses, millinery, and notions in the 1940s and "ladies and childrens ready to wear" clothing in the 1950s. The shop moved into this building in late 1959 or 1960 when it offered dresses, suits, coats, and sportswear for juniors, misses, and women. The VamaNet website gives the date as 1942, but it is possible the date is later, even as late as 1959-60.

2161-2163 Magnolia Avenue. Myers Building. 1889-90. 103-5055-0035. CB.

The two-story frame building has a stucco exterior and a shed roof. The slightly lower north section of the building is an early addition. A slight change in the roof plane of the original section may indicate that its rear part is also an early addition. The front parapet has rectangular vents below a wood cornice supported by large wood brackets with incised and applied floral ornaments. The wooden 2/2 windows in the second story have molded frames. The storefront is a mid-twentieth-century replacement, but it may preserve vestiges of the original wood storefront cornice. The storefront has aluminum and plate glass display windows with brick aprons, double-leaf wood-framed glazed doors below a transom, and a covered storefront transom. On the south side is a second-story rectangular bay window with a hip roof. On the north side is a second-story entry (formerly with an exterior stair, now gone) with an old screen door. To the rear is a two-story frame wing with T1-11 siding, a metal-sheathed gable roof, exposed rafter ends, and large freight openings currently fitted with T1-11 doors. The rear wing may incorporate the building's originally one-story warehouse, constructed by the spring of 1890. At the back of the north addition is a shed-roofed cinder block addition with boarded-up windows.

The December 13, 1889, issue of the *Buena Vista Advocate* noted that H. H. Myers, "the live hardware merchant of Lexington," was building a store on Magnolia Avenue. A business profile of the hardware store of H. H. Myers and H. L. Gilkeson published in the December 26, 1890, issue of the *Buena Vista Advocate* notes that the firm located in Buena Vista in October 1889 and "built the large framed house on Magnolia avenue, near 22nd street, which they opened with a fine stock of hardware. Finding the house inadequate they built a large brick building on 21st street near the depot." Since 2161-2163 Magnolia was the only building near the intersection of Magnolia and 22nd at the time, this is undoubtedly Myers' store. A photograph published in the July 5, 1890, issue of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* shows the building from the rear. It appears to have been sided with white-painted weatherboards, and it had a one-story rear warehouse sided with sheet iron painted a dark color. The building is labeled as a general merchandise store on the 1894 Sanborn map and a furniture store on the 1899 map. The addition was made to the north side between 1908

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 21

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Description (continued)

and 1915 and housed a plumber's shop the latter year. The exterior was covered with stucco by 1921. The rear warehouse was used as a garage in addition to storage by 1928. The Reems, Jones, and Graham furniture store, owned by J. I. Bray, was located here in the 1940s and ran a mortuary in the back. The Sportsman Restaurant was at this address in 1963 and Flint's Furniture in 1974. The Rockbridge Coffee Company had plans to open in the building in 2008 but has not done so and the building was for sale in early 2009.

2164 Magnolia Avenue. Ca. 1910. 103-5055-0036. CB.

The one-story brick building has a parapet shed roof with a wood cornice with fluted end brackets and a paneled frieze above decorative corbelling. The building has a pressed stretcher-bond brick front and painted 1:5 American-bond brick elevations on the south and rear sides. The storefront has a wood cornice with a decorative end bracket, wood-framed display windows with prism glass transoms, and a recessed entry with a replacement door and a boarded-over transom. Beside the storefront is a secondary entry with a tall transom. There are segmental-arch window and/or door openings on the back. The building first appears on the 1915 Sanborn map, labeled as a plumbing establishment. In 1921 an undertaker used the building. It is architecturally similar to 2166 Magnolia and may have been built by the same builder. Currently Pat's Beauty Shop.

2166 Magnolia Avenue. Valley Steam Laundry Building. Ca. 1905. 103-5055-0037. CB.

The two-story brick building has a parapet shed roof with a pressed-metal cornice with acanthus-like ornaments on the end brackets. The pressed stretcher-bond brick façade below is emabayed with decorative corbelling at the top. The second-story windows have concrete sills and lintels, the latter with an ogee-arched profile. These windows and others have replacement 1/1 metal sashes. The pressed-metal storefront cornice has end brackets with foliated decoration and finials. The storefront was remodeled in 2008-09 but the traditional form of its recessed entry, flanking display windows, and metal framing are in keeping with the building's historic character. The side and rear elevations are constructed of 1:5 American-bond brick, the brickwork on the north side consisting of at least three lots. Near grade at the front of the north side are traces of a painted sign that reads "Drink Coca Cola" and is signed "P. [R?] C. Maxwell Co. [Del.?.]" The renovation now in progress has added a one-story frame wing to the north side. The wing has a recessed connection to the original building. Additions to the rear include a wood and metal deck, a cinder block wing, and a second-story cantilevered enclosed porch that is a remodeling of an earlier enclosed porch. The building first appears on the 1908 Sanborn map labeled as the Valley Steam Laundry. The name had changed to City Steam Laundry by 1915. Current owner Brent Dryden undertook the renovation.

2101-2119 Sycamore Avenue. Sheridan Building. 1890. 103-5055-0038. NB.

The two-story building is constructed of brick and has a modern stucco or synthetic stucco exterior. A modern metal parapet conceals either a flat or shed roof. A metal mansard awning shades

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 22

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Description (continued)

replacement aluminum and plate glass windows and entries at street level. Other features include segmental-arch and square-headed second-story window openings with replacement sash and a less altered segmental-arch window on the north side.

The building appears to be the one referred to as the Sheridan Building in historic records. John Sheridan and S. H. Moore owned a \$5,000 building at the location in 1891. The foundation and cellar pit are pictured in a July 5, 1890, article on Buena Vista in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (the photo was likely taken in the spring of 1890). A ca. 1900 photograph in Francis Lynn's history (p. 86) shows the building in its original three-story form, with a storefront on the first story, a decorative cornice at the top, and painted advertisements including one on the (now concealed) west side for Blackburn Davis and Company Real Estate and Insurance. Lynn notes that the Palace Hotel occupied the upper stories at the time. In the 1920s the establishment was known as the Jefferson Hotel. White's furniture store occupied the building in the 1950s and 1960s and Whiteway, Inc., occupied it in 1974. The building was reduced to two stories before 1969 and the street-level windows and entries reworked after 1969. Currently Carpet Outlet (2101) and City Styles Salon (2119).

2127 Sycamore Avenue. Farmers and Merchants Mills Store. Ca. 1920. 103-5055-0039. CB.

The two-story masonry and frame building has a front-gable roof behind a tall false front. The false front has a pressed metal cornice above a buff brick parapet adorned with quoins, panels, and projecting cross motifs. The first- and second-story front is painted and has segmental-arch windows with denticulated arches in the second story and a small first-story office front with a large segmental-arch window and a segmental-arch entry with a wood and glass panel door. Most of the first-story front is taken up by a wood-framed storefront with transoms over the large display windows and center entry with double-leaf wood and glass panel doors. The south side elevation is concrete block for most of the first story, with small high glass block windows, and rock-pattern pressed metal sheathing and 2/2 windows on the second story. The north side elevation appears to be entirely rock-pattern pressed metal sheathing, with 2/2 windows on the second story and high windows on the first story.

The building was built between the 1915 and 1921 Sanborn maps and is labeled on the latter map as a hardware store and warehouse with an office in the front. The building appears to have served as the office and retail outlet for the Farmers and Merchants Mills industrial complex, which in 1921 included a flour/feed mill and a planing mill. Earlier the complex (minus the hardware store) was operated by the Shewey Supply Company. In 1928 the building housed a bakery that presumably used flour produced at the adjacent mill. The building may not have been metal-sided originally, although the brick front is original. Merchant Tom Dickinson, whose store was across the street, used the building as a warehouse in the 1940s. The Huffman Florist shop occupied the building in 1974.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 23

Description (continued)

2138 Sycamore Avenue. Medical Arts Pharmacy. Ca. 1958. 103-5055-0040. CB.

The one-story cinder block building has a parapet flat roof and a stretcher-bond brick front veneer. Other features include a suspended metal awning and a storefront with aluminum and plate glass windows that angle inward to create a recess for the entry. Pharmacist Charles F. Morgan Jr., who had been the pharmacist at the Shirey and Brown drugstore, began his own pharmacy and constructed this building. Morgan's Medical Arts Pharmacy was in operation by 1958, presumably in this building. The name suggests a connection with the Medical Arts Building across the street. Currently Quality on Tap.

2141 Sycamore Avenue. Medical Arts Building. Late 1940s. 103-5055-0041. CB.

The Colonial Revival one-story brick or brick-veneered building has an asphalt-shingled front/side-gable roof. The stretcher-bond brickwork is subtly detailed to form shallow corbelling under the eaves and a slightly projecting front entry surround. The entry has a replacement wood and glass panel door and sidelights. Most windows are wood-framed 6/6 although there are two glass block windows in the front gable end. Physician Robert R. Eason and Earl Starkey had this building constructed to house Eason's medical practice and perhaps for other tenants. Eason was in partnership with Dr. Thomas P. Hedrick in the 1950s. Doctors L. A. Micou and Leonard L. Davis Jr. also had offices in the building, in the 1950s, and attorney Sidney F. Parham kept an office there in 1974. Currently Career Café Job Resource Center.

2152 Sycamore Avenue. 1915. 103-5055-0042. CB.

The two-story building of 1:6 American-bond brick construction has a parapet shed roof with a pressed metal modillion cornice with fleur-de-lis motifs. The façade is constructed of blond brick with brown brick used to form a denticulated corbelled course under the parapet and segmental arches over the second-story 1/1 windows. The side and rear elevations have standard red brick, possibly in two or more lots. At the top of the south side is a faded historic painted sign for a super market (name illegible). On the north side is an old-fashioned-style modern painted sign for the current occupant, the Four Seasons florist shop. The storefront has plate glass and aluminum display windows flanking a recessed entry, all of which date to the mid-twentieth century. The storefront transom and side piers are covered with vinyl siding over stucco over brick. To one side is a street entry for the second floor with a replacement door. The rear elevation preserves early features such as a freight entry with double-leaf four-panel doors, a large transom, and covered sidelights; a small shed wing (possibly a cold storage room) with an entry and a segmental-arch window; and a two-tier porch with a plywood second-tier railing on which is a faded store name and possibly the General Electric logo. A second-story entry with a four-panel door and a transom opens onto the porch. Margaret D. Henkle constructed a building at this location in 1890. The building included a story-and-a-half frame livery stable to the rear. In 1904 the Henkle Building housed the fire department.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 24

Description (continued)

The present building appears on the 1915 Sanborn map labeled "being completed." It was identified as a store in 1915 and as a general store in 1921. The Mick-or-Mack Grocery occupied the building in the 1940s. John H. Dickinson's grocery occupied the building in 1963. Currently Four Seasons Florist and Gifts, established in 1979.

2156 Sycamore Avenue. Ca. 1960. 103-5055-0043. NB.

The one-story cinder block building has a stretcher-bond brick veneer on the front and a parapet flat roof. The storefront has aluminum and plate glass display windows that angle back to a replacement Colonial Revival entry with a wood and glass panel door and sidelights. An asphalt-shingled mansard awning shades the front. Currently Jackson Hewitt Tax Service. Note: The address number is out of sequence in relation to surrounding buildings. The building is located between 2138 and 2152 Sycamore.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 8 Page 25

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary Statement of Significance

The Buena Vista Downtown Historic District is eligible under Criterion A in the area of commerce as the historic business center of the City of Buena Vista, an example of the “boom towns” that sprang up in western Virginia during the late nineteenth-century. Buena Vista was established in 1889 at the juncture of two rail lines and convenient to timber and mineral reserves in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The city experienced rapid growth in 1889 and 1890 followed by more measured growth through the mid-twentieth century. The district is also eligible under Criterion A in the area of government for the presence of key institutional buildings such as the city hall and post office. The historic district is eligible under Criterion C for the quality of its architecture, which ranges from boom-era landmarks such as the 1890 Buena Vista Company Building, an individually registered Second Empire style brick office building, to commercial buildings erected from 1889 to the mid-twentieth century, many with decorative wood, brick, and metal detailing. The period of significance extends from 1889, the earliest date of surviving construction, to 1959 as its significance as a commercial and governmental center as extended to the present. The Buena Vista Downtown Historic District is eligible at the local level of significance as the civic heart of a prominent late nineteenth-century western Virginia boom town.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 8 Page 26

Statement of Significance (continued)

Historical Background

Buena Vista was a product of the rapid economic and urban development that swept western Virginia in the 1880s and which spurred the creation of new cities and the growth of existing communities. Virginia's "boom," as the development was known at the time, was spurred by the construction of rail lines into the Southwest Virginia/West Virginia coal fields and other resource-rich areas. The railroad expansion attracted Northern capital, and it led to the phenomenal growth of Roanoke, known as the Magic City, and points as far east as Norfolk, the state's main coal port. The *Richmond Dispatch* noted in 1891: "Virginia has had a 'boom.' New towns have sprung up in fields and forests. Old ones have grown greatly. Where we used to have few cities we now have many. It is an era of development of our iron and coal lands; of the planting of new industries, and the determination to make Virginia a manufacturing state." The development came late to Rockbridge County, in the waning years of the 1880s, but it sparked no less than four local booms in the pre-existing community of Lexington and the new communities of Glasgow, Goshen, and Buena Vista.¹

Buena Vista adopted its name from the antebellum Buena Vista Furnace, which stood nearby. Although true urbanization did not commence until 1889-90, development within the future city limits began in the early 1880s when the Shenandoah Valley Railroad (later absorbed by Norfolk and Western) and the Richmond and Alleghany line established a junction beside the Maury River. This led to the establishment of the village of Green Forest near the confluence of the river and Chalk Mine Run in the northern part of the present city. Businessman Benjamin C. Moomaw, the chief developer of Green Forest and a force in the creation of Buena Vista, penned a first-hand newspaper account of the events in 1909. "The next step [after the creation of the rail junction] was to lay out the town of 'Green Forest,'" Moomaw recalled, "which occupied the territory now covered by Beech Avenue, Factory Street, Canal Street, Brook Street, Alleghany Avenue and Twenty-ninth Street. Perhaps few of your readers know that a flourishing village preceded Buena Vista by several years, and that it was the rapid growth of this village which suggested to the writer the possibility of a much larger development. In addition to the tannery I had secured a canning factory, planing mill, pulp mill, and was reaching out after some other industries, but it soon became clear that unless large capital and good executive ability could be enlisted in the enterprise I would at best only have a village, with a few industries and a store or two." Moomaw was no doubt inspired in his enterprise by his older brother John C. Moomaw, who as a road agent for the Shenandoah Valley Railroad was instrumental in routing the line through Bick Lick and initiating the development of Roanoke in 1881.²

Over the Christmas holiday in 1888, Moomaw drafted a "prospectus for the city of Buena Vista." He enlisted Lexington/Rockbridge County business leaders C. F. Jordan and A. T. Barclay to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 8 Page 27

Statement of Significance (continued)

help build momentum for the plan. The Buena Vista Company was formed, followed by “two years of intense activity, laying out the town and getting in the industries,” Moomaw recalled. The Buena Vista Company hired W. J. Hurlbut, W. M. Dunlop, and a Mr. Wingate to lay out the town. Hurlbut, the principal town designer and soon Buena Vista’s city engineer, was an Illinois native who worked on railroad and land surveys in the West before moving to Virginia, where he subsequently served as Rockbridge County Surveyor in the mid-1880s. The town survey began on February 26, 1889, and produced a conventional grid plan extending to the south of the preexisting village of Green Valley on level ground known as Harts Bottom. The west flanks of the Blue Ridge Mountains rose precipitously from the city site, prompting a commentator to exclaim “It will be hard to find anywhere a fairer or more attractive site for building than this picturesque city, surrounded as it is, by scenery unsurpassed even in Switzerland.” To aid eager purchasers who might have wished to view lots in the dead of night, the development company is said to have “strung up thousands of light bulbs over fields plotted out as neighborhoods . . . It was the only place in Virginia, one visitor recalled, ‘where you could hunt bull frogs by electric light.’” The town plan defined multiple narrow lots along Magnolia and Sycamore avenues, a feature that implies dense commercial development was anticipated in those areas, and which presumably offered lot purchasers greater flexibility in how they developed their lots, since combining small lots to create larger building sites would have been easier than subdividing large lots to create smaller building sites. An early map labels the blocks between Sycamore Avenue and the railroad “reserved for industrial and manufacturing purposes,” although by early 1890 commercial development was permitted in the area, at least along the 200 block of West 21st Street in the historic district. The Hotel Buena Vista—grand hotels were a key aspect of the booms—opened July 1, 1889, on an elevated site overlooking the still mostly vacant town. (In later years the hotel housed Southern Seminary, followed by Southern Virginia College, and it currently serves as the main building on the campus of Southern Virginia University.) In October 1889 the Buena Vista Company announced it would erect its office building at 2110 Magnolia Avenue. Along with the establishment of the Union Depot of the Shenandoah Valley and Richmond and Alleghany railroads two blocks to the east, the construction of the company’s offices helped ensure that the connecting thoroughfare of 21st Street and adjacent blocks would become the commercial heart of the new city.³

In February 1890 the president of the Buena Vista Company reported: “Buildings are rapidly going up, two churches are finished, and a large number of dwellings and stores being constructed. The population is increasing rapidly, and the small village of fifty inhabitants of twelve months ago has grown to a town of over 1,000 people.” The *New York Sun* ran an article on the town the same month, and in the spring a correspondent with *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* visited Buena Vista and the region’s other boom towns. The Buena Vista segment of the July 5, 1890, *Frank Leslie’s* article, entitled “Buena Vista, the Industrial Wonder-City of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 8 Page 28

Statement of Significance (continued)

Virginia Valley,” included photographs of the historic district area with buildings under construction. Glowing official statements and press releases on the city’s prospects seemed to be backed up by statistics. Assessed building values tracked the city’s rapid growth, increasing from \$4,150 in early 1890, as recorded in county records, to \$450,350 the following year. From an estimated 400 inhabitants in January 1890 the population grew to an estimated 2,500 in January 1891, and the building stock increased from ninety-three dwellings and four stores in January 1890 to 409 dwellings and forty-four stores a year later. The need for housing is indicated by the existence of thirty “licensed boarding houses” in 1891.⁴

By the time these impressive population and construction figures were published in 1892, Buena Vista’s boom had ended. The region was glutted with town sites and industrial plants, and the nation as a whole was heading into the depression associated with the Panic of 1893. Historian Francis Lynn notes that lot sales dropped over 90% between a peak in October 1890 and February 1891. In November 1892 no lots were sold and over a thousand lots were to be auctioned for unpaid taxes. Buena Vista was not alone in experiencing the “bust” that followed the boom. As Francis Lynn puts it, “There were Buena Vista’s all across the nation that began to feel the crunch of tight money and inflexible credit.” Rockbridge County’s other boom towns suffered as well, and they have been singled out by historian Paul Dotson as an example of unsustainable speculation. Dotson’s claim that Buena Vista’s industrial potential was an “empty promise” is not accurate, but his description of the boom in nearby Glasgow as “the most over-hyped and flagrantly under-realized promotion” in the region is close to the mark. Glasgow’s fall was especially hard. The town was propitiously sited at the confluence of the Maury and James rivers, but the first lot sales did not take place until March 1890, late compared to other boom towns. Lack of capital shut down the nascent town’s industries in late 1891 and from 1892 to 1896 the value of the building stock fell nearly 70 percent. Abandoned factories were cannibalized for construction materials in later years, a situation reminiscent of the fall of Rome in antiquity.⁵

Compared to the fate of Glasgow and such communities as Bessemer in Botetourt County, which scarcely made it off the drawing board, Buena Vista weathered the economic downturn of the 1890s relatively well. The town gained city status in 1892 and prosperity returned in the first decade of the twentieth century, as indicated by an upturn in construction in the downtown. The masonry commercial buildings erected in the early and mid-twentieth century, which were smaller and generally more modestly detailed than those erected during the brief boom period, attest to the development of Buena Vista as a local market town and the Rockbridge County area’s chief industrial center. A ca. 1930 community profile enumerated 1,352 employees at twenty industries, chief among them the Buena Vista Textile Corporation (330 employees), the South River Lumber Company (250 employees), and the Columbian Paper Company (200

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 8 Page 29

Statement of Significance (continued)

employees). Lexington, by contrast, had no large-scale industry during the historic period. The historic district remained the city's principal commercial center through the 1950s. Of the thirty-six contributing primary buildings standing in the district in 1959, thirty-three had commercial associations and three had civic associations. (Two of the commercial buildings in the group had second-floor fraternal association space.) Beginning in the late 1940s, new businesses with an automobile orientation such as service stations and motels began to locate on highways at the periphery of the city, a development trend that gained momentum with the construction of suburban shopping plazas in the late twentieth century. Yet the downtown continued to serve as the city's commercial center, and it retains that status despite recent store closings. With a population of 6,482 in 2007, Buena Vista today ranks as the Rockbridge County area's second most populous community, behind Lexington (population 7,026). A recent development is the reorganization of Southern Virginia College as the Church of Latter-day Saints-affiliated Southern Virginia University. SVU has an enrollment of over 700 students and is headquartered in the former Hotel Buena Vista.⁶

Architectural Discussion

Buena Vista's brief boom period in 1889 and 1890 spawned a diverse architectural legacy that illustrates aspects of the city's early development. Six buildings in the district have been identified from the period. Listed in chronological order based on documented or deduced period of construction, these are the Buena Vista Company Building (2110 Magnolia; October 1889-May 1890); the Advocate Building (2077 Magnolia; late 1889); the Myers Building (2161-2163 Magnolia; late 1889-early 1890); the Sheridan Building (2101-2109 Sycamore; mid-1890); the Myers and Gilkeson Building (227 West 21st; mid-1890-September 1890); and the Chamberlin Building (2037 Magnolia; completed December 1890). Construction of these buildings did not begin until after Buena Vista's first lot drawing on May 22, 1889, which was intended to generate excitement and launch the boom. However, most evidence suggests construction activity in the district remained light through the end of the year. Speculation was probably the cause, and was in fact a concern of the city's promoters. On January 19, 1890, the editor of the *Buena Vista Advocate* urged his readers to "Build! Build!! Stop this everlasting speculation and go to building. A naked lot won't bring any rent, and has no real value except as the possible site of a building which would command a revenue." Two projects helped end the speculation in the downtown and establish the area as the city's commercial center. One was the construction of the Union Depot at the southwest corner of 21st Street and Sycamore Avenue beginning in the summer of 1889. The Union Depot and an associated freight depot allowed easy transfer of freight and passengers between the two rail lines that served the city, and it was a natural magnet for development. In October 1889 the Buena Vista Company announced it would construct a "handsome brick building three stories high" as its headquarters near the Union Depot. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 8 Page 30

Statement of Significance (continued)

imposing mansarded building was not occupied until May 1890, but as it rose on its site one block east of the Union Depot during late 1889 and early 1890, it undoubtedly signaled the development company's own faith in the boom.⁷

Construction of the Buena Vista Company Building may have been preceded by the Advocate Building, which was completed at the opposite corner of 21st and Magnolia by December 1889. The Advocate Building was apparently a project of Buena Vista's first mayor, J. W. Blackburn, and associates, and like the company's offices it was constructed of brick, a material favored for durability and fire safety, but architecturally it was a less sophisticated building. The severe two-story block was ornamented principally by a heavy corbelled cornice on its two street fronts. Originally it appears to have had more of a hotel appearance, with a series of balcony-topped porches on its 21st Street elevation. These may have been related to the use of the second floor as Mrs. W. H. Wolfe's boarding house. New residents flooded into the city during the period, and Mrs. Wolfe's lodgings business and others provided much needed short-term housing. The upper floors of the district's other boom-period buildings were presumably used for lodgings. Office space for realtors and professional men would have been another early use.⁸

Lexington merchant Henry H. Myers eschewed brick when he constructed his two-story store building near the intersection of Magnolia and 22nd Street beginning in late 1889. He chose less expensive wood frame construction. Perhaps Myers was reluctant to make a fuller commitment to the new city, a possibility also suggested by his choice of a relatively peripheral lot two blocks from the Union Depot. Or perhaps he considered his Magnolia Avenue store a "starter building" and intended to sell it at a profit as the city prospered. Whatever the case, Myers and his associate H. L. Gilkeson soon found the location "inadequate," according to a period newspaper account, and in September 1890 they relocated to a lot on 21st Street facing the depot. The Myers Building on Magnolia is also notable for its shed roof, a roof form that was common in the commercial architecture of the era but was usually concealed behind a decorative parapet in more refined buildings. Unconcealed shed roofs were frowned upon by the editor of the *Buena Vista Advocate*, who wrote in January 1890: "We think the time has come when all parties who build houses should have some well defined ideas as to something pretty in their style of architecture, and most especially would we urge upon our building associations to drop the low flat roof [ie. shed roof] now being used so much and give us something more sightly in its stead. We have no idea that a nice mansard roof, or a pretty Queen Anne style would cost a great deal more that the present one used, and they would be so much more attractive looking." The Myers Building is architecturally related to the cluster of shed-roofed boom-era commercial buildings on the 2500 block of Sycamore Avenue outside the district.⁹

Buena Vista's town council lost no time in acting to steer the architectural development of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 8 Page 31

Statement of Significance (continued)

city following its first meeting on January 31, 1890. On February 15 the council required prospective builders to submit plans and receive building permits. Several days later council member B. C. Moomaw moved to declare a “fire limit” that would encompass the lots fronting on 21st Street, Magnolia, and Sycamore in the historic district. The ordinance would require that all construction within the limit be of brick, stone, or metal and be roofed with metal or slate. (Concrete was not specified, although concrete buildings existed in Buena Vista during the period.) It is unclear from the council minutes whether Moomaw’s motion was adopted, although few frame structures were in fact erected in the downtown during the historical period, and those that were were typically “iron clad,” that is, sided with fire-resistant sheet iron. The weatherboard-sided frame Myers Building was an exception, although it was begun several months before Moomaw’s motion, and the frame commercial buildings on the 2500 block of Beech Avenue were located well outside the proposed fire limit. Researcher Jordan Walker suggests the lack of a fire department until 1891 as a reason for brick construction in the downtown.¹⁰

The success of a boom such as Buena Vista’s depended in part on the projection of an appearance of prosperity beyond the effect created by brick construction. This explains a provision in the Buena Vista Company’s early 1890 deeds for the 21st Street lot on which H. H. Myers built his second hardware store, the Myers and Gilkeson Building. The company required Myers “to erect a three story brick building, handsome front.” Three-story height was an attribute of most of the commercial buildings erected by the Buena Vista Company, its officers, and like-minded developers in 1890, and it helped create an urban character in the heart of downtown that, it was no doubt hoped, would inspire others to make comparable investments. The largest of these three-story brick buildings no longer survive. The Colonnade Hotel, which stood on the northeast corner of 21st and Sycamore, burned in 1907; the Bank Building, erected by B. C. Moomaw on the northwest corner of 21st and Magnolia, was torn down in the late twentieth century; so too the Improvement Block on the northeast corner of 20th Street and Magnolia, operated as the Palace Hotel and later the Marlbrook Hotel, was demolished in recent years. Another recent loss was the Buena Vista Opera House. Slightly later than the other buildings (1890-91), and distinguished by a Queen Anne style multi-gable roof and a round corner turret, the building was a collaboration between F. P. Summers—an architect or contractor who was involved in the construction of Pulaski’s Maple Shade Inn—and Philadelphia contractor Frederick J. Amweg. By 1984 the Opera House had deteriorated to the point that demolition was deemed necessary. The only three-story building to survive, and only in part, is the Sheridan Building on the northwest corner of Sycamore and 21st, which was built with an extra attic story above the third story, but was reduced to two-stories and heavily remodeled in the twentieth century. Technically the Buena Vista Company’s own building had three stories, although the company economized by putting the top story in the mansard roof.¹¹

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 8 Page 32

Statement of Significance (continued)

The “handsome front” wording in the Myers and Gilkeson Building deeds indicates that some level of decorative treatment was expected. Myers’ builder provided the building with heavy pressed metal cornices at the parapet and over the storefront, segmental-arch brickwork between the parapet cornice brackets, and an ornamental cast iron storefront. The parapet cornice is lost, as is much of the storefront, but the flanking cast iron storefront pilasters survive and the style of their foliated ornament suggests the components were supplied by an architectural cast iron manufacturer located outside the region. The showcase example of architectural cast iron was the Improvement Block, which had a richly ornamented façade with brackets, parapet urns and crestings, colonnettes, and quoin-like treatments. Typically ornament was concentrated at the storefront and cornice. The Chamberlin Building, for example, which survives in greatly altered form at 2037 Magnolia, originally featured a bracketed cornice with a center pediment and urn finials, as well as a triple storefront with display windows, transoms, and recessed entries. Later buildings employed the storefront-and-parapet decorative scheme. Among the best preserved are the ca. 1905 Coiner Building, the ca. 1905 Valley Steam Laundry Building, and the ca. 1910 Buena Vista Masonic Building, all located on the 2100 block of Magnolia.

The second phase of Buena Vista’s downtown architectural development, which began after 1900, made greater use of brickwork for decorative effect. The Coiner Building has overlapping brick parapet arches that create a complex geometry of arcs, triangles, and lancets. Another decorative treatment used in the building is brickwork of contrasting colors; the buff brick lintels over the second-story windows contrast with the red pressed brick of the façade. Contrasting brickwork was also used for the Buena Vista Masonic Building and the building at 2152 Sycamore (built in 1915), in both instances light-colored buff or blond brick with brown brick trim. An especially expressive use of contrasting brick appears on the façade of the 1907 Peoples Bank Building, which in addition to blond brick lintels against red brick has a blond brick parapet with lozenge figures outlined with red brick. In the same vein but in monochrome buff brick is the parapet of the ca. 1920 Farmers and Merchants Mills Store, where the brick projects to form panel borders and cross motifs. Most of these early twentieth century buildings show the influence of the Classical Revival style in the design of their cornices and window surrounds. The most fully realized example of the style is the Peoples Bank Building, graced by three elliptical-arch openings on the street level, each trimmed with cast stone voussoirs. The lintels of the tripartite windows above reflect the arch design but in rectilinear form.

Classicism of a different sort characterizes the 1930 Buena Vista Post Office. The refined building of Flemish-bond brick has a Corinthian portico of Indiana limestone, and it recalls the most sophisticated buildings of the Colonial (and early National) periods, hence its classification as Colonial Revival. Like hundreds of other post offices from the period and from other parts of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 33

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Statement of Significance (continued)

the country, Buena Vista's building was built to a design from the office of Treasury Department architect James A. Wetmore. Professional architects were involved in the design of Buena Vista's buildings from the outset. Architect Walter P. Tinsley of Lynchburg designed the original Hotel Buena Vista, which was begun in March 1889 and opened for business on July 1. After the first hotel burned on July 10, 1890, the Buena Vista Company immediately began planning for its replacement, and in August announced the selection of Pennsylvania architect Sidney Winfield Foulk, who designed the present brick building completed in the summer of 1891. The architect of the Buena Vista Company Building has not been identified, but Jordan Walker suggests similarities between the building's tower and designs in period pattern books such as those of A. J. Bicknell and William T. Comstock. Historian Margaret Peters notes that the building's style "had come to characterize 'boom' town headquarters throughout the United States and was ultimately derived from governmental architecture in Washington, D.C."¹²

Architects, builders, and other building tradesmen descended on Buena Vista during the boom. Using area newspapers, Jordan Walker has documented nearly forty building tradesmen who were active in Buena Vista, or who advertised their desire to work there, during the period 1889 to 1891. John H. Shackelford advertised as a contractor and builder in the inaugural December 13, 1889, issue of the *Buena Vista Advocate*, as did William N. Seay, who offered as a sideline undertaking services. Shackelford was one of the few survivors to advertise in an 1893 business directory, accompanied by architect E. N. Booker and builders and carpenters A. Prescott and G. G. Ware. At present, the architects or builders of the majority of the district's buildings are unknown.¹³

The automobile began to have an effect on the architecture of the district in the 1910s. The original section of the Robey Garage at 2019 Forest was built in 1916 as a repair and car storage garage, although evidence for multiple small openings on the side of the false-fronted brick building suggest the possibility that W. T. Robey's original livery stable business may have continued for a time. A Tudor Revival gas station was built on the southwest corner of 20th Street and Magnolia Avenue, probably in the 1930s. The stucco building features a front drive-through that was originally crowned by large urns or globe light fixtures.

After the renewed construction activity of the 1900 to 1920 period, downtown building activity slowed in the 1920s and 1930s. The commercial architectural after 1940 was generally more modest in character: one-story brick, cinder block, or brick-veneered block buildings with simplified detail. There were exceptions. Relatively large two-story commercial buildings were erected on the west side of the 2000 block of Magnolia, and one of these—Bibee's Super Market at 2067 Magnolia, built in 1940—once boasted a large neon sign depicting a woman shopper. The neon signage in mid-twentieth-century photographs supplemented the colorful painted signage that was a feature of downtown buildings since the boom. A remarkable vestige of this painting survives on the Myers

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 8 Page 34

Statement of Significance (continued)

and Gilkeson Building, with the various and sundry items sold in the store listed on every square foot of the brick façade and remnants of a large Bull Durham tobacco advertisement on the east side elevation. PermaStone came into use as a facing material in the 1950s. The ca. 1950 Causey Cleaners Building at 2028 Magnolia and the 1950s Seay's Drug Store at 2127-2131 Magnolia use the concrete-based faux stone on their facades. Glass block became popular and is seen in some of the windows of the additions to Robey's Garage, in the narrow storefront transoms of the Buena Vista Cleaners Building at 215 West 21st, and as Moderne style curved entry recess corners in the 1940s remodeling of the building at 2066 Magnolia, work that appears to have been associated with the building's renovation as an Alcoholic Beverage Control store. The mid-twentieth century was also a period of alteration to earlier buildings, usually in the form of aluminum-frame storefronts to replace the more ornamental wood and cast iron storefronts of earlier days. Generally, however, the more modern storefronts respected the traditional form of recessed entries flanked by display windows. Very little new construction occurred in the district after the 1960s, although the Buena Vista Company Building and several other buildings have been the subject of rehabilitation or renovation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 8 Page 35

Statement of Significance (continued)

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1. Cote and Peters, "Buena Vista Land Company;" Dabney, *Virginia, The New Dominion*, 406; Lyle, "Rockbridge County's Boom Hotels," 5-11; *Richmond Dispatch*, January 1, 1891.
2. *Buena Vista Times*, May 13, 1909; *Moomaw Newsletter* 4:4 (May 1989), 20; White, *Roanoke*, 61.
3. *Buena Vista Times*, May 13, 1909; *Buena Vista Advocate*, January 3, 1890, and January 16, 1891; "Map of Buena Vista, Rockbridge County, Virginia;" Walker, "Buena Vista and Boom Town Architecture," 3, 9; Dotson, "'Magic City,'" 126-127.
4. *Buena Vista, Virginia*; Rockbridge County land books for 1890 and 1891.
5. Lynn, *Buena Vista: The Bud Not Yet Blossomed*, 14, 15, 19; Walker, "Buena Vista and Boom Town Architecture," 10; Dotson, "'Magic City,'" 126-127; Pezzoni, "Glasgow Historic District," 22.
6. "Buena Vista's [Key] to Industrial Possibilities." Report, ca. 1930.
7. Lynn, *Buena Vista: The Bud Not Yet Blossomed*, 7-8; Grant, "Boxcar Café," 7; Walker, "Buena Vista and Boom Town Architecture," 4.
8. *Buena Vista Advocate*, December 13, 1889.
9. *Buena Vista Advocate*, January 17 and December 26, 1890; Walker, "Buena Vista and Boom Town Architecture," 5-6.
10. Buena Vista town council records; Sanborn maps; Walker, "Buena Vista and Boom Town Architecture," 9, 13.
11. Barclay papers; Walker, "Buena Vista and Boom Town Architecture," 7; *Buena Vista Advocate*, February 20, 1891; Buena Vista Opera House file.
12. Walker, "Buena Vista and Boom Town Architecture," 14-16; Cote and Peters, "Buena Vista Land Company;" *Lexington Gazette*, March 7, 1889; *Buena Vista Advocate*, August 1, 1890.
13. Chataigne, *Virginia Gazeteer*, 1093, 1096; Walker, "Buena Vista and Boom Town

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 36

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Statement of Significance (continued)

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 9 Page 37

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 38

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 9 Page 39

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Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 9 Page 40

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 9 Page 41

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number 10 Page 42

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the approximately ten-acre nominated area are shown on the 1:125-scale map that accompanies the nomination.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the district encompass the concentration of historic commercial buildings that comprise the majority of Buena Vista's historic business district. Excluded from the district are peripheral non-historic (post-1959) commercial or office buildings, historic commercial buildings that have lost integrity, and historic areas that are more residential in character.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number Photos Page 43

PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs are of:

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia
DHR file no. 103-5055
J. Daniel Pezzoni, Photographer

Negatives are stored at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Richmond, Virginia.

DATE: February 2009

VIEW OF: Magnolia Avenue (2100 block; east side) with the Buena Vista Company Building in the right foreground and the Coiner Building in the middle distance. View facing northeast.

NEG. NO. 24521.8

PHOTO 1 OF 7

DATE: February 2009

VIEW OF: West 21st Street (100 and 200 blocks; north side). View facing northwest.

NEG. NO. 24521.36

PHOTO 2 OF 7

DATE: February 2009

VIEW OF: Magnolia Avenue (200 block; west side) with the Advocate Building in the right foreground. View facing south.

NEG. NO. 24521.35

PHOTO 3 OF 7

DATE: February 2009

VIEW OF: Magnolia Avenue (2100 block; west side) with the Myers Building in the right foreground and the Buena Vista Masonic Building in the middle distance. View facing southwest.

NEG. NO. 24521.34

PHOTO 4 OF 7

DATE: February 2009

VIEW OF: Magnolia Avenue (1900 block; west side) with the Shewey Supply Company Store in the left foreground and the Buena Vista War Memorial Building in the distance. View facing northwest.

NEG. NO. 24520.19

PHOTO 5 OF 7

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
Buena Vista, Virginia

Section number Photos Page 44

DATE: February 2009

VIEW OF: Sycamore Avenue (2100 block; east side) with two noncontributing buildings located outside the district in the foreground. View facing southeast.

NEG. NO. 24521.0

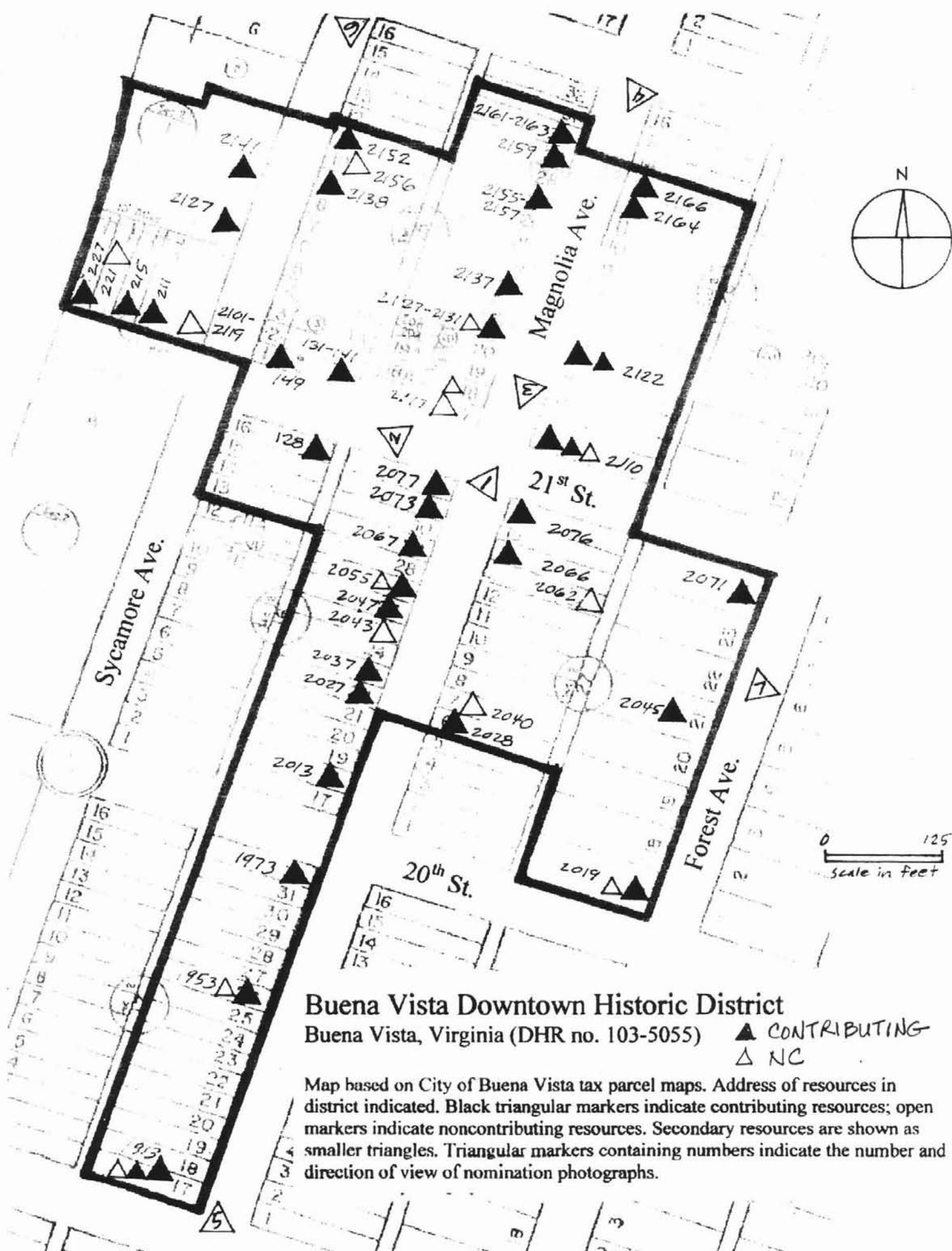
PHOTO 6 OF 7

DATE: February 2009

VIEW OF: Buena Vista Post Office. View facing northwest.

NEG. NO. 24520.16

PHOTO 7 OF 7



Buena Vista Downtown Historic District

Buena Vista, Virginia (DHR no. 103-5055)

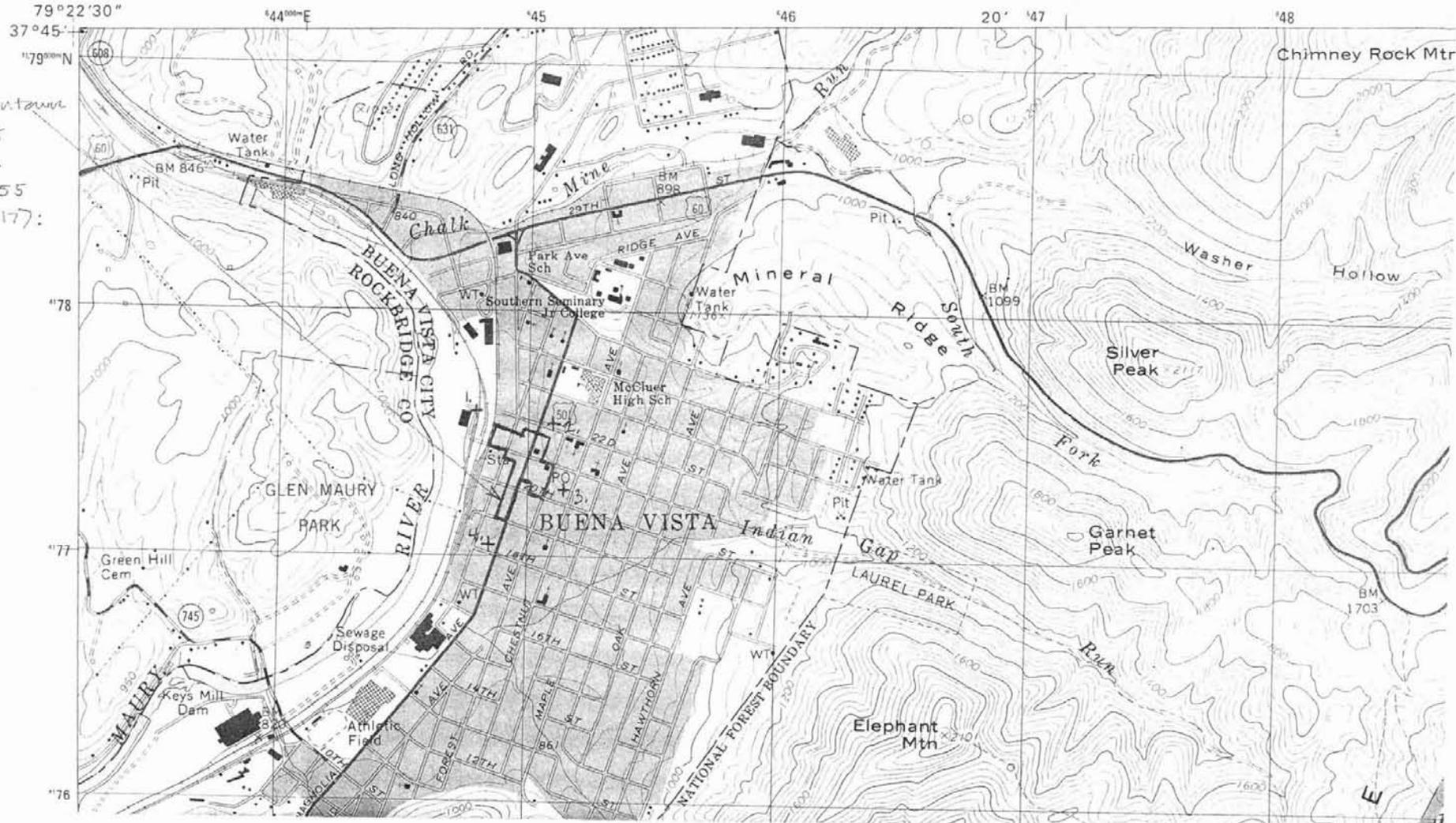
▲ CONTRIBUTING
 △ NC

Map based on City of Buena Vista tax parcel maps. Address of resources in district indicated. Black triangular markers indicate contributing resources; open markers indicate noncontributing resources. Secondary resources are shown as smaller triangles. Triangular markers containing numbers indicate the number and direction of view of nomination photographs.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF MINES



Buena Vista Downtown
Historic District
Buena Vista, Va.
DHR # 103-5055
UTM refs (zone 17):
1. E644780
N4177600
2. E645100
N4177540
3. E645140
N4177280
4. E644840
N4177050