

Virginia Department of Historic Resources PIF Resource Information Sheet

This information sheet is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate the significance of the proposed district for possible listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This is not a formal nomination, but a necessary step in determining whether or not the district could be considered eligible for listing. Please take the time to fill in as many fields as possible. A greater number of completed fields will result in a more timely and accurate assessment. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you have in regards to this form.

General Property Information	For Staff Use Only DHR ID #: 127-7046
District Name(s): <u>North Thompson Street Historic District</u>	
District or Selected Building Date(s): <u>1955-1959</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Circa <input type="checkbox"/> Pre <input type="checkbox"/> Post Open to the Public? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Main District Streets and/or Routes: <u>N. Thompson Street</u> City: <u>Richmond</u> Zip: <u>23230</u>	
County or Ind. City: <u>City of Richmond</u> USGS Quad(s): <u>Richmond</u>	

Physical Character of General Surroundings	
Acreage: <u>5</u> Setting (choose one): <input type="checkbox"/> City <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Corridor	
Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features/Streetscapes: <u>The North Thompson Street Historic District comprises a small area, approximately 5-acres, nestled between N. Thompson Street on the east, the sunken I-195 right-of-way on the west, Broad Street on the north, and a line approximately 175-feet north of Monument Avenue on the south. It is a cohesive area of six contributing small to medium sized office buildings and a bank all designed in the International Style. Set back slightly from the roads, landscaping of various degrees adorns the area in front of the buildings and the view along N. Thompson Street is filled with green interspersed with breaks of interesting vignettes of the International Style buildings.</u>	
Ownership Categories: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local <input type="checkbox"/> Public-State <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal	

General District Information	
What were the historical uses of the resources within the proposed district? Examples include: Dwelling, Store, Barn, etc... <u>Businesses, Bank</u>	
What are the current uses? (if other than the historical use) _____	
Architectural styles or elements of buildings within the proposed district:	<u>International Style</u>
Architects, builders, or original owners of buildings within the proposed district:	<u>Hankins and Anderson, Virginius Goodman, John H. Graham, and J. Henley Walker</u>
Are there any known threats to this district? <u>no</u>	

General Description of District: (Please describe building patterns, types, features, and the general architectural quality of the proposed district. Include prominent materials and noteworthy building details within the district and a general setting and/or streetscape description.)

The North Thompson Street Historic District comprises a small area, approximately 5-acres, nestled between N. Thompson Street on the east, the sunken I-195 right-of-way on the west, Broad Street on the north, and a line approximately 175-feet north of Monument Avenue on the south. It is a cohesive area of six contemporary and contributing small to medium sized office buildings and a bank all designed in the International Style. Set back slightly from the roads, landscaping of various degrees adorns the area in front of the buildings and the view along N. Thompson Street is filled with green interspersed with breaks of interesting vignettes of the International Style buildings.

This style abandoned traditional form and adornment to create a pared down, unornamented style that emphasized geometrical shapes and asymmetry. The use of modern construction techniques allowed for large expanses or bands of windows often set flush with the outer wall. These buildings are generally typified by having flat roofs, asymmetrical elevations, open plans, metal windows, smooth textures, and ornamentation typically limited to material contrasts. With its open plans, it lent itself well to office buildings and banks. Each of the contributing buildings within the North Thompson Street Historic District embraces these design characteristics.

Additionally, completed in an effort to appeal to residents in the adjacent West of Boulevard (Museum District) neighborhood as well as vehicular traffic, the buildings line the street front and have ample parking lots at the rear which are accessible via drives between the buildings and the long gravel drive that connects Broad Street with Monument Avenue alongside the wall separating I-195. Each of the buildings have an entrance on the street side of the building to serve foot traffic, however there are also entrances facing the parking lots or designated sidewalks connecting the lots to the front entrance, even a porte-cochère at one front entrance. Additionally, the bank was also designed to serve those still in their vehicles with drive-through tellers.¹

Inventory of Buildings:

3501 W. Broad Street (VDHR #127-6569)

Contributing

The Central National Bank, constructed in 1956, sits on the southwest corner of W. Broad Street and N. Thompson Street. This is an award winning two-story bank designed in the International Style by Hankins and Anderson of Baskervill and Son. The building is clad in brick laid in a 5:1 course American bond. A large bank of seven fixed windows are centered within the north and south elevations; there is a small bank of three windows on the east elevation. A flat roof covers the building; parapet walls with concrete coping hides the roof. The building was designed to serve foot traffic, individuals driving and parking, and those remaining in the car. The parking lot elevation, south elevation, of the building appears to be the more dominant façade with the long one-story, flat roof, metal porch extending across the entire elevation, along the parking spaces, to the sidewalk on N. Thompson Street. A smaller, flat roof, metal porch covers the entrance on the north elevation.

Originally, the bank had two circular pods at the building's west side that served as drive-in windows. In 1962, the parking lot was expanded to the south and an additional "mushroom" drive-in window was constructed.² These drive-in windows have been demolished and replaced by the existing drive-in window at the southeastern end of the lot.

906 N. Thompson Street

Contributing

The office building at 906 N. Thompson Street was constructed in 1956. The two-story structure is clad in brick laid in a 5:1 course American bond and cast stone panels. The double-glazed entrance, with sidelights and a transom is accessed by brick steps and a ramp at the southeast corner of the building. A one-story flat roof wraps around this corner creating a porch. The porch roof extends beyond the ramp on the south

elevation; there are skylights in the roof over shrubbery planted alongside the ramp. On the façade are two long banks of one-over-one double-hung windows. These windows are singled or paired elsewhere on the building. A flat roof covers the building; a parapet wall with cast stone coping hides the roof. A single interior end brick chimney is at the rear elevation. There is a drive south of the building leading to the parking lot. A concrete sidewalk follows the west and south elevations of the building allowing easy access to the front entrance. There is an additional rear entrance also covered by a small, floor roof, metal porch.

908 N. Thompson Street

Contributing

The office building at 908 N. Thompson Street was constructed in 1959 in the International Style and was immediately occupied by three insurance companies.³ The two-story building is clad in brick laid in a stretcher bond. The southern third of the east elevation is recessed forming a three-sided atrium. There is a glazed entrance on the first floor and an exterior stairway accesses a second entrance on the second floor. Openings within the brick work on the southeast corner serve to anchor the wall. A skylight pierces the flat roof of the atrium. The roof extends out over the entire east elevation over the large bank of windows and metal panels that fills the remainder of the façade. Fenestration on the north and south elevation consists of vertical lines of windows and panels. A flat roof covers the building; a parapet wall with metal coping hides the roof. There is one interior brick chimney.

1000 N. Thompson Street

Contributing

The office building at 1000 N. Thompson Street was designed by Virginius Goodman in the International Style and was constructed in 1956. This one-story building has a second-story at the front third of the structure and it was designed to allow for the easy addition of a second-story on to the remainder of the building. The structure is clad in brick laid in a stretcher bond. The two-story, east elevation is punctuated by glazed white brick laid in a stack bond. A long band of fixed windows extends across the two stories of the east elevation and the entrance is slightly inset at its southern end. Concrete steps and a ramp lead to the doorway. A concrete landing extends across the remainder of the façade, separated from the building by vegetation. The fenestration on the remaining elevations consist of sliding windows. There is a small second-story addition near the rear of the building housing equipment; a brick chimney rises from this addition. There is also a one-story addition on the west elevation. A flat roof covers the building which is hidden by a parapet wall with metal coping. There is one, modern, pre-fabricated shed located just west of the building.

1004 N. Thompson Street

Contributing

The office building at 1004 N. Thompson Street was designed by architect John H. Graham in the International Style and was constructed in 1955. Originally known as the George B. Tyler Building, the building now stands vacant.⁴ The three-story structure is clad in brick laid in a 6:1 course American bond and limestone panels. The entrance, now boarded, is at the southern end of the east elevation. A cantilevered porch approached by stone steps and a metal railing. A low brick wall extends from the building at the porch forming integral planters. While main entrance is on the east elevation, at the street, a sidewalk extends along the north and south elevations of the building from the parking lot. There are also additional entrances on the north and south elevations. A long band of metal fixed and awning windows stretches across each floor of the east and west elevations; there are smaller groupings of windows on the north and south elevations. A penthouse was added circa 1963.

1010 N. Thompson Street

Contributing

Originally constructed for United States Fidelity & Guaranty Co., the Health Brigade at 1010 N. Thompson Street was built in 1955.⁵ Designed by J. Henley Walker in the International Style, the office building is two stories.⁶ The structure is faced with stone panels and large window banks on the north and south elevations. A drive extends along the north elevation leading to a parking lot at the rear of the building. The glazed entrance, located at the north end of the east elevation, is punctuated by a flat roofed porch accentuated by

smooth granite panels. The porch extends north of the drive forming a porte-cochère. A ramp beneath this porch at the drive leads to the entrance, as do stone steps. A stone retaining wall along the remainder of the façade serves as a planter for landscaping. A second entrance on the rear elevation serves visitors parking in the rear lot. The doorway is covered by a smaller, metal, flat roof porch.

1100-1106 N. Thompson Street

Non-contributing

This office building was constructed in 1979 and is therefore non-contributing to the North Thompson Street Historic District. The structure is clad in brick laid in a stretcher bond, with a soldier course above the window line. The main entrance is off-center on the south elevation at a brick porch. There are three additional entrances, each slightly inset. The windows largely consist of ribbons of three fixed windows separated by brick; the group on the north elevation is capped by a fan light. A flat roof covers the building. A parapet wall, with coping, hides the roof. There are two, modern, pre-fabricated sheds west of the building.

Significance Statement: Briefly note any significant events, personages, and/or families associated with the proposed district. It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or genealogies to this form. Please list all sources of information. Normally, only information contained on this form is forwarded to the State Review Board.

The North Thompson Street Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A as an example of the decentralization of Richmond. As significance of the automobile grew and population increased in new suburbs, businesses were forced to also move out of the downtown. Richmond responded by creating a so-called “quiet business district” zoning distinction for professional services and office space, such as that within the North Thompson Street Historic district, in an effort to keep businesses from completely leaving the city. The historic district is also locally significant under Criterion C as a fine example of small-scale International Style business district.

By the early twentieth century, industry was flourishing in Richmond, Virginia. The expanding central downtown business district, which consumed adjacent residential neighborhoods, and the introduction of the automobile and electric streetcar prompted future development of the city along its outskirts, particularly to the west and north. A new residential suburb developed west of Boulevard after 1895 (West of Boulevard Historic District, VDHR #127-0742). The continued development of this district west was hampered by the presence of the Forbes estate, which stretched from Park Avenue to the south, Broad Street to the north, Roseneath Street to the east and Hamilton Street to the west, and the Richmond, Fredericksburg, & Potomac Railroad (RF&P RR) west of Thompson Street between Cary and Broad Streets.⁷

Following World War II, like most southern cities in the United States, Richmond grew even more rapidly. Much of this growth occurred in the larger metropolitan area, prompting the city to continue annexing portions of the surrounding counties. In the late 1940s and 1950s, working-class and middle-class families moved from central Richmond; more affluent residents moved to the far West End. Increased use and popularity of the automobile improved the mobility of these citizens. Car sales rose steadily after the war; in 1955 alone nearly eight million cars were sold in the United States.⁸

The increased population in newly developing suburbs led to residents venturing into the City of Richmond in their automobiles which created seemingly unavoidable traffic congestion downtown.⁹ In response, commercial businesses opened further out from the city’s core. For example, Willow Lawn, the area’s first regional shopping center, opened on West Broad Street in 1956.¹⁰ Residents preferred to have the ability to drive to their intended destination, whether it be a store, bank, or business, and park their car. Traffic congestion and limited available parking in the city’s downtown discouraged this. As fewer people ventured downtown to do business, the service industry was also forced to adapt by creating branches with a drive-through option or where parking would not be an issue. The North Thompson Street Historic District provides an example of this adaption for one of the larger service industries in the city, insurance.

As noted in the 1950 Richmond City Directory, Richmond had a number of insurance companies; there were approximately 425 individual company and agent listings. Some companies made the city their headquarters. In addition to the economic contribution they made to the city, these service and financial establishments comprised an important industrial asset.¹¹

Partially because some companies had voiced interest in relocating outside of the city, in 1954 Richmond’s City Council changed the zoning of approximately 20 acres in the city’s West End.¹² Formerly zoned for “C Single Family” or “D Two-Family” dwellings, the area south of Broad Street and flanking the railroad became zoned as “T Transitional District” or a “quiet business” zone.¹³ This specifically allowed for the operation of “offices for insurance men, attorneys and other business and professional groups”.¹⁴

Plans to build in the North Thompson Street Historic District began immediately. In January 1955, Central National Bank announced that it would be building a branch at the corner of Broad and Thompson (3501 W. Broad Street) where there would be ample parking and a drive-through component.¹⁵ In Spring of 1955, the United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company notified the public that a branch office would be opening in

the new quiet business zone (1010 N. Thompson Street). The advertised perks of the location included a carport entrance and an adjacent parking lot.¹⁶

By 1959, the six contributing buildings within the district had been constructed.¹⁷ While the new office buildings were available for lease by a multitude of quiet businesses, the insurance industry filled much of the space.¹⁸ By 1960, there were insurance companies leasing every building in the district other than the bank. In fact, there were multiple insurance companies leasing the same building for at least 12 insurance companies within 5 buildings.¹⁹

All constructed in the mid- to late 1950s, the buildings were designed in the International Style, a distinct shift from buildings in the adjacent district (West of Boulevard Historic District) although they do complement the larger eight-story Modern Style Seaboard Railroad Company building across from Central National Bank at 3600 W. Broad Street which was constructed in the same time frame. The architect of four of the buildings is known. These include Hankins and Anderson of Baskervill and Son (3501 W. Broad Street), Virginius Goodman of Virginius H. Goodman Associates (1000 N. Thompson Street), John H. Graham (1004 N. Thompson Street), and J. Henley Walker (1010 N. Thompson Street). Each of the buildings are good examples of the International Style on a small-scale with flat roofs, windows set flush to outer walls, smooth unornamented wall surfaces, and asymmetrical façades.

Photo Log

Name of Resource: North Thompson Street Historic District

City or Vicinity: Richmond

County: Independent City

State: Virginia

Photographer: Dara Friedberg

Date Photographed: September 2016

Photo 1 of 8: Representative Streetscape, from 906 N. Thompson Street, facing northeast.

Photo 2 of 8: Representative Streetscape, from 1004 N. Thompson Street, facing southwest

Photo 3 of 8: Representative Streetscape, from 1010 N. Thompson Street, facing northeast.

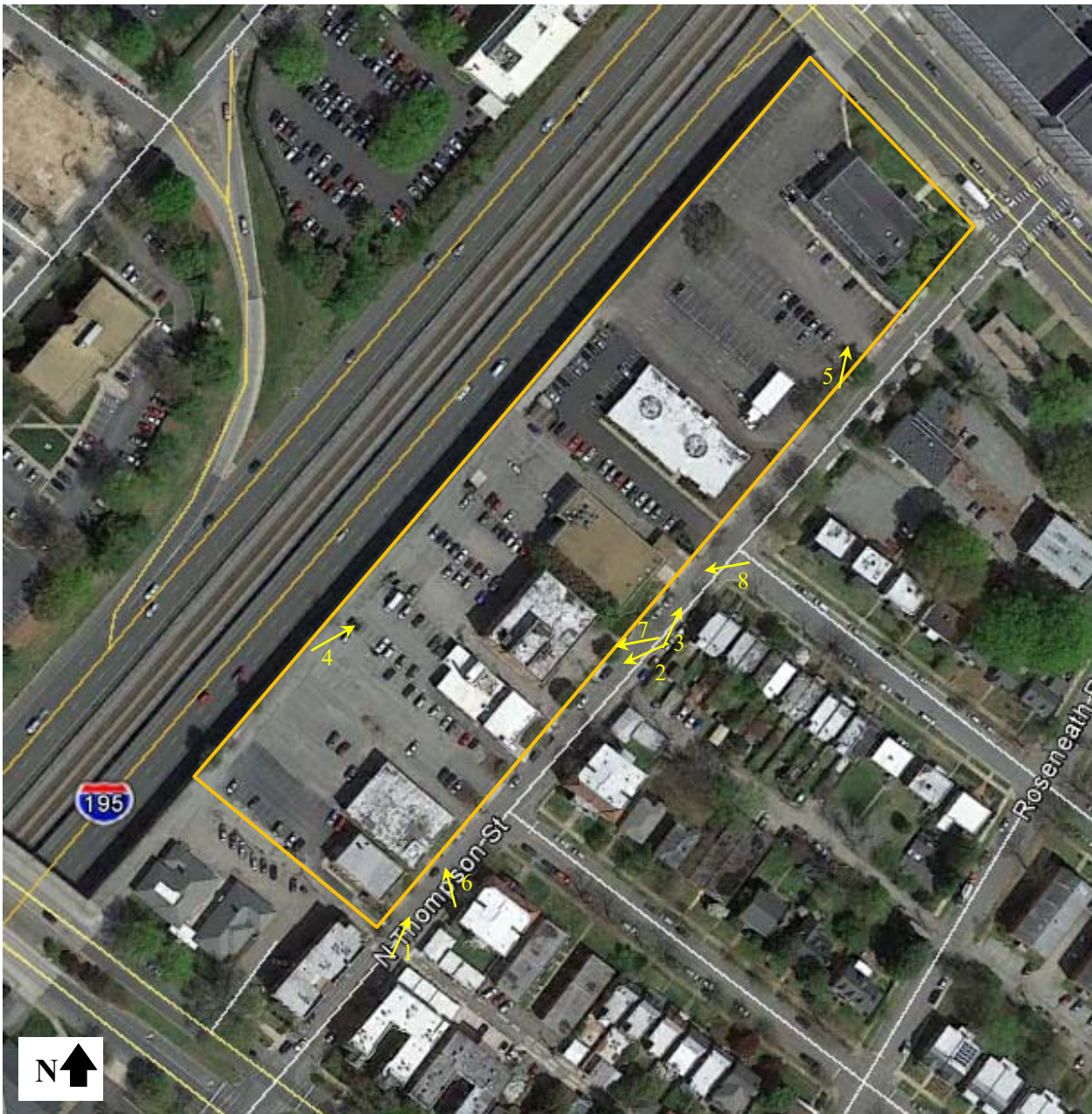
Photo 4 of 8: Rear of buildings facing Thompson Street, from behind 906 N. Thompson Street, facing northeast.

Photo 5 of 8: 3501 W. Broad Street, front façade, facing north.

Photo 6 of 8: 908 N. Thompson Street, front façade, facing north.

Photo 7 of 8: 1004 N. Thompson Street, front façade, facing west.

Photo 8 of 8: 1010 N. Thompson Street, front façade, facing west.



Aerial Photograph: North Thompson Street Historic District
Google Earth Image, 2016

Sponsor (Individual and/or organization, with contact information. For more than one sponsor, please use a separate sheet.)

Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/>	Hampshire Properties		
	(Name)		
PO Box 6784	Richmond	VA	23230
(Address)	(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)
sarah@hampshirepropertiesllc.com			
(Email Address)		(Daytime telephone including area code)	

In the event of organization sponsorship, you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Sarah Krumbein

Daytime Telephone: (804) 414-0537

Applicant Information (Individual completing form)

Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dara Friedberg, M.S.			Dutton + Associates, LLC
Ms. <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/>	(Name)	(Firm)		
1115 Crowder Road	Midlothian	VA	23113	
(Address)	(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)	
dfriedberg@dutton-associates.com		(804) 897-1960		
(Email Address)		(Daytime telephone including area code)		

Applicant's Signature:  Date: 9-27-16

Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. <input type="checkbox"/>	Selena Cuffee-Glenn			Chief Administrative Officer
Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hon. <input type="checkbox"/>	(Name)	(Position)		
City of Richmond, Virginia	900 E Broad St			
(Locality)	(Address)			
Richmond	VA	23219	804-646-7978	
(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)	(Daytime telephone including area code)	

Please use the following space to explain why you are seeking an evaluation of this district.

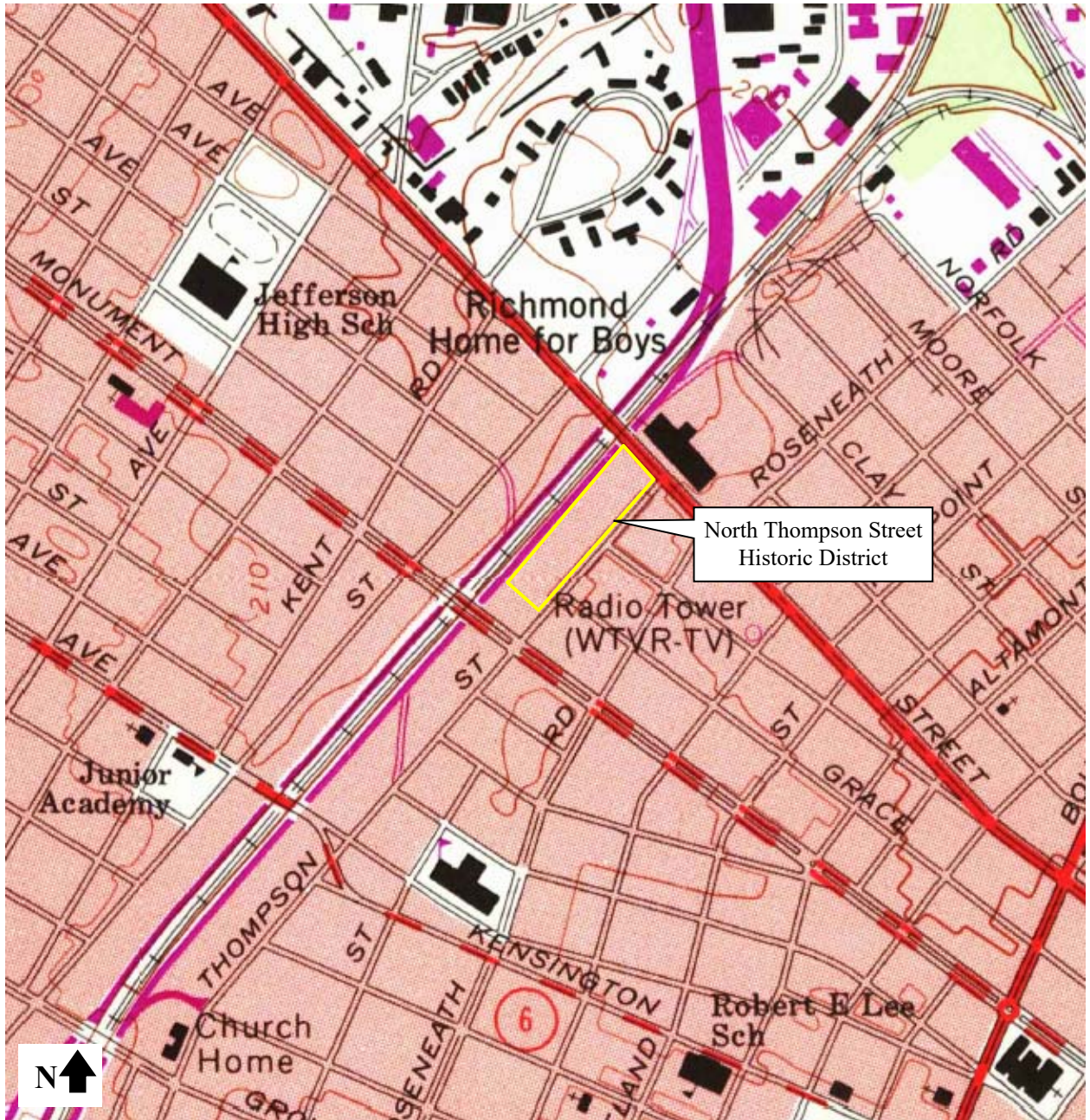
The owner of 1004 N. Thompson Street is interested in historic tax credits.

Would you be interested in the State and/or the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes No

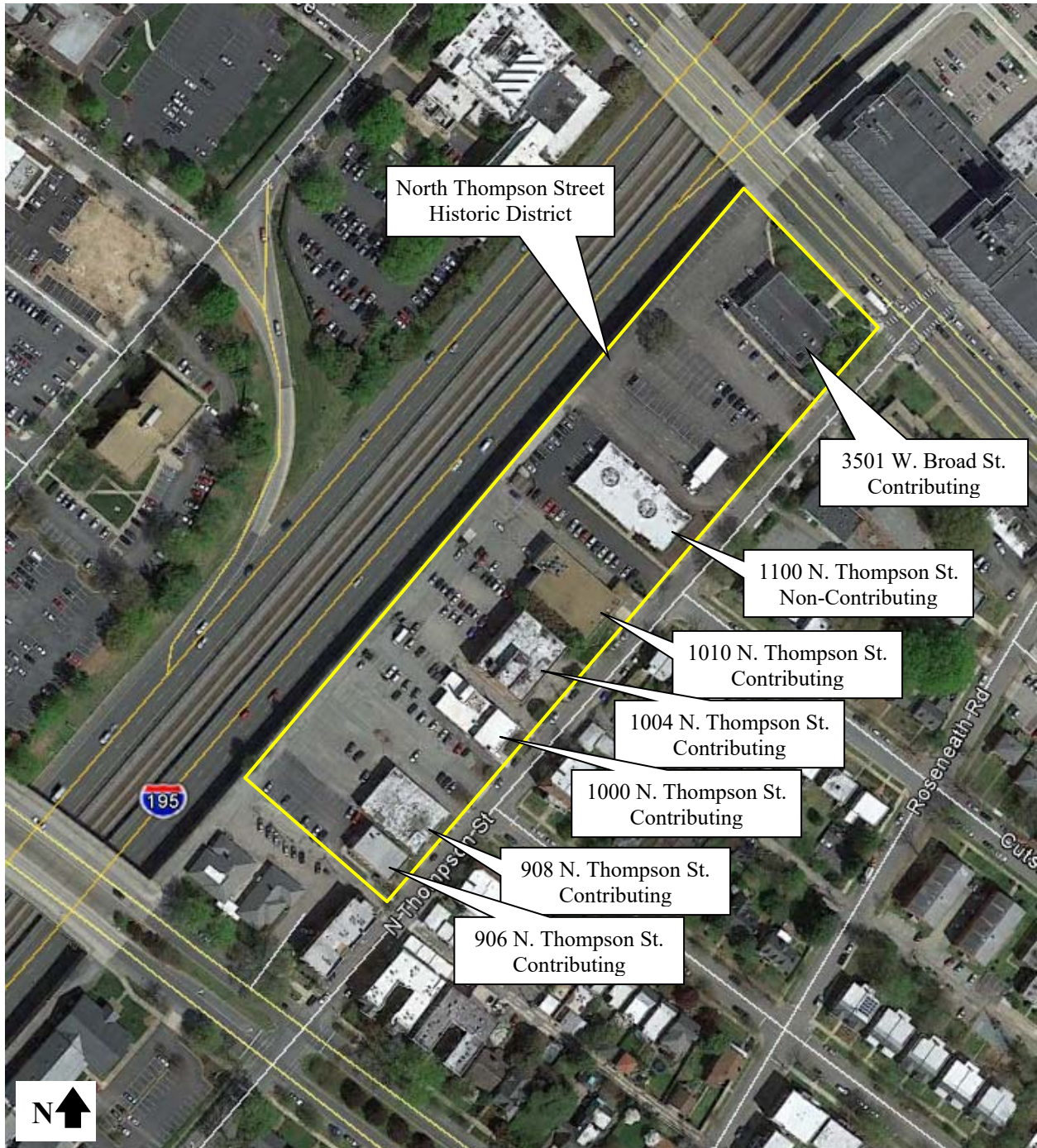
Would you be interested in the easement program? Yes No

¹ "Central National to Open Thompson Branch April 8," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 28 March 1957, Page 22.

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- ² This 1962 drive-in window has also been demolished and replaced. "Branch Bank to Expand," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 1 November 1962, page 41.
- ³ "New Thompson St. Office to Open," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 29 November 1959, page B-11.
- ⁴ Al Zimmerman, "Construction to Start Soon On \$300,000 Office Unit Here on Thompson Street," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 5 May 1955, page 29.
- ⁵ Property card for lot W0001665024.
- ⁶ Al Zimmerman, "U.S. Fidelity Company To Open Branch Office Here in Late Summer," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 8 April 1955, page 37.
- ⁷ David A. Edwards, "West of Boulevard Historic District," *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, October 12, 1993*, 142; and D.F. LaPrade, Papers written for Richmond's Department of Public Works. On file at Richmond's Department of City Planning and Development Review, 1949.
- ⁸ Marie Tyler-McGraw, *At the Falls: Richmond, Virginia, and Its People* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 277.
- ⁹ The electric streetcar ceased operations in 1949.
- ¹⁰ James K. Sanford, *Richmond: her Triumphs, Tragedies, & Growth*. (Richmond, VA: Metropolitan Richmond Chamber of Commerce) 206.
- ¹¹ *Hill's Richmond City Directory 1950* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., Inc.).
- ¹² "Zone Voted For 'Quiet' Businesses," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Page 7, 11 May 1954.
- ¹³ "Zoning Ordinance Notice," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Page 32, 20 April 1954; "Zone Voted For 'Quiet' Businesses," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Page 7, 11 May 1954.
- ¹⁴ "Zone Voted For 'Quiet' Businesses," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Page 7, 11 May 1954.
- ¹⁵ "Branch Banks Going Up At Fast Rate as Answer To the Parking Problem," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 2 January 1955, D-7.
- ¹⁶ Al Zimmerman, "U.S. Fidelity Company To Open Branch Office Here in Late Summer," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 8 April 1955, 37.
- ¹⁷ The building at 1100 N. Thompson Street was not constructed until 1979.
- ¹⁸ United States Fidelity & Guaranty Co. and Central National Bank owned their buildings. In fact, by the end of 1956 the newly zoned area as a whole (between Thompson Street and Malvern Avenue) had 11 large insurance companies, whether they were the owners of the buildings or simply occupants.
- ¹⁹ *Hill's Richmond City Directory 1960* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., Inc.).



USGS Quadrangle: North Thompson Street Historic District
Richmond 1994



North Thompson Street
Historic District

3501 W. Broad St.
Contributing

1100 N. Thompson St.
Non-Contributing

1010 N. Thompson St.
Contributing

1004 N. Thompson St.
Contributing

1000 N. Thompson St.
Contributing

908 N. Thompson St.
Contributing

906 N. Thompson St.
Contributing



Aerial Photograph: North Thompson Street Historic District
Google Earth Image, 2016