

+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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Bristol Commercial Historic District 2017 Piedmont Avenue Boundary Increase

Other names/site number: VDHR# 102-5035

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 40-115 Piedmont Avenue

City or town: City of Bristol State: VA County: Washington

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A B x C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	
In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

SOCIAL: meeting hall

GOVERNMENT: post office

COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

COMMERCE/TRADE: professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco, Moderne

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

FOUNDATION: BRICK, CONCRETE

WALLS: BRICK, LIMESTONE, CERAMIC TILE, OTHER

ROOF: SYNTHETICS (Rubber)

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The original Bristol Commercial Historic District (102-5017) is located in the commercial center of the City of Bristol, predominately along State Street, which is the main corridor through downtown and the divider between Bristol, Virginia, to the north and Bristol, Tennessee, to the south. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 2003 under Criteria A (Commerce) and C (Architecture), the original historic district boundaries encompass 23-acres and four commercial blocks of State Street and adjoining streets in both Tennessee and Virginia. The district was developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with 106 primary resources consisting of two- and three-story brick commercial buildings constructed between c. 1890 and the early 1950s. The boundary increase that is the subject of this nomination includes 10 primary resources (no secondary resources) along two blocks of Piedmont Avenue, which opened c. 1930 as a connector that formed the main north/south corridor to and from State Street. Of the 10 resources, nine are contributing. Only one is considered non-contributing because its construction postdates the district's period of significance. Ranging in date from 1931 to 1941, the commercial buildings represent the growing prosperity during the automobile era that occurred along this corridor off State Street in downtown Bristol. All contributing resources, which include a former Masonic Temple, a United States Post Office, a Greyhound Bus Station, and a First Federal Savings & Loan Association building, retain a high overall level of integrity.

Narrative Description

The coming of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad in 1852 spurred growth in far southwest Virginia and entrepreneur Joseph Rhea Anderson bought 100 acres in Washington County on the Tennessee border, subdivided lots, and called the new town Bristol. Anderson erected the first building in 1853, and other homes and the first Bristol Post Office followed that same year. By 1870, practically all residences were located on State Street (Main Street) and adjacent streets. Main Street was the primary commercial and residential corridor, and as the border between the two states, runs in an east/west direction. The railroad and depot were located at the eastern end of it, with hotels and commercial buildings constructed in the 1870s and 1880s on adjacent blocks. During the 1890s, Bristol's economic growth developed significantly as new industries moved to the area, and the population swelled to over 10,000 residents. From 1900 to 1920, Bristol's population increased to almost 15,000 residents and the city emerged as the commercial center for southwest Virginia and upper east Tennessee. Most of the existing buildings in the downtown area were constructed during the first three decades of the 20th century.¹

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Due to Bristol's early 20th century economic increase coupled with the popularity of the automobile, a new connector road was constructed by 1930 to accommodate traffic in and out of downtown. To accomplish this, a three-block connector road, Piedmont Avenue, had to encapsulate a section of Beaver Creek which, in that area, flowed north to south, thus dividing the commercial downtown to the east and the residential hillside Solar Hill to the west.² From 1931 to 1941, nine new commercial, automotive, governmental, fraternal, and financial buildings were constructed along the first two main blocks of Piedmont Avenue--the basis for this nomination. Eight of these nine buildings are contributing. Another non-contributing building was built c. 1980.

Dating from 1931 to 1941 with a 1957 addition, the eight contributing resources within the Bristol Commercial Historic District Piedmont Avenue Boundary Increase are all commercial as an extension off State Street in the original district. The commercial buildings are of one-story brick or glazed tile construction while the public buildings are of two-to-three-stories with brick and limestone facades. The contributing buildings exhibit styles from the early twentieth century, including Commercial, Neoclassical, Art Deco, Moderne, and Modernist. The former Greyhound Bus Station was built in 1937-1938 in the Streamlined Moderne style.

All but one of the historic buildings in the boundary increase was built in the 1930s, soon after the completion of Piedmont Avenue in c. 1930. The first extant building constructed in the boundary increase, and one of the most significant, is the 1931 **Masonic Temple (102-5020 and 102-5035-0006)**, built on a gentle rise overlooking the main intersection in the district of 56-58 Piedmont Avenue and 628 Cumberland Street. Designed by architects G.M. and G.C. Stone, this three-story, concrete and masonry building was constructed with influences of the Art Deco style. The building has an exterior of cast concrete on the first floor and brick on the upper two floors with two storefronts on the first floor main façade (Piedmont Avenue). Both storefronts are original with recessed entrances with single-light glass and wood doors. The storefronts have original copper and glass display windows resting on cast-concrete bulkheads. The Cumberland Street façade has four window bays with original three-light steel windows with original cast concrete surrounds. This façade has an entrance lobby in the west bay with c. 1980 aluminum and glass doors. The door has a cast concrete surround with the inscription Masonic Temple. Its cast concrete treads and risers and ornamental steel Art Deco handrail are intact. The interior retains original wall and ceiling finishes on the first floor. The upper floors have much of their original floor plan, paneled wood doors, coffered ceilings, and decorative elements.³ The building, in pristine condition, has remained continuously occupied and now functions as a live/work space as its owners live upstairs and operate a popular bakery out of the first floor.

Another significant resource in the boundary increase is the 1933 **United States Post Office (102-0012 and 102-5035-0007)** built into the slope of the northwest corner of 100 Piedmont Avenue and Cumberland Street. The large, two-story, seven-bay brick former Post Office is an excellent example of the Neoclassical style that was used in many public buildings during the first half of the 20th century. This impressive building features a five-bay, full-height, limestone Doric portico. The limestone parapet wall above the projecting modillioned cornice displays the inscription UNITED STATES POST OFFICE. The façade behind the portico features rusticated

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sandstone. The center entrance is an aluminum double-leaf replacement door and transom. A full surround with fluted pilasters, an entablature, and a half-round wood window accent the entrance. An added canopy from a later culinary school occupation obscures the building's entrance and extends over the ten porch steps down to the sidewalk. The three-bay wide steps are flanked with knee walls and original metal lampposts. Other features include original wood, multi-light sash windows and limestone quoins. By 1985, the building was no longer being used as a post office, and private companies had leased it until recently; it remains vacant and for sale. Although entirely intact on its exterior, this large building in general is showing signs of neglect, specifically in its deteriorating wood windows.

The Commercial style, a popular downtown style, is depicted in four historic resources in the boundary increase; all four are one-story brick commercial buildings. The 1936 building at **40-46 Piedmont Avenue (102-5018 and 102-5035-0001)** is a good example with four storefronts. Both 40 and 42 Piedmont Avenue have original storefronts with recessed entrances. The entrances have original single-light glass and wood doors with rectangular transoms. Display windows are original copper and glass design and rest on brick bulkheads. Above the entrance and display windows are original five-light glass and wood transoms. The other two have been slightly modified. Above the storefronts is a belt course of glazed terra cotta with egg and dart molding and a Greek fret band, and the roofline has brick corbelling. The interiors of 40 and 42 have original wood floors, plaster walls, and pressed metal ceilings. The building remains intact with only slight modifications; storefronts 40-44 remain occupied, while storefront 46 is vacant.

Another good example of Commercial style architecture in the boundary increase is the c. 1940 building that wraps around the southeast corner of Piedmont Avenue and Cumberland Street at **51-57 Piedmont Avenue (102-5019 and 102-5035-0005)**. This brick building features a veneer of hollow core tile, and its three storefronts retain original aluminum bulkheads, aluminum and glass display windows, and aluminum and glass doors. An aluminum canopy carries across the width of the storefronts. The dividing storefront piers and upper facade are tan and black tiles, while a belt course is of black tile. The interior of all three storefronts has been remodeled with added wall, floor, and ceiling finishes. On the north and south facades are original nine- and three-light steel awning windows. This building remains in good condition although it is vacant.

Flanking the northern end of the boundary increase is the 1936 former **Firestone Store (102-5035-0010)** at 115 Piedmont Avenue, which displays the influence of the Moderne style with its curved wall of yellow glazed brick. The building includes two sections, the recessed left-side automotive three-bay garage, and the projecting right-side showroom with its curved corner and storefront. The building is constructed of concrete block with a yellow glazed brick veneer. The tall parapet wall is stepped on the far-left side and on the curved storefront section; the corners of the stepped parapet are curved. A belt course of dark blue glazed brick runs below the parapet. The storefront has a deeply recessed entrance; its bulkhead has blue glazed brick. The anodized aluminum storefront has narrower display windows on the curved section and larger display windows on the flat storefront section. The interior remains open and intact. The building has only had two occupants, Firestone and Greene's Upholstery. The building remains in excellent condition and occupied, although the owner is retiring.

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Located on the north side of the Post Office, at 110 Piedmont Avenue is the former 1941 **First Federal Savings & Loan Association (102-5035-0008)**, a good example of Modernist architecture. The two-story, three-bay bank building was constructed with steel joists, concrete floors, metal lath and plaster ceilings, and metal framed curtain walls. Cast-concrete panels cover the vertical members of the building, and the inset areas are covered with a middle ribbon of slate panels that separate ribbons of anodized aluminum windows. The flat roof was originally capped with narrow metal flashing and in the upper center of the façade, below the cornice, an American flag was held in place by an art-deco inspired, vertical metal motif holder. Although the flag holder remains, the cornice is covered by projecting flat metal panels. The original three-bay façade had two entrances separated by a center, recessed display cabinet. That layout was replaced by the current three-bay anodized aluminum storefront. In 1957, a three-story addition with similar construction and design was added off the rear elevation. Its north side elevation features a three-bay metal and glass entrance with an interior lobby that has a rear curved wall and staircase covered with ceramic mosaic tile. The building has always housed offices, and continues to do so. Other than c. 1980 modifications to its façade, the building remains in good condition with strong integrity.

The former **Greyhound Bus Station (102-5032 and 102-5035-0002)** at 41 Piedmont Avenue has been modified with the replacement of its original windows and ribbons of glassblock with layers of modern substitute materials, yet its sleek, curvilinear Streamlined Moderne massing remains evident. A well-known and prominently located landmark, the bus station closed around 1970, remaining vacant until the City of Bristol bought it in 1978 and converted it to their Public Works Department, making a number of modifications to its appearance. However, the rear and side elevations remain intact including the wraparound metal canopy that protected passengers while loading and unloading. The curved glass and double-door entrance remains, as well as the terrazzo floor of both interior floor levels. The upper entrance level had a U-shaped lunch counter to the left and a ticket booth and “colored waiting room” to the right. This waiting room was illuminated by a curtain wall of glassblock, as opposed to clear glass (see Figure 1).

The lower level of the bus station, accessed over a flight of three original terrazzo steps with metal handrails led down to the waiting area and bathrooms; passengers arrived to the left and departed to the right. The black citizens had a separate exterior right-side entrance. The waiting area is still illuminated by the original skylight and glazing. A second floor office and locker room was located above the kitchen and is reached by a metal spiral staircase. The arriving bus driver took his work break in this space; he would place an order for his meal to the kitchen below by a bell, and receive it by a wooden dumbwaiter--still in use today.⁴ An extant oculus window illuminated the kitchen space and staircase. The bus station’s interior has remained predominately intact, minus the removal of the black waiting room dividing wall, the removal of the U-shaped lunch counter, and revisions to the kitchen space. A local citizen purchased the building in 2014, and has sensitively renovated it into a popular brewery.

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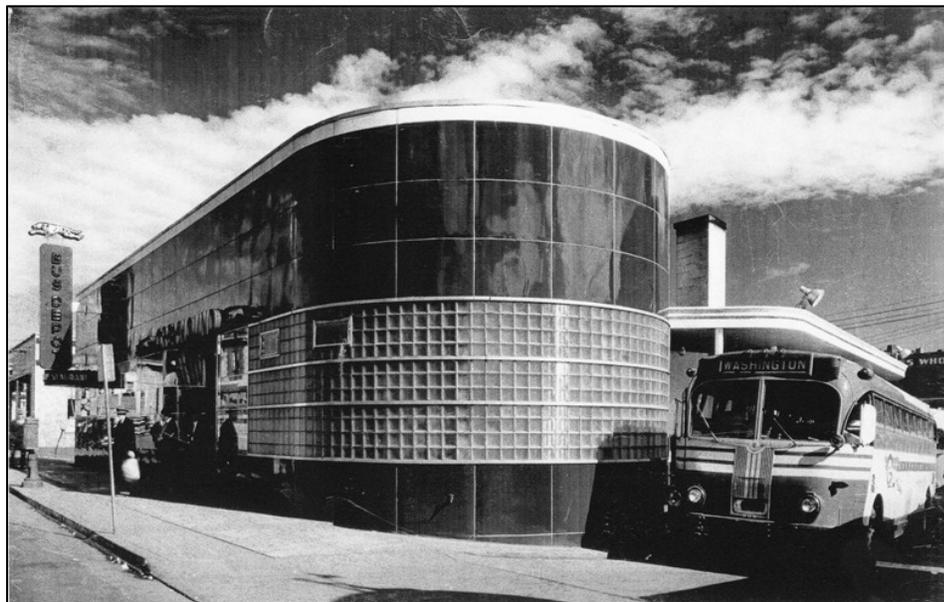


Figure 1. 1940s Photograph of Greyhound Bus Station ((102-5032 and 102-5035-0002).

The single non-contributing resource in the boundary increase, the c. 1980 **Bristol Department of Health Office Building (102-5035-0009)** at 111 Piedmont Avenue, reflects the commercial-themed building trends of the contributing resources along Piedmont Avenue, but is classified as non-contributing due to its late date of construction. It features vertically-aligned panels of brick veneer alternating with narrower, vertically aligned glazed openings topped with a cast-concrete panel cornice with a flat roof. The building is currently used as a law office, remains in good condition, and retains its original architectural materials.

Statement of Integrity

The Bristol Commercial Historic District Piedmont Avenue Boundary Increase retains a high level of integrity as a collection of pre-World War II commercial and public buildings that continue the character of the original district. Of the 10 total primary resources, nine are contributing and only one is classified as non-contributing due to its late date of construction. The Bristol Commercial Historic District Piedmont Avenue Boundary Increase as a whole retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association.

RESOURCE INVENTORY OF 10 PRIMARY RESOURCES

The following inventory lists the resources within the Bristol Commercial Historic District Piedmont Avenue Boundary Increase. It is organized numerically by street numbers on Piedmont Avenue. Each entry provides the address, building name (if applicable), date of construction, architectural style, current building use, VDHR File number, and the contributing status within the district. Whether a building is considered contributing or non-contributing was determined based on its integrity as it supports the historic district's significance under Criterion A for

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Commerce and Criterion C for Architecture during the Period of Significance of c. 1930-1957.
Resources are keyed to the Sketch Map/Photo Key by their numerical street address.

PIEDMONT AVENUE

40-46 Piedmont Avenue 102-5018 *Other DHR Id#: 102-5035-0001*

Primary Resource: **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Commercial, 1936**
Contributing Total: 1

41 Piedmont Avenue 102-5032 *Other DHR Id#: 102-5035-0002*

Primary Resource: **Bus Station (Building), Greyhound Bus Depot, Stories 1, Style: Streamline Moderne, 1938**
Contributing Total: 1

48 Piedmont Avenue 102-5035-0003 *Other DHR Id#:*

Primary Resource: **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Commercial Style: Ca 1938**
Contributing Total: 1

50-54 Piedmont Avenue 102-5053-0004 *Other DHR Id#:*

Primary Resource: **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Commercial, Ca 1938**
Contributing Total: 1

51-57 Piedmont Avenue 102-5019 *Other DHR Id#: 102-5053-0005*

Primary Resource: **Commercial Building (Building), Piedmont Hardware, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, Ca 1940**
Contributing Total: 1

56-58 Piedmont Avenue/628 Cumberland Street 102-5020 *Other DHR Id#: 102-5053-0006*

Primary Resource: **Meeting/Fellowship Hall (Building), Masonic Temple, Stories 3, Style: Art Deco, 1931**
Contributing Total: 1

100 Piedmont Avenue 102-0012 *Other DHR Id#: 158-5053-0007*

Primary Resource: **Government Building (Building), Post Office, Stories 2, Style: Neo-Classical Style, 1933**
Contributing Total: 1

110 Piedmont Avenue 102-5053-0008 *Other DHR Id#:*

Primary Resource: **Bank (Building), First Federal Savings & Loan Association, Stories 2, Style: Modernist, 1941**
Contributing Total: 1

111 Piedmont Avenue 102-5035-0009 *Other DHR Id#:*

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**Primary Resource: Office/Office Building (Building), Bristol Virginia Health Department,
Stories 1, Style: Commercial, Ca 1980**

Non-Contributing Total: 1

115 Piedmont Avenue 102-5035-0010 Other DHR Id#:

**Primary Resource: Commercial Building (Building), Firestone Store and Service Station,
Stories 1, Style: Moderne, Ca 1936**

Contributing Total: 1

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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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c. 1930-1957

Significant Dates

c. 1930, 1931, 1933

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Stone, G.M. and G.C.
Wetmore, James
Kearfott, Clarence B.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The 2017 Piedmont Avenue Boundary Increase incorporates 10 additional resources into the Bristol Commercial Historic District. The boundary increase area is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce, as it represents the continuation of downtown commercial development; and Criterion C in the area of Architecture, as it features strong examples of commercial, fraternal, and public institution styles that were popular in the pre-World War II era. Nine out of the ten resources were built within a ten-year time span from 1931 to 1941. The period of significance for the original district extends from c. 1890 to c. 1952; starting with the earliest construction date to the latest. The boundary increase relates to the opening of Piedmont Avenue, a main north/south corridor to downtown, c. 1930 and concludes at 1957 with the latest construction date (a large addition) during the post-World War II prosperity era.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank the following for their contributions to this nomination: Sally Morgan and Kelly Miller, City of Bristol Community Development & Planning Department; Tim Buchanan, President Bristol Historical Association; Maggie Bishop, incoming Executive Director of Believe in Bristol/Bristol Virginia-Tennessee Main Street Program; and Michael Pulice, Lena McDonald, and Blake Edwards, Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Criteria Justification

Criterion A: Commerce

The Piedmont Avenue Boundary Increase is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce as its resources represent the continuation of downtown commercial and public building functions beyond the original historic district boundaries. The increase area is contiguous to the original historic district at the middle of its northern boundary and encompasses 10 resources along two blocks of Piedmont Avenue. These commercial, fraternal, and public building resources are historically associated with the continued development of downtown Bristol. Bristol originated with the advent of the railroad, while Piedmont Avenue originated with the popularity of the automobile. The resources in the boundary increase contribute to the significance of the original historic district as they represent the continued growth and prosperity of downtown Bristol as a commercial hub of southwest Virginia from the early-to-mid-twentieth century.

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Criterion C: Architecture

Constructed between 1931 and 1941, with a 1957 addition, the contributing resources associated with the boundary increase continue the architectural character of the historic district, as they relate to the commercial enterprises as well as the expansion of downtown. The Commercial style of the early to mid-twentieth century is common along the one-story brick commercial buildings fronting Piedmont Avenue, along with strong examples of the Neoclassical and Art Deco styles that are found in the two- and three-story governmental and fraternal buildings, alongside other commercial buildings exhibiting the Moderne and Modernist styles.

Historical Background

Euro-Americans began settling the area that would become Bristol Virginia-Tennessee led by James King (1752-1825) when he emigrated from England in 1769. In 1782, he married Sarah Goodson and purchased several acres near what is now present-day Bristol. King became wealthy after he established an iron works and was a business partner in a nail factory. His youngest son, James King, Jr. (1791-1867) also became a wealthy businessman, and in 1814, two years after his marriage, he purchased 1,600 acres from Issac Shelby near his father's estate. The land was situated in Sullivan County, Tennessee, and Washington County, Virginia, and would become the present site of Bristol.⁵ King and his new wife built their Federal-style house on a prominent hillside that eventually overlooked the then Town of Bristol.

By the mid-1840s, surveyors projected that the future Virginia-Tennessee railroad would terminate at the Virginia-Tennessee border. Investors speculated on the anticipated economic growth and the need for a definitive town. In 1852, James King, Jr.'s new son-in-law Joseph Anderson convinced King to sell him 100 acres to establish such a town. Within a year, Anderson had the area surveyed, divided into lots, erected the first building, and named the town Bristol for a city in England. Bristol was situated in both Virginia and Tennessee and was legally two towns.⁶

Neighbor Colonel Goodson also envisioned a town and established one called Goodsonville right beside Bristol. Colonel Samuel Eason Goodson (1793-1870) had inherited a 384-acre tract from his father John Goodson upon his death in 1829. John Goodson was the brother-in-law of James King Sr. As the railroad was nearing completion, three different towns surrounded it: Bristol, Virginia, Bristol, Tennessee, and Goodsonville, Virginia. In late 1855, Goodsonville and Bristol, Virginia merged to form the town of Goodson, Virginia, and in early 1856, Bristol, Tennessee incorporated. On October 1, 1856, the first train pulled into Goodson, Virginia. And in May, 1858, the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad pulled into its new depot in Bristol, Tennessee. To complicate its identity, the Virginia and Tennessee railroad refused to use the name Goodson and gave its depot location as Bristol, Virginia. Many citizens and business owners also continued to use the name Bristol.⁷

The arrival of the railroads brought prosperity to Goodson and Bristol. Merchants, druggists, a blacksmith, a baker, a tailor, and a buggy taxi service were established because of the railroad

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and depot. Banking became an early business, and industries such as mills, a tannery, and a woodworking shop were all established prior to the Civil War. But both Goodson and Bristol suffered during the Civil War with eastern markets being cut off, a depressed economy, and several raids by Federal troops, including the destruction of both depots.⁸

Reconstruction and Growth (1865-1914)

After the Civil War, both towns rebounded and the combined population reached 2,000. The boundary increase area remained largely undeveloped as it contained south flowing Beaver Creek, which acted as a natural barrier between the downtown to its east and the western flanking residential hillside. This is the land that James King Jr. originally owned and where he built his Federal style home. The prominent neighborhood Solar Hill soon grew around it.

During 1870 to 1890, many businesses were established on Main (State) Street, including a jewelry store, millinery store, and a confectionery company, in addition to dry good stores and a large hardware store. As the economy continued, so did the number of stores with now multiple bakeries, jewelry and millinery stores, druggists and tailors, and a fine furniture store. Two major banks were established, and the number of industries, factories, and mills continued to rise. With rampant business growth and interactions, the confusion of the town's name and its identity was finally simplified in 1890, when the town became incorporated as the City of Bristol.⁹

However, one of the most significant commercial enterprises to be established in Bristol was tobacco. In 1871, Major A. D. Reynolds, the brother of R. J. Reynolds, made his home in Bristol, and established a tobacco processing plant that in ten years boasted 500 employees. By the late 1890s and the addition of two more buildings, the Bristol Reynolds Tobacco factory was "one of the leading tobacco processing plants in the nation."¹⁰ Despite this success, in 1897 Reynolds sold the plant and it was eventually dismantled. Although he made an indelible mark on the city, the tobacco industry vanished from Bristol.

At the turn of the 20th century, the combined Bristol, Virginia, and Bristol, Tennessee, population was just under 10,000. Main (State) Street was a thriving commercial center augmented by an expanding rail service. After 1900, Bristol served as the commercial, financial, retail, educational, and educational center for surrounding counties in southwest Virginia, east Tennessee, and western North Carolina. Prominent banks, a post office, and a church were built downtown, and three colleges overlooked the flanking hills of the city. Numerous hotels and theaters also served travelers and citizens alike throughout downtown.

World War I and World War II (1914-1945)

At the beginning of World War I, Bristol was a thriving and diversified city with commercial and industrial activities. In 1920, the combined Bristol, Virginia-Tennessee population had reached almost 14,800 people. All contributing resources and one of the two non-contributing resources of the boundary increase were built during this time period.

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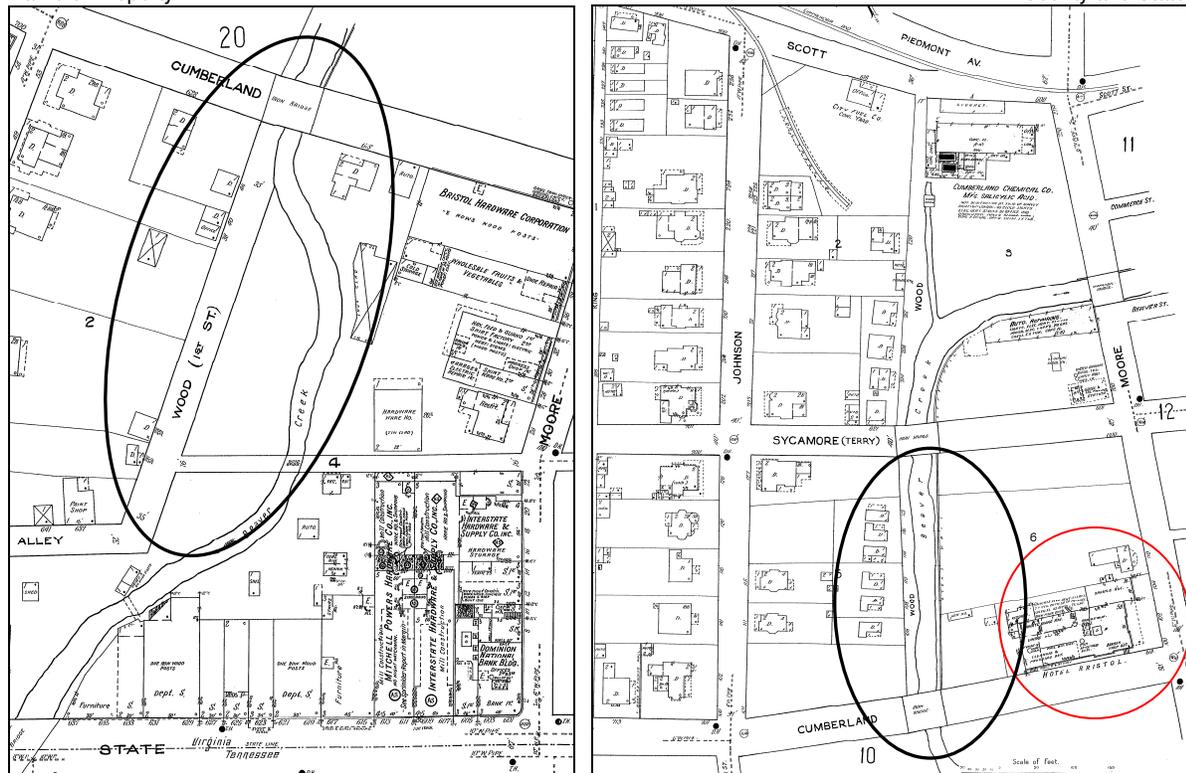


Figure 2. 1922 Sanborn Map, pages 10 (L) and 20 (R) denoting the future site of Piedmont Avenue and the boundary increase as noted in the black oval shapes. Note the workers' housing located on the west side of Beaver Creek on page 20— as also shown in Figure 3. The red circle notes the location of the Hotel Bristol and its proximity to the boundary increase.

In 1922, Bristol's commercial center was clearly centered along State Street (formerly Main Street) with a commercial extension north on Moore Street. Moore Street paralleled the east side of Beaver Creek and Wood Street, which soon would be re-constructed into Piedmont Avenue (the boundary increase). One block north of State Street, at the northwest intersection of Moore and Cumberland streets, stood a prominent downtown fixture, the brick five-story Hotel Bristol. The hotel served travelers for almost 50 years before being razed c. 1974 during the federally-funded urban renewal program. This hotel stood adjacent to the east side of the boundary increase area (see Figure 2).¹¹

On the west side of Beaver Creek, the thriving late 19th and early 20th century neighborhood Solar Hill developed. This prominent hillside was property that James King Jr. had purchased shortly after his 1812 marriage. Mountain View, his c. 1820 Federal style brick house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (102-0019) in 1994 as the King-Lancaster-McCoy House. The intact neighborhood with substantial frame and brick houses situated on large parcels was also listed as the Solar Hill Historic District (102-5015) in 2001. A portion of the boundary increase adjoins the district's eastern boundary.¹²

As the city grew east to west, it also needed to expand south to north. In June 1925, citizens requested to City Council that a two-block street be built over Beaver Creek from State to

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Cumberland streets (it was built one block longer to Sycamore Street) to connect to an existing street to the north. The street was originally to be called Mosby Street, in honor of Col. John. S. Mosby who resided just northwest of Wood Street after the Civil War. After the city had obtained property right of ways, construction began around 1928 and by 1930 Beaver Creek was straightened and encapsulated by the new 70 foot wide Piedmont Avenue for three blocks from State to Sycamore streets. From there it connected with a street already named Piedmont Avenue, and continued north as part of Route 11, a major transportation corridor.¹³

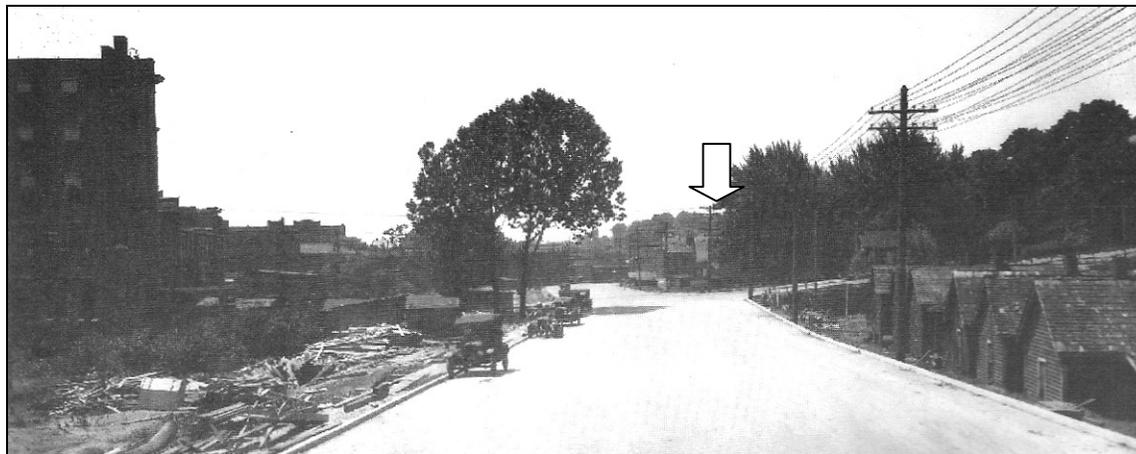


Figure 3. A c. 1929 photograph of Piedmont Avenue under construction; view south toward downtown and State Street. Note worker's housing at right, which became the site of the 1933 United States Post Office, and Hotel Bristol to the left (razed c. 1974). The intersection in the middle of the photograph is Cumberland Street, where the Masonic Lodge would be built in 1931 (arrow location). Credit Tim Buchanan.

Although no filling stations were built in the boundary increase, six of them flanked the new Piedmont Avenue; two stood at its southern entrance from State Street, two were in the middle, on the north and south corners of Sycamore Street, and two flanked the northern end where Piedmont Avenue curves under the railroad trestle and meets the existing Piedmont Avenue. Restaurants sat beside two of these filling stations. Also along this three-block stretch, other buildings were used for 'auto sales and service,' 'auto repair,' and 'washing and greasing.' Although none of these are extant, two former transportation related buildings remain in the boundary increase: a Greyhound Bus Station and a Firestone store and service station.

The former **Greyhound Bus Station (102-102-5032 and 102-5035-0002)** was built one block north of State Street in 1938, during Greyhound's rapid growth period. The advent of federal highways and the subsequent decline in railway passenger service increased the need for additional bus travel. To accommodate this growth, Greyhound built many new stations, just like this one in the period between 1937 and 1945, mostly in the Streamline Moderne style.¹⁴ The bus station was a downtown fixture as it stood close to hotels and businesses and was not too far from the train depot. It was especially popular with local factory workers as it featured a lunch counter; the terrazzo tiled floor is still marked where the waitresses worked behind the u-shaped counter.¹⁵ The bus station design was also a model for segregation, as the African-American

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citizens were forced to enter the building from a rear entrance into their small, enclosed, barely ventilated waiting room. This waiting room was located on the far right-side of the station, which was illuminated with three ribbons of glassblock so as to obscure them being seen. Conversely, this architectural feature contributed to a dramatic exterior façade. Despite its façade modifications, the former bus station is considered a contributing resource because the building's iconic original massing has not changed and much of the exterior and the interior remain intact; yet moreover, because of its important place in Bristol's history.

The other transportation-related resource is the former **Firestone Store and Service Station (102-5035-0010)** standing at the northeast corner of Piedmont Avenue and Sycamore Street (two fillings stations once stood across the street from it). The building is listed as Firestone Auto Supply & Service Store in the 1936 Hill's Bristol Directory, and is listed on the 1946 Sanborn Map as Auto Supplies & Service. The Art Moderne style building has remained virtually intact, as Firestone continued to operate out of the building until at least 1980, when it is last listed in Hill's Directory; the current owner, Greene's Upholstery, had purchased the building by 1990.

Four, one-story brick commercial buildings were built between 1936 and 1940 on both sides of the first full block of Piedmont Avenue, within the boundary increase. The building at **40-46 Piedmont Avenue (102-5018 and 102-5035-0001)** consists of four storefronts, each formerly with a three-bay storefront with transoms. During the 1940s, this building featured Warren's Restaurant, the Sanitary Barber Shop, and a Big Ben Store. Adjacent to this building on its north side is **48 Piedmont Avenue (102-5053-0003)** which featured the Nan Sue Beauty Shop. Adjoining its north side is the 75' wide **50-54 Piedmont Avenue (102-5035-0004)**, a tripartite storefront building that opened in 1938 with the A&P Food Store (50); the Bristol Cigar & Tobacco Co. (52); and the U-Tote-Em Grocery store (54), which remained through the 1940s. Across the street, and wrapped around the corner of Piedmont and Cumberland (the main intersection) is the Moderne inspired **Piedmont Hardware (102-5019 and 102-5035-0005)** that opened in 1940 with a market and a music store. By 1946, it was an appliance and hardware store, alongside a Navy Recruiting Station. The 1951 Hill's Directory lists it as Piedmont Hardware.

Two significant resources to the boundary increase overlook the north and southwest corners of the main intersection of Piedmont Avenue and Cumberland Street. The 1931 Art Deco **Bristol Masonic Temple (102-5020 and 102-5035-0006)** was the earliest building erected in the boundary increase. This imposing three-story brick and limestone edifice has served the entire City of Bristol since its opening. Although a Fraternal organization, its first floor space with its decorative three-bay storefront always provided civic-related office space. In 1936, the first floor contained the Bristol Va-Tenn Chamber of Commerce, Bristol Tourist Bureau, Bristol Traffic Bureau, and the First Federal Savings & Loan Association (before opening their own building in 1941). In 1958, the building also housed the offices and practice studio of the Bristol Ballet Company. The Masonic Temple ceased its fraternal activities in 2007. Two years later a young Bristol couple purchased it, and they operate the popular Bluebird Bakery from the first floor and mezzanine level while living upstairs.

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Across Cumberland Street on its northwest corner stands the equally imposing two-story brick and limestone **United States Post Office (102-0012 and 102-5035-0007)**. Built in the Neoclassical style in 1933 under the supervision of architect James Wetmore, this building is an important landmark to the City of Bristol.¹⁶ First listed in the 1936 Hill's Directory, the second floor served the U. S. Army Recruiting Office, "US Int Rev (Income Tax Div)," and "U S PO Inspector." By 1985, the government had vacated the building and the USA Reserve Center used it for the next ten years. By 2009, it was used for the Bristol Banquet & Catering and the Southeast Culinary and Hospitality College, but has been vacant and for sale for several years.

Adjacent to the United States Post Office is the 1941 **First Federal Savings & Loan Association (102-5053-0007)**, another important landmark that signified the importance of Bristol's continuing prominence in the financial markets. Built in the Modernist style, the bank opened with much excitement as noted in the October 17, 1941, edition of the *Bristol Herald Courier*. Known as the Piedmont Building, the First Federal Savings & Loan Association operated out of it until c. 1985 when it was changed to the Charter Federal Savings & Loan, which continued until 2000, when it became Kerr-Boswell, Inc. During the 1940s and '50s, it was the preeminent office space for legal professionals including lawyers, insurance agents, accountants, and notaries. Well-known Bristol architect Clarence B. Kearfott also had his office there during this same time period. Clarence B. Kearfott (1917-1989) designed homes, schools, churches, offices, hotels, and government buildings. The First Baptist Church and the downtown Reynolds Arcade, named for A. D. Reynolds, are two of his better known works.¹⁷

The New Dominion (1945-Present)

By World War II, Bristol had a population of around 32,000 and was a leading regional city. Its location at the corner of a five state area and its accessibility by rail, highway, contributed to its success. Wartime industries were located in Bristol and other large manufacturing plants continued to move into the area in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The commercial dominance of downtown Bristol stayed strong with a staggering number of 142 retail stores. Bristol was considered the "Shopping Center of the Appalachians" as it was located between Roanoke, Virginia to the northeast and Knoxville, Tennessee to the southwest.¹⁸

Following World War II, Bristol's population continued to rise, and in 1956 Bristol celebrated its 100-year anniversary as an incorporated city. In 1957, a major addition was added to the rear of the **First Federal Savings & Loan Association (102-5053-0007)**, replacing a large two-story frame house that had stood behind it on a separate parcel. The only building built outside the period of significance in the boundary increase is a c. 1980 one-story brick building at **111 Piedmont Avenue (102-5035-0009)**. Built for the Virginia Employment Commission, it served as the Bristol Health Department for many years, and currently houses the Ward & Rasnic Law Office. Although considered non-contributing due to its late date of construction, the building blends in with the scale and character of the surrounding district.

By the 1960s, however, like other cities, Bristol's vibrant downtown began to change as shoppers tried new strip malls. The rise of large shopping malls led to the decline of the

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downtown and many stores and large department stores closed their doors by the 1980s. Merchants and building owners chose, in many cases, to modernize the exteriors of the existing building stock. New shopping areas began to draw shoppers away from the pedestrian-oriented business district. The loss of traditional commerce downtown has been augmented by the opening of new specialty shops, restaurants, office space, museums, art galleries, and the continuance of long-time landmarks such as the 1931 Art Deco style Paramount Theatre with its original neon sign that have revitalized downtown.

In tandem with strong local government planning and participating in the future of its downtown, the city has two strong non-profit organizations to work with, the Bristol Historical Association and Main Street's Believe in Bristol. The Bristol Historical Association recently celebrated its 35th anniversary. The association was formed under the auspices of local elementary school teacher Joyce Kistner and a small group of citizens concerned about the decline of downtown. The association is active in the community, has acquired and preserved historic buildings, organized annual house tours, and provides lectures to the public and presentations to school groups.¹⁹

Since 2000, the twin cities have enjoyed their own non-profit organization Believe in Bristol, an association that advocates for downtown by participating in and sponsoring community events. In conjunction, Bristol, Tennessee/Virginia became re-certified as a designated Main Street Community in 2006, and enjoy an office in the downtown historic district on Moore Street adjacent to the boundary increase. Believe in Bristol has hosted film events, loft tours, open houses, art events, and business competitions, along with member-based committees that focus on Design, Economic Vitality, Film Festival, Promotions, Organization, and Arts & Entertainment.²⁰ The City of Bristol as a whole is focused on increasing and promoting arts and entertainment venues, such as the Birthplace of Country Music Museum that opened in 2006 in a renovated automotive dealership adjacent to the boundary increase at 520 Cumberland Street.

Adjacent to the museum is the latest downtown development, the renovation of the 1920s Reynolds Arcade, at Cumberland and Lee streets. This former office building designed by local architect Clarence B. Kearfott is scheduled to reopen in 2018 as the Bristol Hotel. The seven-story brick building overlooks downtown to the south, City Hall, Cumberland Square Park, and Beaver Creek to the north, and the Piedmont Avenue Boundary Increase two blocks to the west.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Boyd, Peyton AIA, Bristol Masonic Temple PIF102-5020. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 2007.

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New York, NY: Sanborn Insurance Company.

Thomason, Phil. Bristol Commercial Historic District, National Register nomination 102-5017. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 2002.

Thomason, Phil. Solar Hill Historic District, National Register nomination 102-5015. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 2001.

Wright, Russell. Bristol U.S. Post Office PIF102-0012. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 1981.

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

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- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR File No. 102-5035

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.30 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- 1. Latitude: 36.597636 Longitude: -82.184536
- 2. Latitude: 36.597580 Longitude: -82.183211
- 3. Latitude: 36.596116 Longitude: -82.184080
- 4. Latitude: 36.596353 Longitude: -82.184978
- 5. Latitude: 36.596870 Longitude: -82.184163

Or UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- 1. Zone: Easting: Northing:
- 2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

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3. Zone: Easting: Northing:
4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary increase includes all tax parcels indicated within the boundary lines on the attached tax parcel map entitled "Bristol Commercial Historic District Piedmont Avenue Boundary Increase, City of Bristol, VA, DHR #102-5035, Tax Parcel Map." The entire parcel number is shown on the map, along with the parcel's street address number. The true and correct historic boundaries also are shown on the attached Location Map and Sketch Map/Photo Key.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries encompass a collection of resources that relate to the contiguous Bristol Commercial Historic District. The original 23-acre district comprises commercial buildings along 5th, 6th, 7th, Cumberland, Lee, Moore, Goode, and State Streets and Piedmont Avenue. The Piedmont Avenue Boundary Increase extends the district boundaries north along part of the 00-100 block and the entire 100 block of the three block long Piedmont Avenue that opened c. 1930 and includes commercial, fraternal, governmental, and financial resources that were built between 1931 and 1941, with a 1957 addition. Inclusion of this area strengthens the boundaries of the historic district with additional historic resources that are significant in the areas of Architecture and Commerce.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Anne Stuart Beckett
organization: Same
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e-mail: asbeckett@cox.net
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date: February 2017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. The name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Bristol Commercial Historic District Piedmont Avenue Boundary Increase

City or Vicinity: City of Bristol

County: Washington

State: VA

Photographer: Anne Stuart Beckett

Date Photographed: January and February 2017

Digital Repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1/8: The 1930s buildings along 40 - 58 Piedmont Avenue, view north.

Photo 2/8: 41 Piedmont Avenue, the former 1936 Greyhound Bus Station, view northeast.

Photo 3/8: 41 Piedmont Avenue, Greyhound Bus Station, mosaic floor logo at front entrance.

Photo 4/8: 58 Piedmont Avenue, the former 1931 Masonic Temple, at intersection with Cumberland Street and the former 1933 United States Post Office in background, view north.

Photo 5/8: View west from Cumberland Street toward intersection with Piedmont Avenue. From left to right are the former c. 1940 Piedmont Hardware, Masonic Temple, and United States Post Office. The adjacent Solar Hill Historic District (102-5015) is in the background.

Photo 6/8: Façade of the United States Post Office at 100 Piedmont Avenue. View west from Cumberland Street.

Photo 7/8: View southwest from Cumberland Street toward intersection with Piedmont Avenue. From left to right is the 40-58 block of Piedmont Avenue (west side), Masonic Temple and United States Post Office.

Photo 8/8: Piedmont Avenue, view south of the entire two blocks of the historic district, depicting the former Firestone Store at 115 Piedmont (left side of photograph), and the former 1941 First Federal Savings & Loan Association building at 110 Piedmont Avenue.

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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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Endnotes

¹ Phil Thomason, Bristol Commercial Historic District, National Register nomination (Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 2002).

² Sanborn Insurance Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: 1922 and 1946 (New York, NY: Sanborn Insurance Company), and Tim Buchanan Interview (City of Bristol, Virginia, February 2017).

³ Peyton Boyd AIA, Bristol Masonic Temple PIF 102-5020 (Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 2002).

⁴ Ken Moynak Personal Interview (City of Bristol, Virginia, February 2017).

⁵ Phil Thomason, Bristol Commercial Historic District, National Register nomination (Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 2002).

⁶ Thomason

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ 1922 Sanborn Map and Personal Interview with Tim Buchanan (City of Bristol, Virginia, February 2017).

¹² 1922 Sanborn Map, and Phil Thomason, Solar Hill Historic District, National Register nomination. (Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 2001).

¹³ City of Bristol Minute Book, Tim Buchanan Personal Interview and Archives.

¹⁴ Greyhound Bus Line web information, February 2017.

¹⁵ Ken Moynak.

¹⁶ Russell Wright, Bristol U.S. Post Office PIF. (Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 1981).

¹⁷ Angie Bishop Personal Interview (City of Bristol, Virginia, February 2017) and Bristol Historical Association website, February 2017.

<http://bristolhistoricalassociation.com/landmarks.html>

¹⁸ Phil Thomason, Bristol Commercial Historic District, National Register nomination.

¹⁹ <http://bristolhistoricalassociation.com/landmarks.html>

²⁰ Believe in Bristol Annual Organizational Report 2015-2016. 2016.