

HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY
CITY OF DANVILLE, BOYLE COUNTY, KENTUCKY
SURVEY REPORT



David L. Taylor
Historic Preservation Consultant
Brookville, PA 15825
2021

INTRODUCTION

The 2020-2021 Historic Resource Survey of individual properties within the City of Danville, Boyle County, Kentucky was funded by a Certified Local Government Grant to the City from the Kentucky Heritage Council (KHC), using funds from the U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. During the Fall of 2020, the City solicited proposals from firms or individuals who met the Department of the Interior's professional qualification standards for historic preservation as published in 36 CFR 61. Following proper procurement, the City selected David L. Taylor to undertake the project. Taylor had a long history of historic preservation activities throughout much of Kentucky and had completed previous projects in Danville. His résumé appears as Appendix A.

Joni House, Historic Preservation Coordinator for the City of Danville, was a critical component in the process. She provided the list of properties to be investigated, completed historic resource survey forms for a number of individual properties and coordinated with Consultant David Taylor in all aspects of the undertaking.

The Kentucky Historic Resources Survey is an official record of historic sites recorded on survey forms that are compiled through fieldwork and research. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires states and territories across the nation to establish this record, calling for the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to "conduct a comprehensive statewide survey of historic properties and maintain inventories of such properties." By examining historic resources (buildings, structures, sites, and objects,) gathering data from those examinations, conducting related research, and maintaining records of that research, the SHPOs establish the baseline data needed to make informed decisions about historic properties. States, such as Kentucky, also inventory archaeological resources, preserving a record of both prehistory and the early historical period. In Kentucky, the archaeological survey is maintained separately by the Office of State Archaeology. The KHC's Historic Resources Survey program has been actively recording Kentucky's historic places for over 40 years. Local volunteers with an interest in historic preservation carried out initial survey activities. In general, the first survey projects concentrated on historic resources associated with high architectural style, Kentucky's wealthiest or most famous residents, and the Commonwealth's oldest structures. In the 1970s, the KHC began a

comprehensive statewide architectural survey conducted by professional architectural historians. Their focus shifted to a more comprehensive view of the cultural and historic resources that make Kentucky unique, now including resources such as barns, downtown commercial buildings, industrial sites, and vernacular houses. This more comprehensive approach began to expand the view of the state's rich past; the KHC has continued to widen its scope to encompass a rich and varied landscape of historic resources. See (<http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/nhpa1966.htm>). The words "sites," "resources," or "inventory" are often used as synonyms for "survey" in this context, so one might find variations such as the "Kentucky's Historic Sites Inventory," etc. The KHC, with the assistance of numerous local groups and many individuals, has documented over 80,000 historic sites, many of which contain multiple historic resources. These resources range from houses to battlefields to agricultural and industrial complexes to entire streetscapes of commercial buildings. They range in size from very small--a war monument, for example, or a highway marker--to quite large--a whole distillery complex or a lock and dam. They cover a broad historic period, from Kentucky's settlement period in the eighteenth century to the recent past. The NHPA also established the National Register of Historic Places. Administered jointly by the National Park Service and the SHPOs, the National Register is the nation's official list of historic and archaeological resources deemed worthy of preservation. The National Register recognizes districts, landscapes, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is part of a federal program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archeological resources. One of the main purposes of the Historic Resources Survey is to provide guidance in determining what is and what is not eligible for the National Register. According to National Park Service guidelines, properties eligible for National Register listing must be at least 50 years old--or, if not, must be of exceptional importance; must possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association; and must meet at least one of four Criteria for Evaluation of significance: A--Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or B--Properties that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or C--Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method

of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or—D: Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. The significance of a historic property can be judged and explained best when it is evaluated within its historic context. Historic contexts are those patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history or prehistory is elucidated; the survey is used to help select resources for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. National Register listing establishes a property's eligibility for grants and tax benefits, and provides planning data for federal, state, and local projects. The survey helps to understand the context in order to make eligibility determinations. A property included in the Kentucky Historic Resources Survey may or may not be eligible for the National Register. Lacking adequate context, many of them are given "undetermined" status. Very early survey efforts in the state sometimes involved rejection of sites for inclusion. This did not mean that the survey form was rejected as incomplete or inaccurate, but that the property was deemed unworthy to be part of the survey. However, it soon became clear that once field documentation of a site had taken place, and the survey form filled out correctly, that form became an official record to be maintained. If the property is judged to have insufficient historic significance or integrity to be eligible for the National Register, the form documents that decision. The record itself is a valuable resource. For many of these historic properties, however significant, the survey will be the only official record of their existence. For this reason, Historic Resource Survey forms contain a valuable archive of Kentucky's historic built environment. The reasons why a given property may be determined ineligible for the National Register are varied. In many instances, the property may be too heavily altered or too deteriorated to qualify: in other words, it lacks historic integrity. On the other hand, it still has historic information to offer. In other cases, the property type may not be sufficiently understood to determine its eligibility. Only through documentation can we begin to establish that understanding. A site's National Register nomination normally includes comparisons of the nominated property to others of similar type, some which may already be listed on the National Register, but others that are only documented in the survey. The benefits of the Kentucky Historic Resources Survey are

far-reaching. For the KHC staff and professional consultants, the survey provides essential data to make historic preservation planning decisions. If, for example, a road-widening project is planned for a certain corridor using Federal funds, the firm designing the roadway will hire a professional consultant to consider its impact on historic properties. The first place the consultant will turn is the Historic Resource Survey files. The consultant uses the KHC's data to locate documented historic properties in or near the Areas of Potential Effect (APE) of the planned road. They also do further field work in the APE to document previously undocumented historic sites. They then can see how the project impacts the identified cultural resources, as required by the NHPA and the National Transportation Act. For the general public, the survey files are also an important source. If someone is restoring a missing porch to a historic house of a particular period and style, for example, they can search the survey files for houses from the same period and style to find appropriate models for their design. A genealogical researcher may turn to the survey files for information about an ancestor's home. For more information about the Historic Resource Survey, KHC Survey website is available at: <http://www.heritage.ky.gov/natreg/histbldgsurv/>. The survey files at the KHC are a unique and important archive. Currently, there is no backup copy of this archive, but the KHC has been exploring the possibility of scanning all the survey files and the hundreds of thousands of photographs that are in the Council's care. This would not only ensure the continued survival of the survey files, but would ultimately make them more available to the public.

The Kentucky Historic Resources Survey is a single sheet of paper with information on both the front and the back, although the documentation for any given individual site may include continuation sheets and further forms for associated resources. Each survey form is identified by a unique survey number. Kentucky's survey site numbers, like those of many other states, are alphanumeric and include both a county prefix and a site number, such as BOD-449 in Boyle County. The survey forms are filed in order by county and site number at the KHC.

Objectives

The project consisted of several specific objectives:

- to complete a research design, setting forth the process of the survey

- to identify and document specific properties within the City of Danville, Boyle County, Kentucky.
- to conduct an intensive-level architectural survey of these properties, photographing each of them, undertaking local history research, and completing KHC survey forms for each.
- to prepare a Survey Report that, along with all other survey products, would be delivered to the City and to the KHC.

At the outset of the project the following Research Design was developed. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in-person public meetings could not be held; the Consultant met on two occasions with City Historic Preservation Coordinator Joni House.

Research Design and Results

The following was submitted and approved at the beginning of the project.

Introduction

This project consists of an intensive-level survey of a series of individual properties in the downtown and immediately adjacent residential areas of the City of Danville, which is located approximately 36 miles south of Lexington, in Boyle County, Kentucky. Approximately 80 properties will be documented. The project is funded by a Historic Preservation Fund Grant from the U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, administered by the Kentucky Heritage Council. Following proper procurement, Historic Preservation Consultant David Taylor was selected to perform the survey which has a timeline beginning in August 2020 and continuing through October 2021.

Objective of the Survey

This project has as its goal the documentation and recordation of specific individual properties along East and West Main Street, Wilderness Road, East and West Broadway, North 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Street, Larrimore Lane, and Wilderness Road. The survey would evaluate the significance of all properties, both as properties individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and as elements in potential historic districts

Geographical Description of the Survey Areas

As noted above, this project focuses upon portions of Danville's historic central business district and adjacent residential areas. Overall, the survey area is approximately 35.3 acres in area. The central business district consists of both retail and adjoining commercial and institutional buildings, including store buildings, institutional resources, the county court house, and churches. The adjoining area to the north is primarily residential in character, consisting of detached domestic architecture and a small number of commercial properties. The properties in the downtown are

typically built with no front- or side-lot setback, although institutional buildings do exhibit front lawns and associated parking areas.

The survey area consists of detached houses finished in wood, brick, and non-historic material, with varying lot sizes and setbacks, sidewalks and tree lawns along tree-lined streets, generally modest front and side yards, and some domestic dependencies. The downtown area is characterized by a typical “downtown” appearance, with commercial and institutional architecture of masonry construction, generally with little or no setback, and a minimum of street plantings.

Primary historic contexts within this survey area were *Mid-Nineteenth to Mid-Twentieth-Century Domestic Design* and *Mid-Nineteenth to Mid-Twentieth-Century Commercial Design*.

The following property types were identified in the course of the survey:

- Single-family domestic architecture
- Multi-family domestic architecture
- Nineteenth-century commercial architecture
- Twentieth-century commercial architecture
- Institutional architecture, including religious buildings, fraternal buildings, and public buildings.

Survey Process and Methodology

No volunteers were used to gather information on individual properties within the subject area; all work elements were undertaken by the Consultant. Each street within the project area was traveled and photographs were taken of each property. In the few instances when foliage was heavy, GoogleEarth images supplemented contemporary images. Photography took place only from public rights-of-way and, depending upon the physical character of individual properties, included more than one image. The images were taken with a Canon digital SLR camera and were produced at a scale of 1,600 x 1,200 pixels at 300 dpi. The images were each be labeled according to SHPO requirements. When available, historic images were embedded onto the survey forms as well as contemporary views.

Following fieldwork and photography, an Excel database was prepared covering all surveyed properties.

Local and regional history and public record research was to be carried out, including the study of public documents, published sources, historic photos, post card collections, and Internet and oral sources. However, due to the Covid pandemic, the local library and other research venues were closed and research was confined to the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort; their digital collection of historic city directories was extremely helpful. Internet sources included ancestry.com, newspapers.com, and citydirectories.com.

Mapping of the survey area was prepared, noting the survey boundaries and individual

resources. Mapping was provided in a digital format.

This Survey Report was prepared, describing the scope and scale of the survey, the project's methodology, a description of the historic contexts identified in the course of the project, etc.

The Consultant worked closely with the City and the KHC and submitted all products to both for review and comment.

Results

It was anticipated that this project would result in the preparation of approximately 80 survey forms, mapping, and a Survey Report covering the study areas, one a downtown area and the other an established residential neighborhood. As noted above, in fact 84 forms were prepared.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that additional survey initiatives be instituted; given the National Register 50-year guideline, neighborhoods and individual resources dating from as late as the 1960s should be considered. A recent example of such activity is the Bayles Addition Historic District, a 1948 historic district in Lee's Summit, Missouri for which Consultant David Taylor recently prepared a National Register nomination.
- Consider combining several Danville historic districts into a new, larger district. This could incorporate the previously-listed districts of Constitution Square (NR 1976), Lexington Avenue-Broadway (1987), Terrace Court (2010), the Danville Commercial Historic District, the McGrorty-Old Wilderness Road district (2019), and the Todd-Montgomery Houses districts and unlisted but potentially eligible areas in between into a Central Danville Historic District. This would in no way diminish the status of the existing districts, but would allow additional resources to enjoy the benefits of National Register listing.

A comparable example of such action was the 2009 National Register listing of the Central Frankfort Historic District that combined four previously-listed districts into one larger, more comprehensive historic district that better reflects the historicity of the Kentucky capitol city.