

Northside Historic District Placed on National Register

Three hundred and 10 acres of old Lexington comprising the Northside Historic District have been entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

The register was set up by Congress in 1966 to recognize sites that have historic, architectural or archaeological significance within the context of the community, state or nation.

Lexington's newest addition is most of the northwest quadrant of the old circular city limits.

Approximately 1700 buildings are included. Property owners, notified earlier of hearings that decided the matter, currently are being informed that the district was entered on the

national register Aug. 28.

Making the announcement is the Kentucky Heritage Commission, which by law makes Kentucky nominations.

Preparation of nomination forms, which include photographs and area history, was done by the Lexington-Fayette County Historic Commission at the urging of the Northside Neighborhood Association. The nomination was written by architectural historian Walter Langsam, with the neighborhood association assisting with the work and helping take photos.

The district is one of the two largest in Kentucky and one of the largest in the country. Old Louisville District includes perhaps 50 more

buildings and may not cover so large an acreage.

The Northside district is called an entity of neighborhoods within a neighborhood on the register form.

The district is described as having a contrasting socio-economic, architectural, racial and urbanistic character comprising a remarkably integrated whole that is a viable place to live.

The area has economically and racially mixed housing. Among the streets are Willy, Dakota, Florida and Smith streets, Bourbon Avenue, Gratz Park (previously on the National Register), Elsmere Park (also on earlier) and Fayette Park.

According Richard S. DeCamp, Historic Commission executive director, listing on the register does the following:

- ✓ Provides an element of prestige due to recognition at state and national levels.

- ✓ Makes buildings considered significant to the area eligible for federal grant-in-aid funding for improvements to the property. In the 50/50 matching grants, the owner puts up half.

However, for the 1979-80 fiscal year the Kentucky Heritage Commission has received requests for \$8 million worth of grant assistance for 85 projects.

But preservation planner David Morgan says the state commission is qualified to apply for only \$1.1 million and probably will receive only \$300,000 to \$400,000.

- ✓ Allows owners of investment properties that qualify (as important to the district) to be eligible for benefits under the Tax Reform Act of 1976.

Improvements certified by the Department of the Interior may be depreciated rapidly for income tax purposes.

- ✓ Protects properties against adverse action by federal agencies.

The widening of a street or road is an example: If federal money is to be used, the adverse effect on national register properties is considered by a national advisory council set up to decide such matters.

- ✓ Provides reasons to discourage demolition of buildings important to the area. Businesses cannot count demolition costs for a building contributing historically or architecturally to the district as a business expense for deductions.

When new construction replaces a significant building, a business cannot take as rapid depreciation as normally would be allowed.

The Northside consists of approximately 40 blocks, chiefly residential

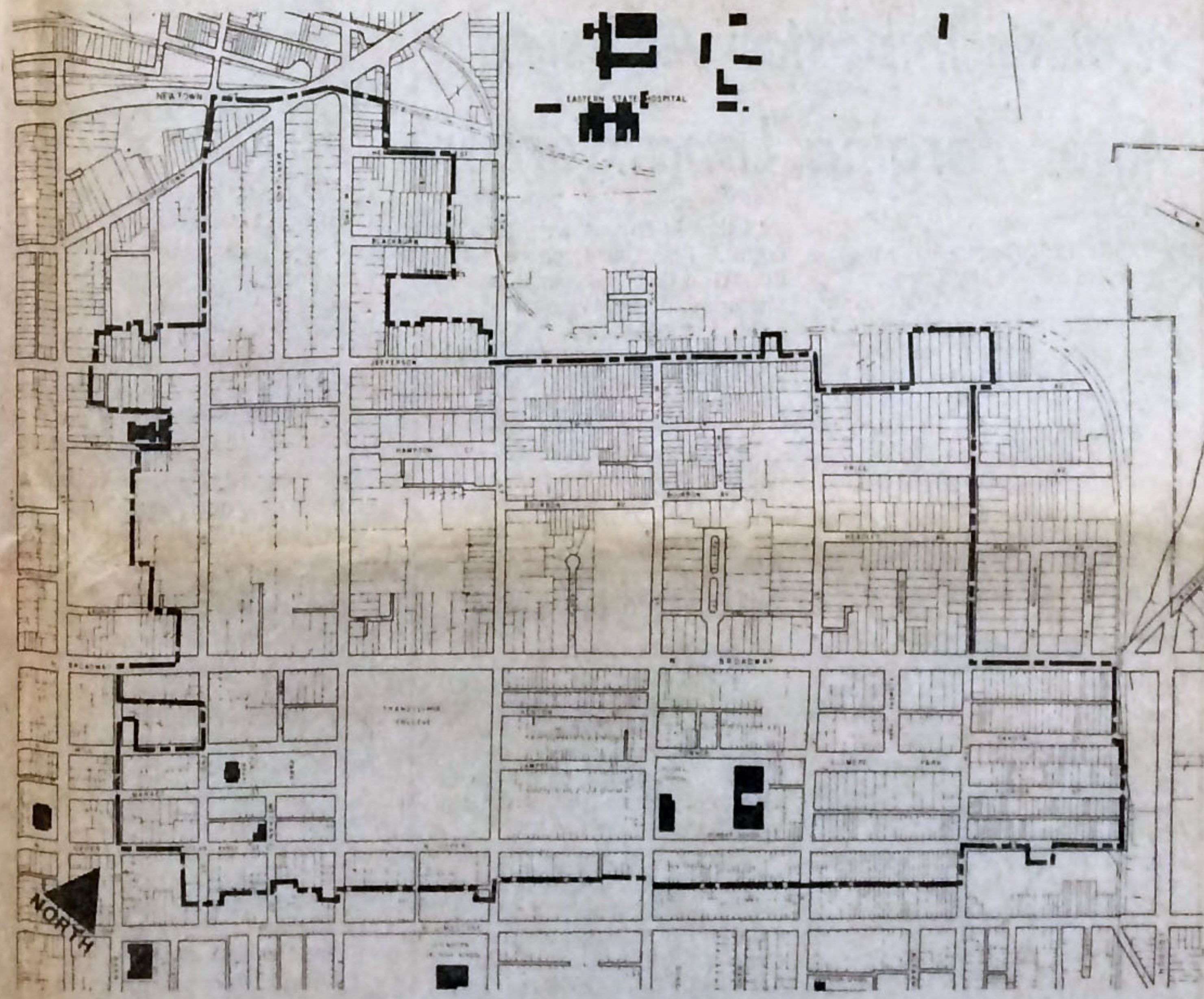
(Turn to **NORTHSIDE, C-5**)



House built in 1870s at 426 North Broadway is in Northside Historic District



Former Methodist church at 156 North Broadway



Heavy black border encloses 310 acres placed on National Register of Historic Places

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intermixed with educational, institutional, religious, public, retail, commercial and a few industrial structures.

A few buildings date from before 1800, but the district is dominated by architecture from the half-century roughly between the War Between the States and World War I.

The district is more or less centered on Broadway, which is wider than other major streets and higher than those on either side where the land tends to slope downward.

Jefferson Street, two blocks west of Broadway, and Upper Street three blocks east, were both described as having more varied architecture than Broadway.

Included in the district are several individual structures already on the register, among them the January-Gibson house on West Second Street; Transylvania University's Morrison College; Christ Church Episcopal; First Presbyterian Church and the Henry Clay Law Office.

The predominantly black area of Brucetown (which includes Dakota and Florida streets) is part of what the historic commission calls "a series of block-long streets, some almost aligned in a continuous chain, many developed as housing for freed slaves and other blacks who flocked to the city after emancipation."

The black areas "were located almost uniformly in the topographically lower portions and were often adjacent to unpleasant facilities such as railroads, cemeteries and insane asylums," the form notes.

Notable exceptions are certain blocks located on the higher geographical points of Upper Street identified with the upper levels of black society, according to Langsam.

Cited as district amenities are full-grown trees that contribute to the area's "appearance and desirability as a place to live ... even where widened streets have lost their lining of trees, backyards are mostly amply and well planted."

Some of the city's earliest fine apartment buildings exist in the area in Hampton Court. Elsewhere are recent motel-type buildings and other structures included on the register but not considered as contributing to the historic district.