

## North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

James G. Martin, Governor  
Patric Dorsey, Secretary

Division of Archives and History  
William S. Price, Jr., Director

June 28, 1990

The Honorable D. J. Mando, Mayor  
Town of Mocksville  
P. O. Box 532  
Mocksville, N C 27028

Re: Certificate of Entry in the National Register of Historic Places for  
Downtown Mocksville Historic District,  
Mocksville, Davie County, June 1, 1990

Dear Mayor Mando:

Please accept the enclosed certificate which states that the above-referenced property has been entered in the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register has been called "a roll call of the tangible reminders of the history of the United States." It is, therefore, a pleasure for the Division of Archives and History to participate in this program and thereby make our nation aware of North Carolina's rich cultural heritage.

In order that we may keep our records up to date, it would be very helpful if you would notify us of any changes in ownership or of any major alteration of the property, including moving, destruction, remodeling, or restoration. We appreciate your efforts and your cooperation in preserving the best of our past for posterity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William S. Price, Jr." with a flourish at the end.

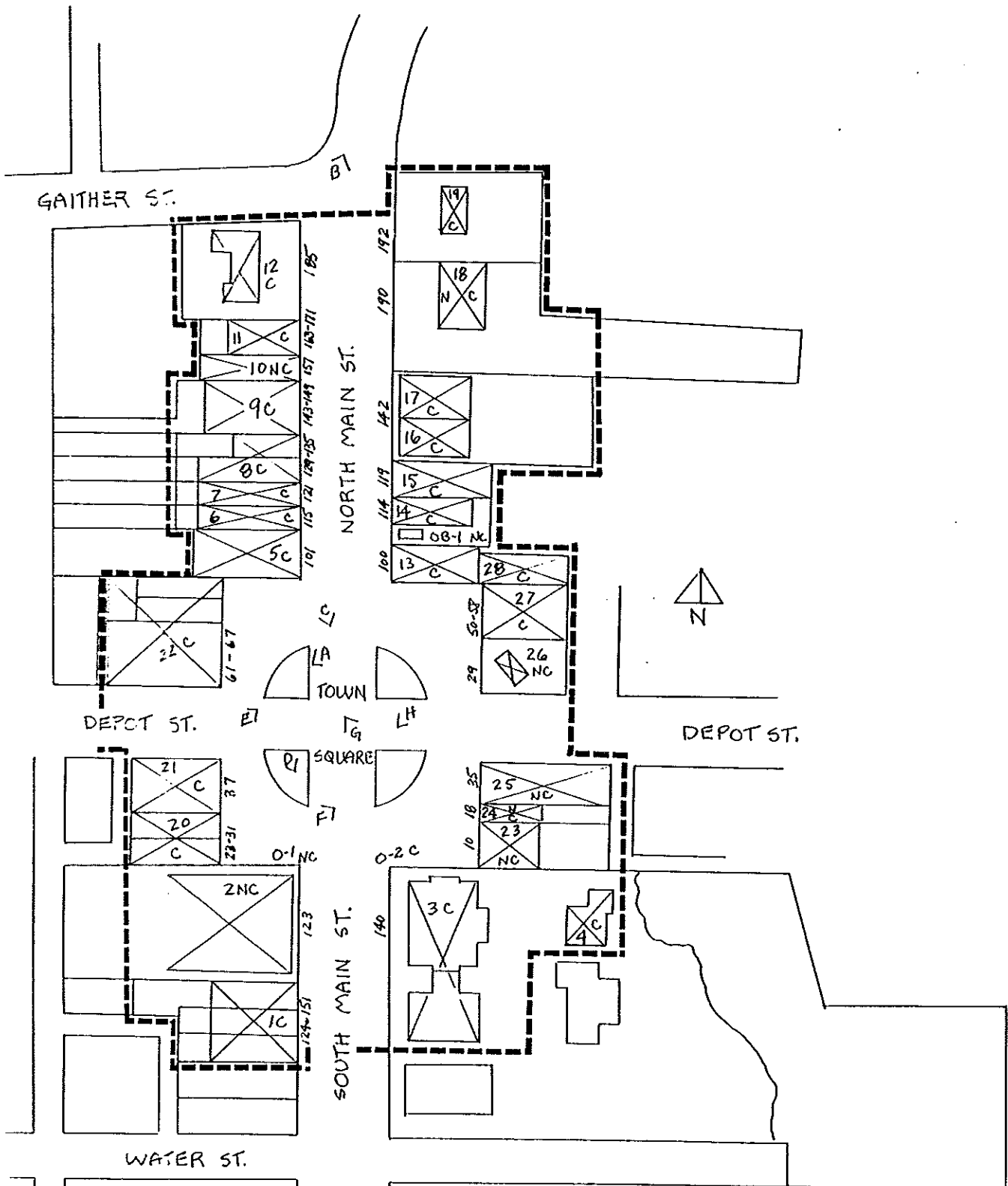
William S. Price, Jr.  
State Historic Preservation Officer

WSP, Jr./mlr

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Jesse Helms  
The Honorable Terry Sanford  
The Honorable W. G. "Bill" Hefner





DOWNTOWN MOCKSVILLE  
 HISTORIC DISTRICT  
 DRAWN FROM DAVIE CO. TAX MAPS  
 1" = 100'



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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Downtown Mocksville Historic District

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number Town Square, N. Main and S. Main Streets

N/A not for publication

city, town Mocksville

N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC

county Davie

code 059

zip code 27028

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>21</u>	<u>8</u> buildings
_____	_____ sites
<u>1</u>	_____ structures
<u>22</u>	<u>1</u> objects
	<u>9</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

COMMERCE/business

COMMERCE/department store

COMMERCE/financial institution

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

COMMERCE/business

COMMERCE/department store

COMMERCE/specialty store

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Commercial Vernacular

Classical Revival

Beaux Arts

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

stucco

roof ceramic tile

other steel

wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Downtown Mocksville Historic District consists of the 1916 Davie County Courthouse [3] and 1909 Davie County Jail [4], the original town square of Mocksville, and a collection of one to three-story brick commercial buildings on and adjacent to the square dating from the 1880s to after World War II. These buildings represent the development of the central business and government district of Mocksville during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Within the district are 22 contributing and 9 non-contributing resources (21 contributing and seven non-contributing primary buildings), including the 1925 Daniel Boone Trail Marker [O 2] and the 1987 War Memorial [O I]. The Davie County Courthouse is already listed in the National Register.

Mocksville's downtown, as laid out in the original 1837 plan, is composed of a central square, an intersecting, broad, north-south street (Main Street, formerly Henderson Street), and smaller east-west Streets (Gaither; Depot, formerly Factory; and Water). Town Square sits on a hill, with streets sloping away from it, except for North Main, which rises gradually from the square. Until 1922, when North Main was paved as part of the state highway system, the square was dominated by the (then) superannuated Davie County Courthouse, which sat in its center. In 1933 quadrant-shaped beds were laid out in the corners of the square and planted with oaks, which have matured and shade the square. During the nineteenth century Main Street was also lined with large elm trees, but these have gradually fallen victim to disease and development and are all gone.

The sense of containment provided by the built-up four angled corners of the square has been maintained through the years, including a new, Post-Modern Davie County Office Building [2] completed in 1990. The weakest section of the square, both historically and architecturally, is the southeast side, which was rebuilt in non-descript commercial and office buildings following a post-World War II fire. However, adjacent to these buildings is the side of the Davie County Courthouse, whose imposing Beaux Arts bulk anchors that corner of the square. Almost hidden down the hill behind the courthouse, the Davie

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County Jail is a severely classical hipped cube of rusticated concrete block with sheetmetal cornices.

The oldest buildings surviving on Town Square are at its northwest corner, where the ca. 1880 C. C. Sanford Store, a companion ca. 1890 Sanford Building and the ca. 1900 Bank of Davie Building were united in 1937 by a refacing into one block, the (former) C. C. Sanford Sons Store [22]. Adjacent to it is the (former) J. T. Baity/Anderson Store [5], with elevations on town Square and North Main, built in 1906, but burned and rebuilt in 1915 with a distinctive shaped front parapet.

At the southwest side of the square are the (former) Meroney Hardware Company Building [20], whose plain, tapestry-brick faced double fronts were constructed in 1922-24. Next to them, at the corner with Depot Street, is the downtown's most architecturally distinctive building, after the courthouse, the Sanford Brothers Building [21] of 1927. At three stories it is the tallest commercial building in downtown, but it also has carefully-detailed Commercial Classical brick and limestone street elevations, and a rear, Spanish-tiled section.

At the northeast corner of the square is the 1938 Horn-Harding Building [27], with a symmetrical tapestry brick facade that retains its original shopfronts, and the yellow brick Commercial Classical (former) Southern Bank & Trust Company Building [13] of 1923, a modest, but well-preserved bank building facing Main Street.

On the east side of North Main Street are the (former) Gaither Tobacco Factory [16], ca. 1880, and the ca. 1900 Horn Building [17], two good examples of ornamental brickwork on vernacular commercial buildings of the late 19th century. On the west side of North Main are largely one-story brick commercial buildings, except for the (former) Princess Theatre [9], which has a slightly eccentric panelled brick facade built in sections during the late 1920s and early 30s, and the 1910 J. T. Angell Building [11] which also has interesting corbelled brickwork on its one- and two-story facades.

On South Main Street the district includes one commercial building, the Classical Revival style Johnstone Office Building [1] of 1939, whose distinctive, long, one-story facade is composed of three offices united by a wooden cornice and divided by wooden Tuscan pilasters.

Also located in the downtown district is a small collection of 1920s and 1930s filling and service stations, including the Spanish Mission

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Revival style Horn Service Station [19]; the (former) Kurfees and Ward Pure Oil Station [12], displaying the distinctive Tudor Revival elements of the Pure Oil chain, but apparently never having the Pure Oil blue tile roof; and the altered (former) Meroney Filling Station [26], which retains its Spanish tile roof.

To the south of the downtown district are later commercial and government buildings and the beginning of the residential area, while to the north is a small section of later commercial development and the North Main Street Historic District. To the east is a steep slope leading through later commercial buildings to the Southern Railway line, and to the west are later commercial buildings and parking lots.

As is common in commercial districts, the first floor fronts of many of the Mocksville downtown buildings have been rebuilt. However, in most cases the upper levels of the buildings have retained their integrity, and some of the original shopfronts have been preserved in part or in whole. Some rehabilitation is taking place, most notably the (former) Meroney Hardware Company Building [20], but most changes in recent years have been commercial renovations of shopfronts.



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Inventory List

Historical information contained in the inventory listings was compiled from Davie County Deeds; vertical files, Davie County Public Library; survey files, N. C. Division of Archives and History; and Kirk F. Mohney, The Historic Architecture of Davie County.

Note: Mocksville street numbers have been revised several times but follow no consistent pattern.

Key

C = contributing  
N = noncontributing  
OB = other building  
O = object

<u>List #</u>	<u>Street #</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Description/original owner-occupant</u> <u>(if known)</u>
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West Side South Main Street North of Water Street

C 1.	124 & 151	1939	1	Johnstone Office Building; nine-bay brick Classical Revival style office building; wood pilasters divide facade into three, three bay units, each with central doorway, flanking windows with transoms; north unit has second doorway converted from south window; continuous wooden cornice unites offices; half-glazed doors with transoms; plain side elevations; flat roof; built for Knox Johnstone, president of the Bank of Davie; designed by Northup and O'Brien architects in Winston-Salem; originally rented to Duke Power Company, attorney John Brock, and the publisher of the <u>Enterprise-Record</u> .
NC 2.	123	1989-90	2 1/2	Davie County Office Building; large, brick-faced Post Modern office building with split block foundation and dormered metal mansard roof.

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East Side South Main Street

- |      |     |               |   |   |
|------|-----|---------------|---|---|
| C 3. | 140 | 1909,<br>1916 | 2 | <p>Davie County Courthouse; rectangular, cruciform plan Beaux Arts Classical courthouse; originally built of tan brick with buff terra cotta trim (both now painted); west elevation has four Corinthian columns in antis set in a nine-bay facade; dentilled cornices; high parapets; pedimented classical door surround; side entrances recessed; all sash replaced with single sheets of glass; square, domed and pedimented cupola on square base over front entrance; two-story, flat-roofed addition added to south in 1970s; rear addition under construction; courthouse constructed in 1909 burned, was rebuilt in 1916 using shell of earlier building; contractor was J. L. Crouse of Winston-Salem.</p> |
| C 4. | 140 | 1909          | 2 | <p>Davie County Jail; hipped-roofed square building of rusticated concrete block; original front entrance faces south, has sheetmetal pediment over door; hipped porch on west elevation; gabled, one-story 1920s masonry addition to north end of building; barred windows; one over one sash; built at same time as first courthouse on site next door, but did not burn in 1916.</p>   |

West Side North Main Street North of Town Square

- |      |     |                  |   |   |
|------|-----|------------------|---|---|
| C 5. | 101 | ca. 1905<br>1916 | 2 | <p>(former) J. T. Baity/Anderson Store; rectangular, five-bay brick commercial building; front elevation has shaped Flemish gable parapet; front elevation and end bay of side have machicolated corbelled brick cornice, corner pilasters; brick string course follows top of segmentally-arched windows; one over one sash; rock-faced stone sills;</p> |
|------|-----|------------------|---|---|

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- |      |         |                |   |  |
|------|---------|----------------|---|--|
|      |         |                |   | modern aluminum and glass, wood shopfronts on front and side elevations; property was acquired in 1905 by John Thomas Baity, who built a two-story brick building for his general store in 1906; following a fire in 1915, the building was rebuilt, mostly using original exterior walls, by Dr. R. P. Anderson and contained his dental offices.                         |
| C 6. | 115     | ca. 1930       | 1 | Store; narrow, rectangular brick commercial building; tapestry brick facade with corbelled cornice, rockfaced granite coping; small, rectangular attic vents; modern aluminum and panel shopfront.   |
| C 7. | 121     | ca. 1940       | 1 | Store; narrow, rectangular brick commercial building; corbelled brick cornice, concrete coping; small, rectangular attic vents; modern aluminum and glass shopfront.   |
| C 8. | 129-135 | 1935           | 1 | Hanes and Johnson Building; rectangular brick double store building; stores share corbelled cornice, concrete coping; panel of header bricks over each store; small, rectangular attic vents; modern aluminum and glass shopfronts; modern metal marquee; built for J. F. Hanes and Knox Johnstone by James and Lanier.  |
| C 9. | 143-149 | 1927,<br>1930s | 3 | (former) Princess Theatre; rectangular brick theatre/commercial building constructed in three periods; south two stories were built in 1927 by contractor C. B. Mooney for J. Arthur Daniel; north two stories and three bays added ca. 1930 by Daniel for his Ideal Grocery Store; third floor added over both in early 1930s to make Mocksville Hotel; theatre closed in |

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				1963; first floor has modern wood shopfronts, wooden flat marquee with railing has been reconstructed; herringbone panels between second and third floors; corbelled brick cornices; six over one sash; pilasters on third floor corbelled over second.
NC 10.	157	1972	1	Commercial Building; rectangular brick commercial building with aluminum and glass shopfront, canvas awning.
C 11.	163-171	1910	2,1	J. T. Angell Building; two-story, two-bay commercial building with one-story, one-bay section on north; painted common bond brick facades with deep, triangular brick corbels in the cornices; segmentally-arched windows with corbelled hood moldings, one over one sash; modern aluminum and glass shopfronts; canvas awning; built by J. T. Angell for his general merchandise store; north portion originally contained a barber shop.
C 12.	185	ca. 1935	1	(former) Kurfees and Ward Pure Oil Station; brick masonry service station exhibiting the distinctive steep gables and Tudor Revival stylistic elements of the Pure Oil chain; round-arched board and batten door; diamond lattice transom; documentary photographs indicate originally had large, projecting front gable over pumps.

East Side North Main Street North of Town Square

C 13.	100	1923	2	(former) Southern Bank & Trust Company Building; two-story, rectangular, yellow brick bank/office building on corner of Town Square and North Main; three-bay front elevation, ten-bay south elevation with corbelling beneath flat parapet lined with flues; display
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windows on first floor front, one-over-one sash windows with transoms second floor; brick pilasters and recessed panels; window trim covered with aluminum; built for Southern Bank & Trust, which closed in late 1920s.

NC OB 1.	No #	ca. 1985	1	Portable, gable-roofed frame store/kiosk on loose concrete block foundation.
C 14.	114	ca. 1930	1	Cafe Building; rectangular, tapestry brick-faced commercial building; wood, glass and brick original shopfronts; modern stained glass in transoms; canvas awning; probably built for use as cafe.
C 15.	119	ca. 1940	1	Commercial Building; rectangular, brick commercial building with corbelled brick cornice; modern wood and glass shopfronts; stone-capped parapet.
C 16.	142	ca. 1880	2	(former) Gaither Tobacco Factory; rectangular brick commercial building; three-bay street elevation has two-over-two sash windows with rounded top corners, corbelled brick hood moldings; recessed brick bays with diamond pattern at top, corbelled brick pendants; dogtooth panels; modern aluminum and glass shopfronts; lot owned by Thomas H. Gaither 1866-1911 and reportedly used for his tobacco factory.
C 17.	142	ca. 1900	2	Horn Building; three-bay, rectangular brick commercial building; second floor divided into two-bay and one-bay sections by pilasters; two-over-two windows with rounded top corners, corbelled brick hood moldings; corbelled brick string courses and cornice; stepped parapet on side

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elevation, six-over-six sash windows, shed balcony with turned columns on north elevation; modern brick enclosure under side balcony; documentary photos show two-story porch across front elevation; modern aluminum and glass shopfront; probably built for Gaston G. Horn for rental purposes.

NC 18. 190 ca. 1970 1

Horn Oil Building; rectangular concrete block and orange brick office building.

C 19. 192 ca. 1930 1

Horn Service Station; stuccoed, rectangular Spanish Mission Revival service station; two part front elevation with double service bays and office; pilasters with shaped tops which rise through metal mission tile mansard strips; built to characteristic Standard Oil Company design for Claude R. Horn, Sr. for Horn Oil Company.

West Side Town Square, South to North

NC O 1. No # 1987 1

War Memorial; grey and black granite panelled memorial at southwest corner of Town Square.

C 20. 23-31 1922-1924 2

(former) Meroney Hardware Company Building; seven-bay brick commercial building constructed in two periods; unornamented upper facade with corbelled brick cornice and eight over one crossette pattern sash; recessed central entrances to shops flanked by display windows with mix of wood and bronze muntins; prism glass transom windows; #23 has "Meroney" in glass over entrance; rear and side window and door openings are segmentally-arched; #23 built 1922 for hardware store of Charles Flynn Meroney; three bays of #29-31 added to north side of hardware store in 1924.

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C 21. 37 1927 3

Sanford Brothers Building; large, five bay brick commercial building on corner; facade has pair of shopfronts on either side of arched doorway to upper floors; shopfront inserts modern aluminum; projecting hipped metal marquee hung on chains; upper floors single and double one over one windows; limestone string courses between floors, shallow limestone cornice, limestone panel in parapet; five bay side elevation has third-floor rear section with gable roof, six over six sash; side shopfront retains original prism glass transom; built by A. H. Cozart for R. B. and J. C. Sanford, sons of Mocksville merchant Calvin Cowles Sanford; built for rental purposes, it originally housed the Post Office, Davie Cafe, and Green and Graves; second floor contained offices and third floor was used by lodges.

C 22. 61-67 ca. 1880, 2  
ca. 1890,  
ca. 1900

(former) C. C. Sanford Sons Store; rectangular, six bay brick commercial building; originally constructed in the late 19th century; refaced and new shopfronts added in 1937; plain stretcher bond brick facade with corbelled brick cornice; slightly-arched four over four original windows; 1930s aluminum and glass shopfronts with recessed entrances; side elevation common bond brick with pencilled joints, segmentally-arched four over four sash; south three bays built for C. C. Sanford Store ca. 1880; next two bays constructed by Sanford ca. 1890 for soda shop; end two bays constructed ca. 1900 for Bank of Davie.

East Side Town Square, South to North

C O 2. No # 1925 1

Daniel Boone Trail Marker; rough-cut

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granite memorial with cast iron bas-relief plaques; erected by the Daniel Boone Trail Highway and Memorial Association.

NC 23.	10	ca. 1950 ca. 1980	1	Office Building; rectangular masonry building with modern clapboard front, mansard roof; two ca. 1950 buildings joined together under new facade.
NC 24.	18	1949	1	Martin Office Building; one-story, Colonial Revival brick office building with gable roof; erected for Dr. Lester Martin.
NC 25.	35	ca. 1950	1	Heffner's Food Store; rectangular brick store building; later metal mansard.
NC 26.	29	ca. 1925	1	(former) Meroney Filling Station; stuccoed masonry filling station with hipped Spanish tile roof; large gabled modern addition on east elevation and wood shingle marquee over main entrance; converted to offices; originally filling station of Jacob Meroney.
C 27.	50-58	1938	2	Horn-Harding Building; rectangular, tapestry brick-faced office/store building; five bay front elevation with central, arched, recessed entrance; wood and glass shopfronts with transoms; one-over-one sash windows; checkerboard corbelled brick cornice; built for Dr. S. A. Harding and J. M. Horn.
C 28.	No #	ca. 1930	1	Commercial Building; small, rectangular brick commercial building with entrance on Town Square; glazed door with wooden shop window; recessed brick panel in parapet with white tile inserts.



**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Commerce

ca. 1880-1940

1909, 1916

Politics/Government

Architecture

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder James & Lanier, Builders

Northup & O'Brien, Architects

Crouse, J. L., Builder

Cozart, A. H., Builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary

The Downtown Mocksville Historic District contains the 1916 Davie County Courthouse, the 1909 Davie County Jail, and a collection of one- to three-story brick commercial buildings arranged around Town Square in a plan established in 1837 as part of the founding of the new county. This district is eligible under Criterion A, in the area of Commerce, as the only historic urban commercial center of any size in a traditionally, largely rural county. It is also significant in the area of Politics/Government as the first and only site for the county courthouse. Under Criterion C, the district is eligible in the area of Architecture, the fabric of buildings in the district reflecting predominantly the ca. 1880 to World War II period with a mix of modest and distinctive Commercial Vernacular and Classical Revival structures overlooked by the Beaux Arts Classical county courthouse. Within the district are 22 contributing and 9 non-contributing resources. Although many of them have received some alterations, as a group they retain an integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association of local significance.

See continuation sheet

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In 1836 a bill was passed in the North Carolina General Assembly to create a new county of Davie out of part of Rowan County. Located in the forks of the Yadkin and South Yadkin Rivers, residents of this part of Rowan County found it inconvenient to travel to Salisbury to conduct their legal business. By an act of January 13, 1837, Mocksville was specified as the county seat, with a minimum land requirement of 15 acres. (Wall, Brief History, p. 44)

The commissioners appointed to set up the new town acquired 19 1/2 acres from A. G. Carter and wife Letitia, Wiley M. Lowery, and Thomas McNeely. Commissioner and surveyor Thomas Ratledge produced a town plan in 1837 which divided this land into lots around a central town square, with an intersecting, broad central street and smaller cross streets. (Wall, Brief History, pp. 42, 44) A crossroads community called Mock's Old Field had existed since at least the Revolutionary War, but was located to the southwest of the area laid out for the county seat, principally along what is now Salisbury Street. This area was already a local trading center. (Mohney, p. 7)

Sales of lots in the new town generated enough revenue to allow contracting with Colonel Henry R. Austin for a large, brick Greek Revival county courthouse in the middle of the square, as well as a brick jail down the hill. (Ibid., p. 8) The Salisbury Western Carolinian described the new county seat as being "...situated on an eminence gradually sloping in every direction, on a clean, dry, sandy soil." (Wall, Brief History, p. 45)

Davie County in the antebellum period was relatively sparsely populated, with an 1840 census count of 7,575, of whom 1,800 were slaves. (Mohney, p. 8) It was overwhelmingly rural in character; beside Mocksville, the only urban settlements consisted of crossroads with a few buildings. (Mohney, p. 8) Although Mocksville was initially built up with a loose fabric of brick and frame Federal and Greek Revival style residences and businesses, it languished in succeeding years. In 1855 the Carolina Watchman reported that:

We remember well when Mocksville was not as old as it now is by some dozen summers; and how like a young May queen she was all smiles and beauty...But for all this it is apparent that Mocksville is now, and has been for several years "under the weather." Her day of prosperity was brief but an attractive one.

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She has sustained more injury from a number of sources than the mere effects of time. (Mohney, p. 10)

The immediate post-Civil War period was also a time of stagnation for the county's economy, but by the 1880s there were signs of recovery, which were reflected in the construction of several two-story brick commercial buildings in downtown Mocksville. Though increasing numbers of crossroads communities sprang up in the county, the county seat remained its largest town. Part of the reason for this relative prosperity may have been the town's location on the main roads leading from Winston and Salem to Salisbury, Statesville and Charlotte. By 1884 Branson's Business Directory listed eight merchants, seven mills, three tobacco factories, and the first newspaper for the county, the Davie Times, founded in 1880. (Mohney, p. 19)

The most important event in early history of the town was the arrival of the railroad in 1891, in the guise of a spur of the North Carolina Midland Railroad. In 1899 the railroad was completed to Mooresville in Iredell County. (Mohney, p. 15) As the principal trading center and the residence of many of the county's political and business leaders, Mocksville benefitted more than any area of Davie. New industries were established, including the Mocksville Furniture Company in 1899 and the Mocksville Chair Factory in 1901. An assessment of Mocksville by the Davie Record in 1899 reported that it was a quiet town with

2 hotels, 4 churches, 3 livery stables, 5 stores and room for more, 1 cotton gin, 2 saw mills, 1 planing mill, 1 roller mill, 1 wood shop, 1 academy, 1 tobacco factory, 2 weekly papers, 1 job printing office, 1 copper (sic?) shop, 2 harness shops, 5 blacksmith shops, and 1 shoe shop.

WHAT IT NEEDS: a bank, more stores, a cotton mill, better streets, a beef market, some delapidated old buildings torn down and new ones erected, the academy to be repaired and a high school started, a roller and grist mill. (Wall, Brief History, p. 99)

A documentary photograph of Town Square about 1890 shows a loosely built-up downtown with a few brick commercial buildings, wooden commercial and residential buildings, and tree-lined, dirt streets.

In the early years of the twentieth century, however, the town began a relatively rapid growth which reflected the increasing prosperity of



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the county. A new, Classical Revival county courthouse was constructed at the southeast corner of town square, though the old courthouse was preserved in the center of the square and rehabilitated as a community building for meetings. On the hillside behind the new courthouse was also constructed a new county jail to replace the original, Federal style one. The new county courthouse burned in 1916, but was rebuilt in a grander, more exuberantly neoclassical Beaux Arts form using the original walls. The northwest side of the square was also built up in brick with the construction of J. T. Baity's store building in 1906, which itself burned in 1915 and was rebuilt. The Greek Revival Masonic Building at the southwest corner of the square was torn down and a larger, Classical Revival building with stores erected (no longer standing).

During the 1920s and 30s, however, the downtown achieved much of its present appearance. An offer to bring a paved state highway through the middle of the town spurred the demolition of the then dilapidated old county courthouse in 1922. (Vertical Files) Filling and service stations sprang up to service the increased automobile traffic. A new, two-story, yellow brick, Classical Revival, Southern Bank and Trust Company building was put up at the northeast side of the square in 1923. A two-story brick building and addition were erected for the Meroney Hardware Store in 1922 and 1924, and next to them a three-story brick office/store building by Sanford Brothers in 1927. A small movie theatre, The Princess, was erected on the west side of North Main. A granite monument with cast iron plaques was installed next to the courthouse to mark the Daniel Boone Trail in 1925.

Despite the Depression of the 1930s, downtown Mocksville continued to grow. In 1933 Federal funds were used to lay off quadrant-shaped islands in the square and oak trees were planted on them. Frame stores were torn down in the northeast corner of the square and the Horn-Harding building erected in 1938. Buildings on the northwest side of the square were refaced in modern brick in 1937. Gaps in the west and east sides of North Main Street were also built up in one-story stores in the 1930s. One of the downtown's most interesting buildings architecturally, the one-story Classical Revival Johnstone Office Building of 1939 was constructed to the designs of Winston-Salem architects Northup and O'Brien at the west side of South Main.

In the immediate post-World War II period the remaining frame buildings on the square, the old Marsh House and Stores, burned and were replaced by one-story brick offices and stores.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
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During the post-war era downtown Mocksville has received increasing competition from shopping centers at the periphery of the town, as well as from other, larger towns in the area which are more readily accessible with the construction of the nearby interstate highway. Some rehabilitation and renovation of downtown buildings has occurred in recent years, giving hope for increased activity in the future. The greatest area of growth in the downtown in recent years has been in county government facilities. An addition was made to the county courthouse in 1970 and another is under construction. The Masonic building at the southwest corner of the district was demolished in the 1980s and a brick Post-Modern style county office building is nearing completion on the site.

Architectural Context

Mocksville's downtown has a mix of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial and governmental buildings not matched by any community in the county. Individually, as well as collectively, they are reflective of stylistic developments in the larger towns and cities of the adjacent Piedmont North Carolina counties.