

North Thompson Street Historic District

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Location and Current National Register Status: The proposed North Thompson Street Historic District is located between North Thompson Street on the east and the I-195 expressway on the west, from Broad Street to the north and approximately 175 feet north of Monument Avenue to the south. The area is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places but is bordered by the West of the Boulevard district on the east and the Scotts Addition district on the north.

History and Significance: The six contributing buildings within the district, five office buildings and one bank, were constructed between 1955 and 1959 as a result of the rezoning of the area from residential to a “quiet business” zone. This change was made to attract professional offices to the area, which was closer to downtown but still provided the space and vehicular access enjoyed in the suburbs. Businesses such as insurance offices and banks immediately began developing the corridor. Buildings were architect-designed in the International Style with auto-centric amenities including a drive-through and large rear parking lots.

The North Thompson Street Historic District is a cohesive collection of five International Style buildings that convey defining characteristics such as lack of ornamentation, smooth textures, flat roofs, ribbons of windows or glass curtain walls, and asymmetrical elevations. Each of the buildings was designed by architecture firms that would go on to become influential in both Richmond and Virginia.

Staff Recommendations and Comments:

The application of the National Register criteria indicates that the district is eligible for listing under National Register Criterion C for its architecture at the local level with a period of significance of 1955-1959. The proposed district reflects an intact collection of International Style medium-scale office buildings that continue to convey the characteristic design features intended by their architects. Staff recommends that the Commission support the nomination of the district under National Register Criterion C at the local level.