

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Huntingdon Borough Historic District

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Bounded roughly by Allegheny St., Ninth St., Moore St. & Second Street N/A not for publication

city, town Huntingdon N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 042 county Huntingdon code 061

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple

street & number

city, town N/A vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds

street & number Huntingdon County Courthouse

city, town Huntingdon state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Huntingdon Co. Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records BHP, PA Historical & Museum Comm. & Huntingdon Co. Historical Soc.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Huntingdon Borough Historic District is located at the southern end of Huntingdon Borough. The district lies between the Juniata River on the southwest and a steep hill to the northeast. A park borders the district on the southeast. The buildings in this district date from the late eighteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth century. They represent a range of nineteenth and early twentieth-century styles of architecture. The buildings are typically detached, two and three story, brick and frame structures and have good integrity. Of 521 buildings in the district, 492 are contributing and only 29 are non-contributing.

Huntingdon began as a proprietary town in 1766 when Philadelphia land speculator William Smith acquired the site. He chose this site for its abundant water power, elevation above the flood plain, and key position at the intersection of two early Indian and trader's paths which followed the Juniata River's east-west course and the Raystown Branch's north-south path. In 1787 it was chosen as the seat of a new frontier county. Settlers built log and stone houses in Huntingdon during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Some of these early houses still survive. About two per cent of the buildings in the historic district were constructed between 1788 and 1824.

Huntingdon grew rapidly in a northwestern direction along the bank of the Juniata River between 1825 and 1900. The construction of a turnpike, canal and railroad through the town brought an influx of new residents and commerce. As a result the number of buildings in Huntingdon grew substantially. Almost three quarters of the buildings in the historic district were constructed between 1825 and 1900, including many built after the Civil War. Since most of the structures were brick, brick is now the predominant construction material in the historic district accounting for sixty percent of the buildings.

Huntingdon's growth slowed significantly after 1900. A minority of the buildings - about one quarter - were constructed between 1900 and 1935.

Huntingdon's significant growth in the nineteenth century resulted in a need for various types of buildings. The majority of buildings are detached, two-story houses built to house a growing population. A minority of buildings centered in the western half of the district are commercial buildings that serve the borough and surrounding area. Although Huntingdon is the county seat, only a few buildings are used for the county court and government offices.

The timing of Huntingdon's significant growth in the 19th century helped decide which architectural styles predominate in the district. Three styles popular between 1825 and 1900 - Federal, Italianate, and Queen Anne - are found most often in the district. Federal buildings are typically brick, two-story edifices three to five bays wide. They have low pitched roofs, smooth facades, transom lights, and plain stone or wood window sills and heads. Italianate buildings are generally brick, four to seven bays wide, and two or three stories high. They possess low-pitched roofs, bracketed eaves, and windows with brick or stone round heads. Some Italianate buildings also show cupolas and bay windows. The Queen Anne buildings have some of the most distinctive shapes and features in the district. They are generally brick and wood frame, three stories high and three to five bays wide. They have steep pitched roofs, ornately detailed porches or encircling verandas, and a wide variety of projecting turrets or towers.

The district also has representatives of other styles popular during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There are fairly small numbers of Greek Revival, Colonial Revival, Second Empire, French Renaissance, Eastlake and Art Moderne buildings scattered through the district. In addition, about three tenths of the buildings are vernacular with elements of various nineteenth and early twentieth century styles.

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The large majority of buildings contribute to the architectural and historic character of the district. Non-contributing buildings occupy only one twentieth of the area of the district. They include pre-1935 buildings that have been greatly altered in appearance as well as post-1935 buildings. The post-1935 buildings, however, are often the same scale as earlier buildings and incorporate elements of styles found in the earlier buildings. The district also includes several outstanding examples of adaptive re-use.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1788-1935

Builder/Architect various

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Huntingdon Borough Historic District is significant as a historic center of commerce and transportation in central Pennsylvania, and for its outstanding collection of nineteenth-century architecture. The district was an important nineteenth-century stop for goods and people moving along major transportation arteries. The district's numerous businesses comprised the largest commercial center in Huntingdon County. In addition, the district contains one of the finest groups of nineteenth century architecture in the county.

Huntingdon's rise to prominence began in the late eighteenth century. William Smith, the first head of the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania) acquired the land in 1766. Smith sold plots with the stipulation that buyers would develop the plots within a limited time period. He ensured that the lots would be developed quickly rather than be left vacant by land speculators. Huntingdon Borough became one of the largest towns in Huntingdon County in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In recognition of its size and prominence, it was made the county seat in 1787.

When Smith laid out plots in 1767, he allotted space for a market square on the town's broad center street, Smith Street, near the bank of the Juniata River (See Smith's original plan on separate sheet). In the early 1790s, after Huntingdon County was formed, discussion on the location of a courthouse prompted serious thought about the town's increasing size and developing pattern. A small jail had been built on Lot 41, which blocked the eastern end of Hill Street. When it burned, consideration of a new jail site was joined to consideration of a courthouse site. Smith and trustees of the public buildings agreed on a plan. A courthouse was erected in the middle of Smith Street, facing the jail which was later constructed on the north side of Mifflin Street. A marketsquare or "diamond" was then established in 1792 along Penn Street two blocks west of Smith Street. This allocation of separate space to the town's governmental and commercial interests can still be seen today. The middle-of-the-street site occupied by the first courthouse is commemorated by a garden plot and a monument erected in 1896. Two blocks north on Smith (now Third) Street the county jail (1829) is still used as part of the county's jail facility.

From its beginning all aspects of Huntingdon's development have been tied to its location on important transportation routes. In the eighteenth century the Juniata River's unusual east-west course through the mountains of central Pennsylvania made it an important transportation artery into the wilderness area. Its depth would float only a canoe or raft, except in flood, but Indians, traders and eventually settlers travelled along its course to take advantage of its cuts through the mountains. Smith's town was situated six miles downstream from the Juniata's junction with the Frankstown and Little Juniata branches and two miles upstream from the junction with the Raystown branch. Thus Huntingdon was conveniently accessible to the river and its branches and the early paths which followed the waterways. As the earliest town this far north and west in central Pennsylvania, Huntingdon was an important outpost in the newly opened territory.

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Huntingdon's importance as a transportation center continued in the nineteenth century with the construction of more east-west transportation routes along the Juniata River. In 1820 the Huntingdon, Cambria and Indiana Turnpike was completed through Huntingdon. The Pennsylvania Canal reached Huntingdon in 1832 and then followed the Juniata River west to the Allegheny Front. Finally in 1850 the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which also followed the Juniata River west, reached the district. These transportation arteries carried a heavy traffic of people and goods across the state.

Huntingdon Borough was a major transportation center on the railroad, canal and turnpike. Eight to ten substantial hostelries were built to serve the many travelers. Few if any of the towns in the county could boast as many hotels. Unfortunately, only one of these hostelries, the Penn Hunt Hotel (formerly the Leister House) survives today. The Leister House is a four-story Italianate building erected in 1873-1874. The Pennsylvania Railroad also constructed buildings to serve passenger and freight traffic. Three of these railroad buildings still stand in the district. The 1872 Union Depot, a two-story Italianate edifice, is located across Allegheny Street from the Leister House. A one-story eastbound passenger station and a c. 1900 two-story switching tower also survive.

The railroad, canal and turnpike brought many residents and businesses as well as freight and passengers to the district. The borough's population increased rapidly after 1820, growing to nearly its present-day size by 1900. The number of businesses in the district expanded greatly to serve this rising population and the surrounding area. More than fifty businesses were established between 1850 and 1900. These firms erected buildings primarily in the western side of the district. Together these new buildings formed the largest commercial center in the county.

These new buildings greatly changed the conservative, traditional two-story streetscapes of Huntingdon. Between 1865 and 1875 businessmen constructed no less than eighteen tall (principally three story) commercial buildings which fronted directly on the street, often with projecting cornices and window moldings which accentuated their different character. Every one of these buildings survives today, in addition to many survivals from an even larger and more stylistically diverse group of more than thirty commercial buildings erected between 1885 and 1905.

The location of these commercial buildings also illustrates the gradual northwesterly growth of Huntingdon along the bank of the Juniata River. The eighteen structures erected between 1865 and 1875 were all located within a block of the Diamond. By the 1890s a new commercial center began to develop in the 700 block of Washington Street, two to three blocks west and one block north of the Diamond. Both continue in importance, with the retail center located at Seventh and Washington Streets, and banks and professional offices concentrated around the Diamond.

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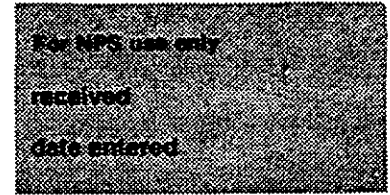
Of particular importance among Huntingdon's commercial buildings are Fisher and McMurtrie's Store (c.1850), 100 Fourth Street, a rare survivor of the one-story, gable-to-the street commercial building typical of the first half of the nineteenth century; Reed's Drug Store (1865), 410 Penn, called Huntingdon's "first modern store building" by a contemporary editor; Port Building (1875), Fifth and Washington, an outstanding Italianate corner building; the Iron Front Store (1884), 211 Fifth, the first of six iron fronts and one of only two remaining in the district; and the eight-story Blair Building (1889), sixth and Penn, said when built to be the tallest building between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, and designed by F.L. Olds, who modeled it closely on H.H. Richardson's Marshall Field warehouse in Chicago which was widely copied around the country.

The rapid population and commercial growth during the nineteenth century led to the creation of a large collection of nineteenth century architecture. The majority of the district's buildings were erected between 1820 and 1900 to house the mounting numbers of residents and businesses. The district's buildings are predominantly Federal, Italianate and Queen Anne in style with smaller numbers of Greek Revival, Colonial Revival, Second Empire and Eastlake Buildings. Although most of the buildings in the district are fairly ordinary representatives of these styles, the district does contain some outstanding architectural examples. Exceptional Federal buildings include the Saxton House (1840), 512 Penn, and the Thomas Fisher House (1850), 222 Penn. Among the fine Italianate buildings are residences at 210 Penn (1872), 206 Second (1873), 505-509 Church (1873), and Eighth and Washington (1885). The Gage House (1896), 317 Penn, and an entire block built in the 1890s on the west side of Seventh above Moore are fine examples of the Queen Anne style. The district also includes smaller numbers of nineteenth century buildings in other styles. Fine examples of the Greek Revival style include the Dorsey-Speer House (1850), Third and Penn; Graffius Miller House (1850), Fifth and Church; and the first Huntingdon Academy (1844), Fourth and Moore. Outstanding examples of the French Renaissance are the Horatio Fisher House (1871), 508 Penn; Lovell House (1876), Second and Penn; Simpson House (1881), Second and Penn; and the Huntingdon County Courthouse (1883), designed by M.E. Beebe of Buffalo. Fine Eastlake houses are the Smucher House (1890), 305 Penn, and the Garland House (1890), 821 Washington.

The district contains one of the best collections of nineteenth century architecture in the county. No other town in the county has such a large concentration of nineteenth-century buildings. Over 350 of the district's 429 contributing buildings were erected between 1820 and 1900. Population and commercial growth slowed greatly after 1900, leaving most of the buildings in the district much as they appeared in the nineteenth century.

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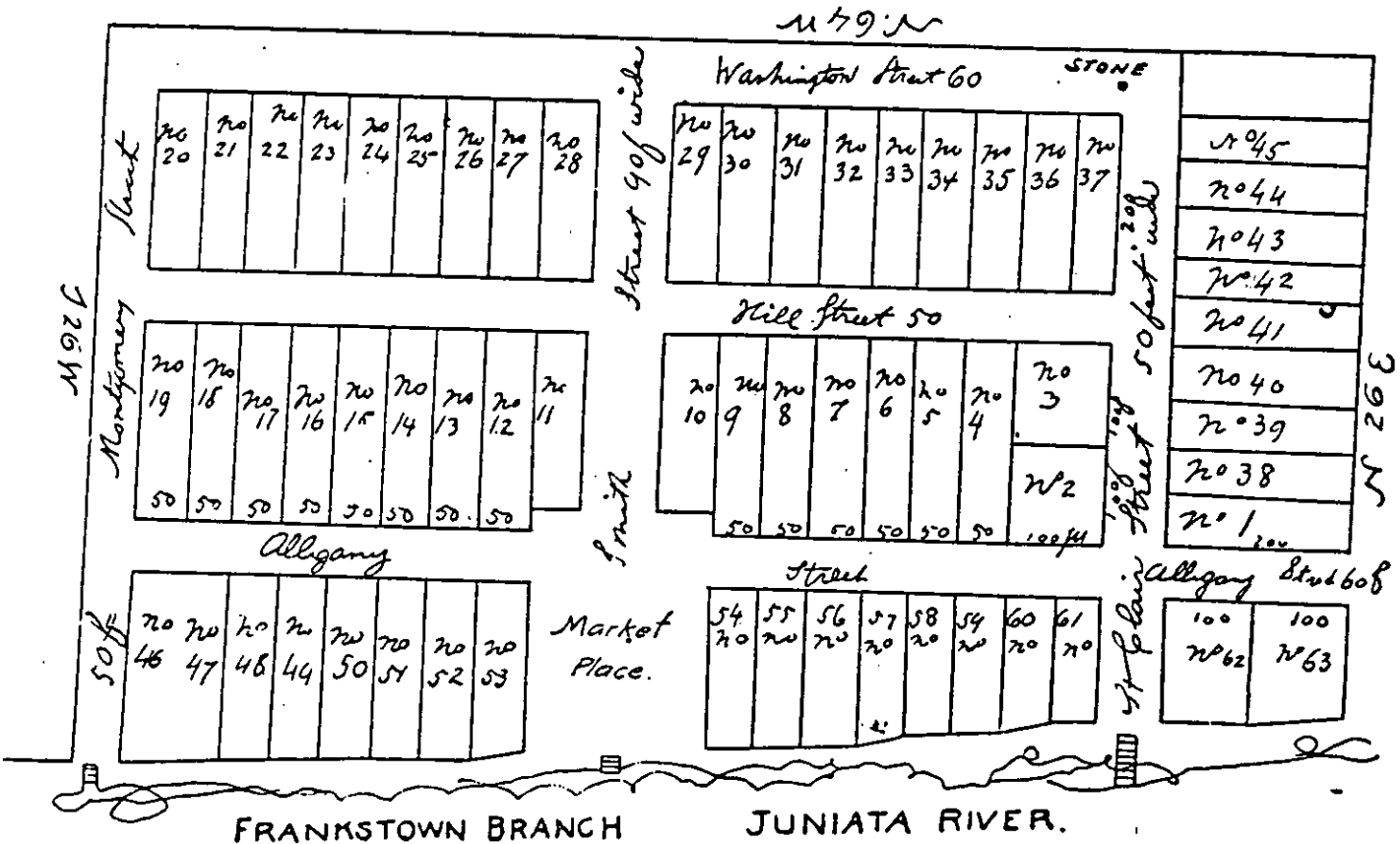
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Map of Huntingdon, Pa., as laid out by William Smith, D.D., 1767, from the original

9. Major Bibliographical References

Africa, J. Simpson. History of Huntingdon & Blair Counties, Philadelphia, 1883.
 Rung, Albert M. Rung's Chronicles of Pennsylvania History, Vols. I & II. Huntingdon, 1977 & 1984
 Shedd, Nancy S. An Architectural Study of the Ancient Borough of Huntingdon, Huntingdon, 1976.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 87 acres
 Quadrangle name Huntingdon Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	1 7	7 5 2 7 7 0	4 4 8 6 0 0 0	B	1 7	7 5 3 1 3 0	4 4 8 6 1 2 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 7	7 5 3 7 3 0	4 4 8 5 6 7 0	D	1 7	7 5 3 6 7 0	4 4 8 5 4 0 0 0
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification
 (See Continuation Sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George J. Drobnock, Rory Peachey, & Nancy S. Shedd
 organization Huntingdon Revitalization & Dev., Inc. date July 15, 1985
 street & number 10th & Moore Street telephone 814 643-1110
 city or town Huntingdon state Pennsylvania 16652

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:
 national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title Dr. Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date _____

For NPS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 date _____

Keeper of the National Register _____ date _____

Attest: _____ date _____

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Beginning at the NW corner of 4th & Allegheny Sts., S 250 ft. to a point on the southern edge of the railroad right-of-way;
thence 1250 ft. in a westerly direction along the railroad right-of-way to a point where the E side of 7th St. meets the right-of-way;
thence N 300 ft. on the E side of 7th to the SW cor. of #18-01-34;
thence W 500 ft. along the S boundaries of properties fronting on Washington St. to the SE cor. of #19-04-72;
thence W at an angle 450 ft. along the S boundaries of properties fronting on Washington to a point on the E side of Susquehanna Ave. (an alley);
thence N 375 ft. along the E side of the alley to a point on the S side of 9th St.;
thence E 500 ft. along the S side of 9th St. to a point at the SW cor. of 9th & Mifflin;
thence S 100 ft. on the W side of Mifflin to the NE cor. of #19-04-57;
thence E 200 ft. to the W side of Maple Ave.;
thence S 390 ft. along Maple Ave. to Mifflin and across to a point on the S side of Mifflin;
thence E 110 ft. along the S side of Mifflin to a point;
thence N 535 ft. to a point on the N side of Moore St.;
thence W 100 ft. to the NE cor. of Moore & Cherry Ave. (an alley);
thence N 340 ft. to the NW cor. of #19-03-41;
thence E 120 ft. to the SW cor. of #19-03-37;
thence N 50 ft. to the S side of Oneida St.;
thence E 70 ft. to the SW cor. of 7th & Oneida;
thence S 250 ft. on the W side of 7th;
thence E 157 ft. to the NE cor. of #18-03-100;
thence S 50 ft. along the E side of #18-03-100;
thence E 175 ft. to a point on the E side of #18-03-116;
thence S 70 ft. to the NW cor. of #18-03-118;
thence E 106 ft. to the E side of 6th St.;
thence N 60 ft. along the E side of 6th to the NW cor. of #18-03-122;
thence E 87 ft. to a point on the W line of #18-03-125;
thence N 40 ft. to the NW cor. of #18-03-125;
thence E 42 ft. to the W side of Fifth Ave. (an alley);
thence S 150 ft. to a point on the S side of Moore St.;
thence E 312 ft. to the SE cor. of Moore & 5th St.;
thence N 107 ft. to the NW cor. of #18-03-129;
thence E 450 ft. to the E side of 4th St.;
thence N 43 ft. to the NW cor. of #17-03-32;
thence E 100 ft. to the NE cor. of #17-03-32;
thence S 515 ft. to the NW cor. of #17-03-65;
thence E 350 ft. to the W line of the Huntingdon Co. Jail property;
thence N 100 ft. to the NW cor. of the Huntingdon Co. Jail property;
thence E 65 ft. to the NE cor. of the Huntingdon Co. Jail property;
thence S 100 ft. to a point on the E line of the Huntingdon Co. Jail property;
thence E 425 ft. to a point on the E line of #17-03-96;
thence S 25 ft. to the NW cor. of #17-03-99;
thence E 50 ft. to the W side of 2nd St.;
thence S 200 ft. to the SE cor. of #17-03-152;
thence E 170 ft. to the NE cor. of #17-03-158;

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thence S 122 ft. along the E boundaries of #17-03-158, -158.1, and #17-04-02 to the S side of an unnamed alley;
thence E 110 ft. to the NE cor. of #17-04-11;
thence S 200 ft. to the SE cor. of #17-04-14;
thence W 75 ft. to the NE cor. of #17-04-15;
thence S 110 ft. to the S side of Penn St.;
thence E 93 ft. to the NE cor. of #17-04-31;
thence S 102 ft. to the SE cor. of #17-04-32;
thence W 250 ft. to the W side of 2nd St.;
thence S 100 ft. to the NW cor. of 2nd & Allegheny;
thence W 1040 ft. along the N side of Allegheny to the place of beginning.

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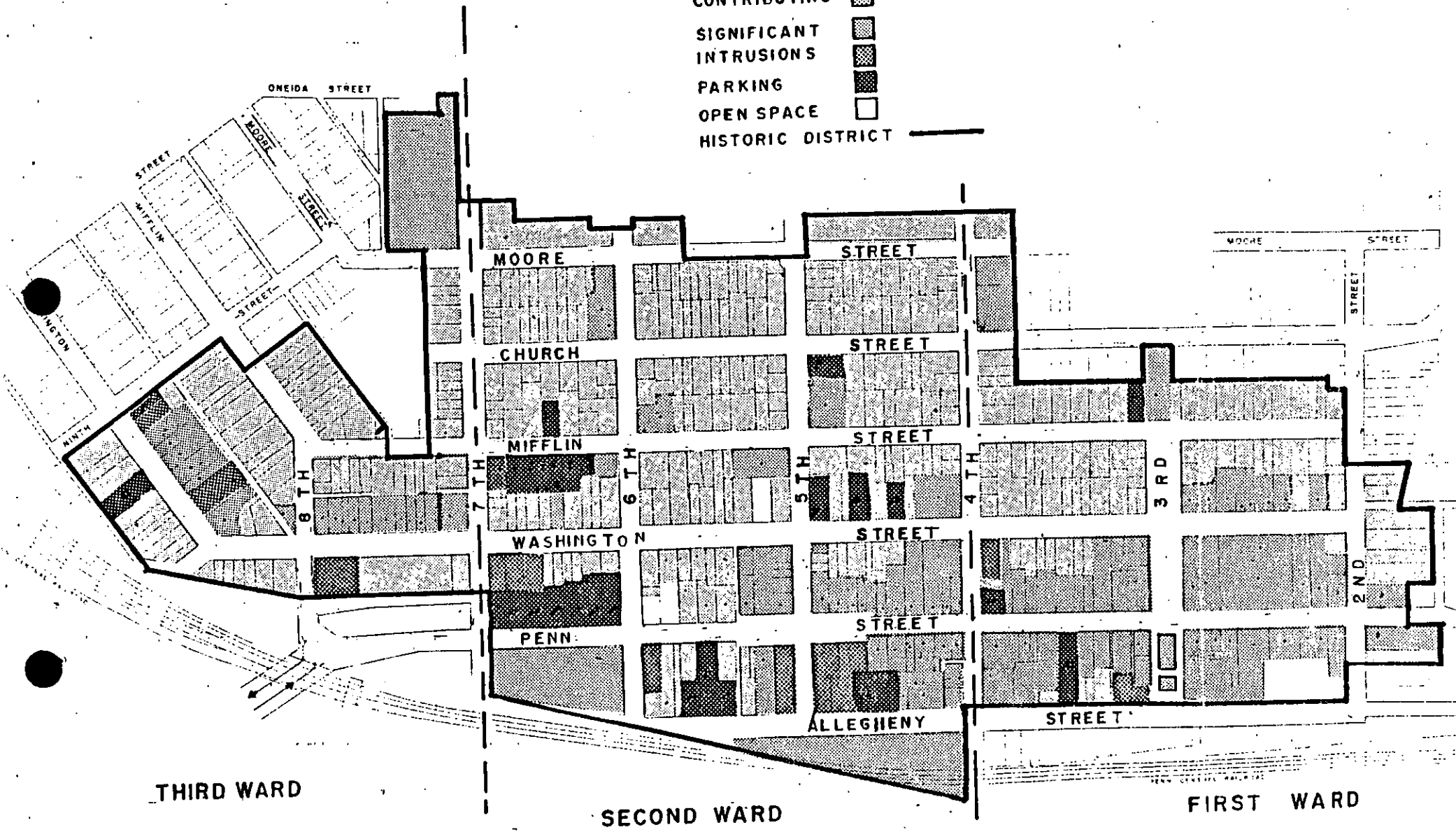
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Boundary Justification

The boundary lines of the district are defined by topographical features and post-1935 real estate development. The southwest boundary line borders the Juniata River. An open park lies on the southeast boundary of the district. A large, post-1935 school and a steep hillside define the northeast boundary. Vacant lots and post-1935 housing for the elderly separate the district on its northwest side from late nineteenth and twentieth century buildings in the rest of Huntingdon Borough.

KEY

- CONTRIBUTING 
- SIGNIFICANT INTRUSIONS 
- PARKING 
- OPEN SPACE 
- HISTORIC DISTRICT 



HUNTINGDON BOROUGH HISTORIC DISTRICT

HRDI 1985

HUNTINGDON COUNTY
OF HUNTINGDON • PENNSYLVANIA

