

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 (former) Kinston Fire Station/City Hall  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 118 South Queen Street N/A not for publication  
city, town Kinston N/A vicinity  
state North Carolina code NC county Lenoir code 107 zip code 28501

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Historic & Architectural Resources  
of Kinston, N. C.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 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.

William S. Rich, Jr. 9-12-89  
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

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: City hall and fire station

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

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WORK IN PROGRESS

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Commercial style

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

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walls Brick

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roof Asphalt

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other Concrete

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Wood

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Standing in the shadow of the Lenoir County Courthouse at the northwest corner of the courthouse lot, the building erected in 1895 to serve as a fire station and city hall for the town of Kinston, North Carolina, is a relatively intact and well-crafted two-story brick structure with a two-story rear wing built in several stages. The (former) Kinston Fire Station/City Hall exhibits standard late 19th century construction techniques employed for commercial and industrial buildings, with modest decorative treatments.

Constructed of one-to-five common bond brick now covered with dark red paint, the main block of the two-story building has a sloping roof with a raised parapet which is stepped on the side elevations. Early documentary photographs (1897) show that the original parapet on the 1895 building was continuous, rather than stepped, and that standing seam tin covered its sloping roof. In these photographs, a brick cornice with corbelled brick dentils appears below the parapet coping. The main (west) facade features a trio of two-over-two windows in jack-arched openings on the second floor. The first floor has a pair of large round-arched openings for fire-fighting equipment; two courses of headers outline the arch. Arched doors with wide sidelights below a three-part arched transom now fill these openings. It has not been possible to determine the nature of the original doors, as they are open in early photographs; however, it is believed that, at least by the early 20th century, overhead rolling doors were in use. No physical evidence survives to support or refute this contention.

The main block's south elevation has three bays with two-over-two windows on each floor; a half-glazed door with transom is located to the right of the easternmost window on the first floor. Three windows light the second floor of the main block's north elevation. A course of white-painted sawtooth brick above the second-floor windows enlivens the main facade and south elevation. These elevations also have plain string courses below the second-floor windows and at their sills and lintels.

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Also on the north elevation is a tiny one-story brick structure added between 1901 and 1906 as a fire engine shed, according to Sanborn maps, and later (1920s) used as sleeping quarters for on-duty firemen. A large opening between this small structure and the main building has been bricked up. The former engine shed is now occupied by a watch repair shop, and its original double-leaf wooden doors have been replaced with a glass and wood door.

The 1897 photographs of the building reveal that it was originally unpainted. A 1906 photograph shows that retractable canvas awnings shaded the second-floor windows. At some time after that date, the building was first painted, a practice that has continued. By the 1980s, the white paint which covered the building was in poor condition. During recent renovations, the exterior was painted a dark red.

To the rear of the building were stables of frame construction for the horses which drew the fire-fighting equipment. The horses were brought into the main building through a large opening (now bricked up) in the north half of the rear elevation, and harness was pulled down from ceiling hooks. The 1901 Sanborn map shows a 50-foot fire bell tower behind the southeast corner of the main block. This tower, also used for drying fire hoses, now stands behind the main fire station on East King Street.

The restored first floor interior of the main block has an original concrete floor--grooved on the north half and smooth on the south section--from which metal poles rise to a central supporting beam. The grooves are said to have been necessary to provide better footing for the horses. The walls are plaster, while the ceiling is of narrow beaded tongue-and-groove. A 1940s fire truck and various items of fire-fighting equipment are displayed in this space. An original two-over-two window and a later doorway are cut in the rear (east) wall.

The second floor of the main block served for more than three decades as Kinston's City Hall. During that period a number of changes were probably made. The three rooms into which the space is currently divided are simply finished with plaster walls. The front main room extends the width of the building and has mitered surrounds, a simple chair rail, and grained sheet wainscot. The larger of the two rear rooms has a metal safe, simple chair rail, and a low wooden divider.

The two-story brick-sheathed rear wing was built in several stages. The earliest section, built between 1908 and 1914, was a one-story brick structure extending eastward from the fire bell tower. A second

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addition, used as a jail, was added on the north side of the earlier addition between 1919 and 1925; it extended across the rear of the small engine shed as well. It also appears that the stair case at the rear of the main block was enclosed at this time. In the late 1930s, after a fire in the adjacent courthouse, a second floor was built over the rear additions, and the building was converted for use as temporary county offices. By this time, a new city hall and fire department headquarters had been constructed on West King Street.

It was during the 1930s renovations that the parapets on the main block's side elevations were stepped, the brick cornice was removed, and glass and wood doors and windows were installed in the large round-arched first floor main facade openings. Wood flooring was also installed over the concrete on the first floor of the main block.

The rear wing as it appears today has a sloping roof which is an extension of the main block's roof, and tile coping tops its parapet. Windows have six-over-six sash in simple openings. There are two entrances on the south elevation and one on the rear. The westernmost south elevation entrance has a six-panel door which opens to an enclosed staircase. The other entrance is flanked by windows and sheltered by a bracketed shed hood. An interior end brick chimney rises near the center of the rear elevation.

Both floors of the rear wing are divided into several simply-finished rooms with plaster walls. The south first floor room has built-in cupboards on the west wall. There are two small bathrooms on each floor, a small boiler room behind the staircase on the first floor, a room for a more modern heating system on the second floor, and several storage rooms.

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)

Architecture  
Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1895-ca. 1936

Significant Dates

1895  
1904

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Unknown

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

The (former) Kinston Fire Station/City Hall, which is located on the northwest corner of the Lenoir County Courthouse tract, is significant in the history of Kinston, North Carolina, as that city's earliest surviving building erected solely to serve a municipal function. Its 1895 construction followed on the heels of the disastrous fire in February of that year which destroyed a substantial portion of the growing town's main commercial district and occurred during the first decade of the city's late 19th/early 20th century period of growth and increasing prosperity. It was during this decade that the city's first textile mills were established and that Kinston began its strong entry into the eastern North Carolina tobacco market with the construction of several tobacco warehouses. The population of Kinston more than doubled, increasing from 1,762 in 1890 to 4,106 in 1900, and the desire and need for various amenities and services intensified. These included sewer systems, paved streets, electricity, telephone service, better water, etc. Its associated historic context is Kinston's Era of Accelerating Prosperity, 1890-1941, and it is an example of the property type Late 19th/Early 20th Century Public and Institutional Buildings.

Historical Background

Although a volunteer fire department (known as Kinston Fire Company No. 1) had been established in Kinston in 1873, it was ill-equipped to handle the disastrous conflagration which struck the central business district in February 1895 ["Kinston Fire Company No 1"]. Even though

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the volunteers received assistance from firemen and equipment brought in by train from New Bern, several blocks of buildings were destroyed [Minutes, vol. 2, p. 134]. This blaze was one of a series of fires which later were found to have been started by black arsonists who claimed to have been hired by two well-known white citizens. The fires and the court trial which followed caused a great deal of controversy and hard feelings in the town [Heritage, pp. 36-37]. Construction of the brick fire station on South Queen Street was probably a direct result of these fires. Newspaper articles suggest that the fire engines had previously been kept in a frame building which hampered the company in responding quickly to fire alarms, as the engines had to be taken out of the building before they could be started ["Two Fires"].

The minutes of the meeting of the town commissioners held shortly after the fire report that "Mayor Ellis of Newberne came before the board and talked fire engines" [Minutes, vol. 2, p. 133]. Three commissioners formed a committee to travel to New Bern to discuss the possibility of purchasing a fire engine from that city's fire department, and deliberations and negotiations continued for several weeks over the best arrangement for the acquisition of a new engine [Minutes, vol. 2, pp. 133-137].

The original intention was to build a one-story fire station, but the commissioners quickly ". . . decided to sell the mayor's office, build the engine house two stories and use the upper story for the mayor's office" [Kinston Free Press, 2 May 1895, p. 10]. At the regular election time in May 1895, the citizens of Kinston elected a new mayor and board of town commissioners. They were J. B. Temple, mayor, and B. W. Canady, A. R. Miller, George B. Webb, R. H. Lewis, and E. F. Cox, commissioners. Webb and Canady comprised a Building Committee appointed at the first commissioners meeting. The board authorized the committee ". . . to have the engine house now being constructed on the courthouse square completed and acting with the Executive Committee of Kinston Fire Company, employ a man as fireman of the Engine of said company . . ." [Minutes, vol. 2, pp. 143-144]. The Kinston Free Press regularly reported on the progress of construction, including a notation in July 1895 that, "The engine will be moved in it as soon as the cement floor hardens sufficiently" [Kinston Free Press, 18 July 1895, p. 10]. S. H. Abbott, proprietor of the Kinston Brick and Tile Works, provided the brick used in constructing the fire station at a cost to the town of \$364.50 [Minutes, vol. 2, p. 157; and "Representative Houses," p. 102].

To carry out their other missions, the Building Committee hired Everett Brinson as the fireman at a salary of twenty-five dollars per

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month; they gave him the additional duties of lighting the street lamps and attending to the town clock. He also was to act as a special policeman when required [Minutes, vol. 2, p. 145].

The new two-story brick building first appears on the Kinston Sanborn maps for 1896, with a one-story frame stable at the rear [Sanborn maps]. In April of that year black citizens formed a hook-and-ladder company which was known as the "Dread Naughts" ["Hook and Ladder Company"]. A 50-foot bell and hose-drying tower appears on the 1901 map at the rear of the building's southeast corner, and a well for the fire department (whose cost was shared by city and county) is shown on Queen Street near the station [Minutes, vol. 2, p. 157; and Sanborn maps].

By 1901, Kinston Fire Company No. 1 boasted one "steamer" and two hose wagons. In 1904, the town commissioners appear to have become unhappy with the service provided by the company and in June of that year took ". . . into their own custody all the fire equipments heretofore having been in the charge of said company" ["Fire Company Resolutions"]. The commissioners then (July 1895) passed an ordinance to create a new fire department, to be known as Caswell Fire Company No. 1, which was to be ". . . under the supervision and control of the [commissioners'] committee on fire department" ["To Fight the Flames"]. Controversy over these actions raged for a time, but the commissioners won out, and Caswell Fire Company No. 1 became the official fire department for Kinston.

During the next three decades, a number of changes were made to the building, principally on the north elevation (where a one-story engine shed was added before 1908) and on the rear. Information about some of these changes came from the late Ralph Dudley, who joined the Kinston fire department in the 1920s; he was interviewed about the fire station in 1987. The alterations at the rear included construction and later enclosure of stairs to the second floor. In addition, a one-story brick structure extending eastward from the bell and hose-drying tower was built between 1908 and 1914. A second annex, used as a jail, rose to the north of the first addition between 1919 and 1925. At some point, the fire bell tower was removed and its space incorporated in the rear additions. In the late 1930s, after a fire at the adjacent county courthouse, a second floor was built above the earlier rear additions, and the whole building was converted for use as temporary county offices. At this time, wood and glass doors and windows were installed in the large round-arched openings through which the fire engines once emerged [Clark interview; and Sanborn maps].

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By 1914, Kinston had grown to such an extent that a second fire station (no longer standing) was built on West King Street between Queen and Heritage streets [Sanborn maps]. A third station was established on Tiffany Street with the formation in the early 1920s of East Kinston Fire Company No. 2 [Sanborn maps; and Fire Department Minutes]. Between 1935 and 1938, a new brick combination city hall and fire department headquarters was erected on West King Street (superseded by the 1962 Municipal Building on East King Street), at about the same time as the 1895 building went into use by the county [Reinspection Report]. After the new courthouse was completed, the building was used as offices, both for the county and by private individuals. It had been empty for several years prior to the work begun in 1987 toward its restoration. The Caswell No. 1 Fire Station Preservation Committee, chaired by the current fire chief, spearheaded these efforts, which have resulted in the restoration of the first floor of the 1895 building as a fire department museum. They hope to continue the restoration of the remainder of the building [Proposal].

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### MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"1898 Blaze Sparks FD Organization." Kinston Daily Free Press, 4 July 1976, p. 10F.

Clark, Robert. Director of Planning and Research, City of Kinston, Kinston, North Carolina. Allison Black interview, 26 May 1989.

"Fire Company Resolutions." Kinston Free Press, 9 June 1904, p. 4.

"Hook and Ladder Company." Kinston Free Press, 18 April 1896, p. 4.

"Kinston Fire Company No 1." Kinston Daily Free Press, 18 July 1904, p. 1.

Kinston Fire Department. Minutes of Fire Company meetings, in possession of Fire Chief Tony Kelly.

Kinston, North Carolina. Minutes of the Town Commissioners. Microfilm in Search Room, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Proposal for Restoration of the Caswell No. 1 Fire Station and City Hall (circa 1894), March 2, 1987. Copy in Survey File.

Reinspection Report, City of Kinston, N. C.. South-Eastern Underwriters Association, 5 December 1938. Copy in Survey Files.

"Representative Houses and Prominent Men of Kinston, N. C." Historical and Descriptive Review of the State of North Carolina. Charleston, S. C.: Empire Publishing Company, 1885.

"To Fight the Flames." Kinston Daily Free Press, 8 July 1904, p. 1.

"Two Fires." Kinston Free Press, 23 May 1895, p. 10.

For general works, see Major Bibliographical References for Historic and Architectural Resources of Kinston, N. C.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than 1

UTM References

A 18 265160 3904670  
 Zone Easting Northing

C         

B           
 Zone Easting Northing

D         

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property being nominated consists of the approximately 34 by 64 foot building only.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The (former) Kinston Fire Station/City Hall stands at the northwest corner of the Lenoir County Courthouse tract, lot 15, Lenoir County Tax Map 6. The courthouse and a 1.95-acre tract, excluding the fire station, were listed in the National Register in 1978 as part of North Carolina's courthouse thematic nomination.

See continuation sheet

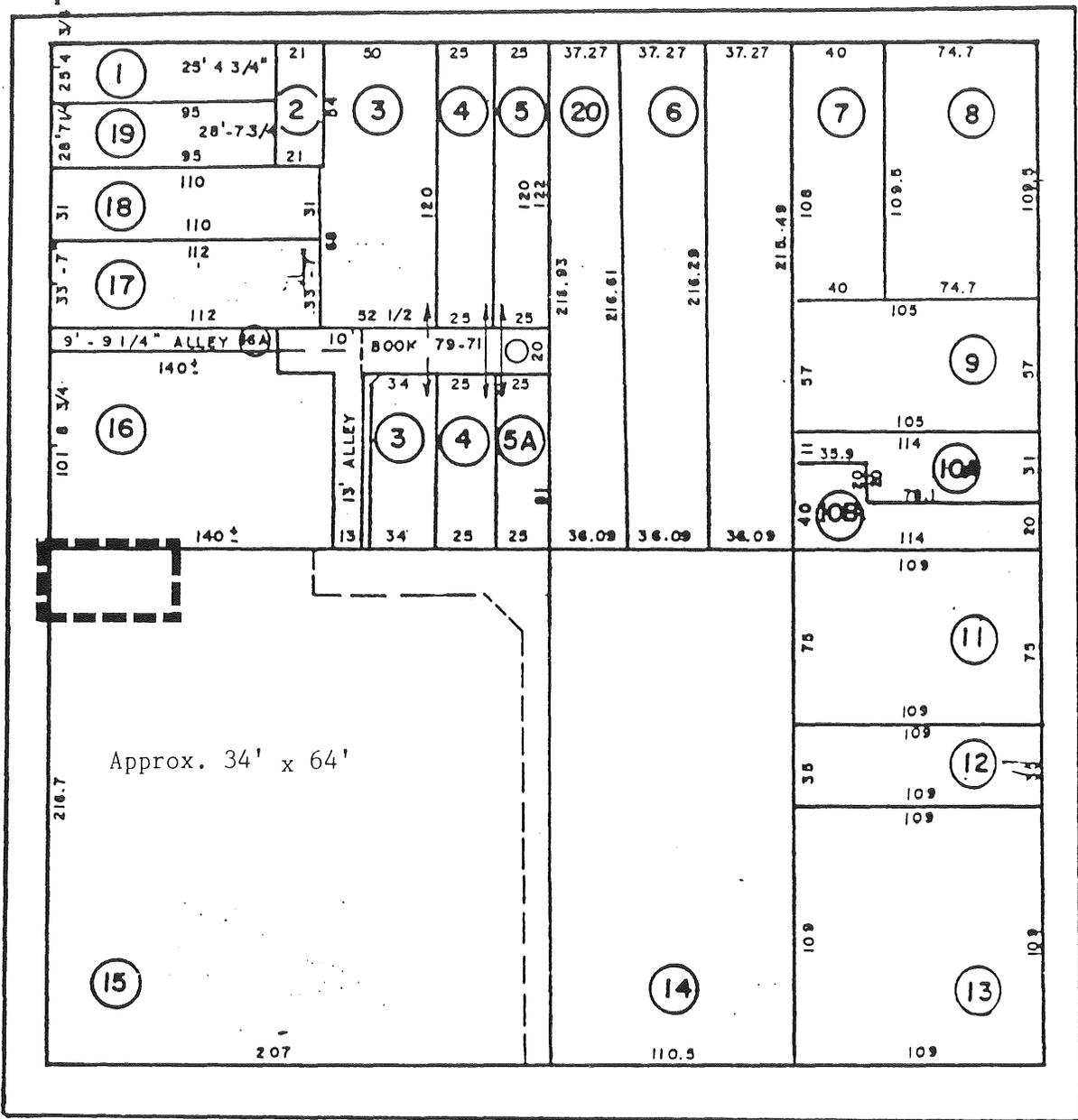
11. Form Prepared By

name/title Allison H. Black, Architectural Historian  
 organization Black & Black, Preservation Consultants date June 1, 1989  
 street & number 620 Wills Forest St. telephone 919 828-4616  
 city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27605

E. CASWELL ST.

S. QUEEN ST.

S. MCLEWEAN ST.

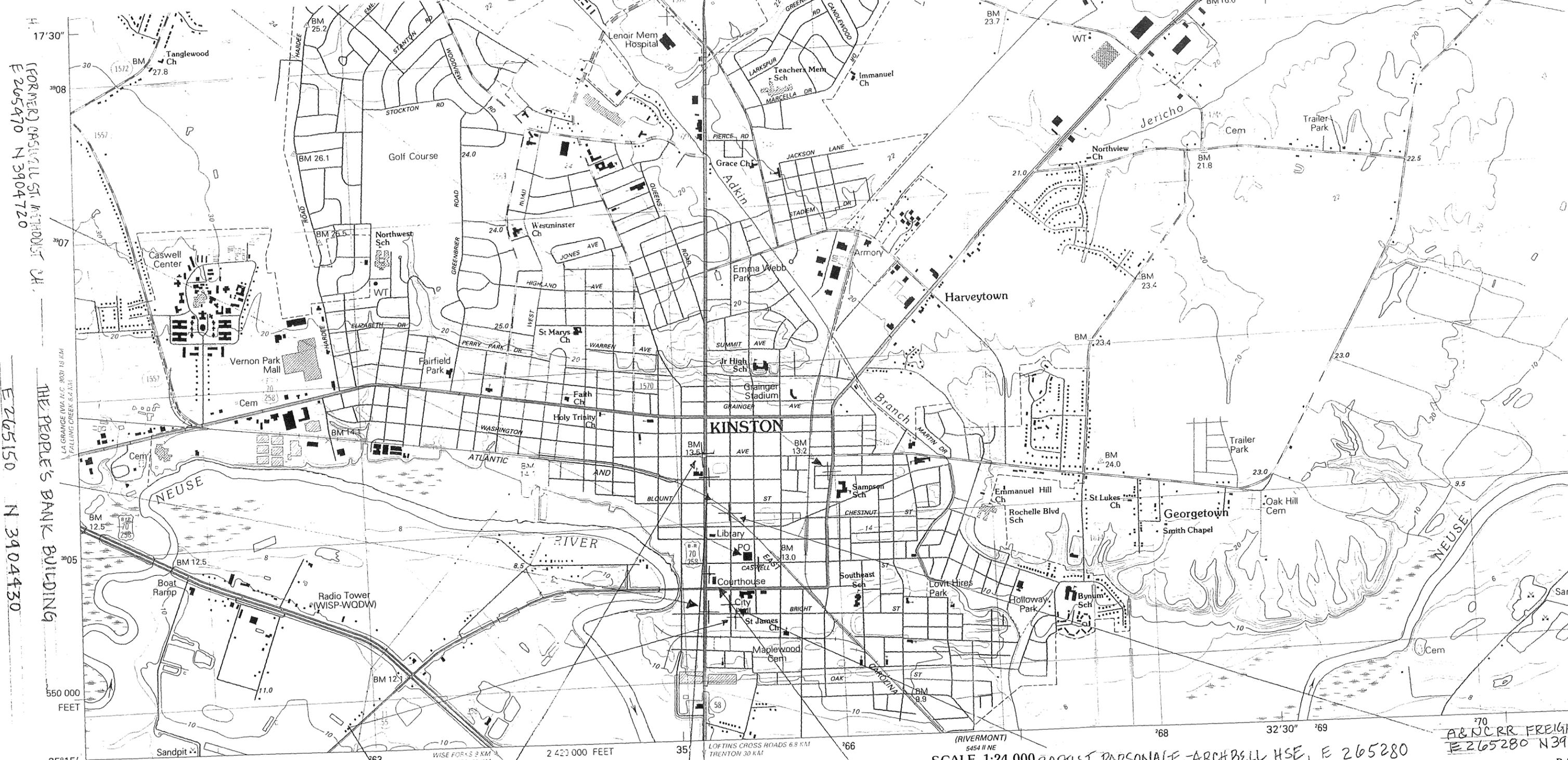


E. KING ST.

(former) Kinston Fire Station/City Hall  
 118 S. Queen St.  
 Kinston, N. C.

Lenoir County Tax Map 6, lot #15





(FORMER) CASWELL ST METHODIST CH.  
E 265470 N 3904720

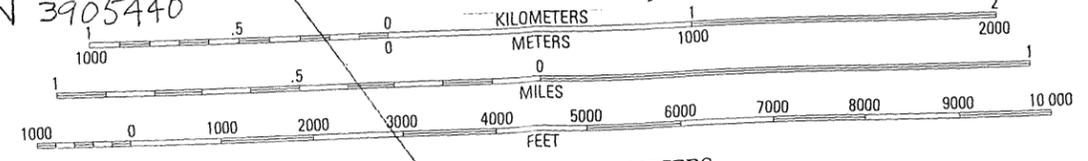
THE PEOPLE'S BANK BUILDING  
E 265150 N 3904430

Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and North Carolina Geodetic Survey  
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1977. Field checked 1979. Map edited 1983  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: North Carolina coordinate system (Lambert conformal conic)  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18  
1927 North American Datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 12 meters south and 26 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
Gray tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

B.W. CANADY FSE, E 265160 N 3905440

HOTEL KINSTON E 265190 N 3905290

BLALOCK HOUSE E 265310 N 3904400



CONTOUR INTERVAL 2 METERS  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER  
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST  
(FORMER) KINSTON FIRE STATION/CITY HALL  
E 265160 N 3904670



QUADRANGLE LOCATION  
CONTOURS AND ELEVATIONS IN METERS

A&NCRR FREIGHT I  
E 265280 N 390500

BAPTIST PARSONAGE ARCH BELL HSE, E 265280 N 3904480

Primary hard su  
Second hard su

