

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Mayfield Electric & Water Systems

other names/site number GV-M-375

2. Location

street & number 301 E. Broadway

NA	not for publication
NA	vicinity

city or town Mayfield

state Kentucky code KY county Graves code 083 zip code 42066

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title Mark Dennen, SHPO Date _____
Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____
Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

Mayfield Electric & Water Systems
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Graves, KY
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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

NA

NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/government building

GOVERNMENT/government building

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

International Style

foundation: _____

walls: Stone

roof: Flat roof, not visible

other: _____

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

Mayfield Electric & Water Systems (GV-M-375) is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of 5th and Broadway in Mayfield, seat of Graves County, Kentucky. The building is situated right beside City Hall and one can see the Graves County Courthouse and court square as they walk out the building's front doors. The building was constructed in 1955, has an International style and consists of a single building.

Narrative Description

Previous use of the property and character of the site

The nominated property has been used as the administrative offices of the City of Mayfield's electric, water and sewer company since 1955. Until the current building was constructed in 1955, this site was occupied by a house, and City's Electric and Water Systems offices were at 213 W. Broadway. The building today occupies most of its lot, with a parking area on the building's north (rear) side. The building is set back from the street, making room for sidewalks on its south and west sides.

Nine sets of Sanborn Insurance Company maps were issued from 1886-1942, and on the 1905 maps, commercial buildings line both the north and south side of East Broadway nearly to the intersection with 5th Street (Sheet 10); the 1916 maps show that little change had occurred in the movement of the central business district eastward (Sheet 13).



1916 Sanborn Map Showing East Broadway

Exterior Description of the Building

The building is one story in height, with the main entrance on its southwest corner, has a flat roof made of built-up asphalt material covered in rock, and is faced in Bedford limestone in ashlar coursing. The building's most distinctive feature is its entry way, which is comprised of a glass-walled vestibule bay framed in aluminum and topped by a one-of-a-kind marquee proclaiming "TVA POWER" above the company's name, "MAYFIELD ELECTRIC & WATER SYSTEMS."

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The sign stopped working in the 1970s, but has recently been restored to its function, with energy-efficient LED lighting. Each night, from dark to 10:00 p.m., the sign is activated. MEWS has learned that this sign is one of only two original TVA signs still in existence in the United States.

Fenestration consists of a single bank of windows on the west side and a matching bank on the south side, each consisting of 5 vertically oriented windows in metal frames. A limestone cap tops the walls. The building has few applied decorative details, in keeping with mid-century International style.

Interior Description of the Building

One enters the building from its southwest corner, through two sets of automatic doors onto a carpeted lobby floor. Once inside, on a sunny day, the front office is brightly lit by sunlight through the 10 floor-to-ceiling windows that surround the front part of the lobby. To the left is a dark wood counter with three customer service spots. On top of the counter is a glass protective wall with small cut-outs for patrons to slide their payments through. Behind the counter is one of two stone walls, original to the building. To the right are two leather chairs for customers to sit down while waiting. Straight ahead is the second stone wall, which holds a community computer for customers wishing to check their usage online, as well as a flat-screen television mounted on the wall playing promotional videos.

Beyond the customer service counter is a hallway vestibule. It has a stained-wood door on the left and a set of stained-wood double doors in front. The left door leads to the employee-side of the customer service desk. Beyond that is a long narrow hallway. That hallway leads to a series of rooms—the Cash Room, named so as it is where the cashiers count their money at the end of the day. This room also houses lists of disconnections, promotional items, filing cabinets, and boxes of materials used by the customer service representatives.

Beyond the Cash Room is an office that has been split into two sections by a grey partition. This office hosts one employee that currently enables customers to take advantage of the office's pre-paid billing program, and another employee who provides other customer services.

Further, another office houses the Customer Service and Marketing Manager. This hunter green office is lined with cherry book cases. The back wall of this office has glass windows that stretch from about waist height to the ceiling.

Near the end of that hall is the building's kitchen. From 1955 until just a few years ago, these two offices and the now small kitchen made up one huge kitchen that was used for promotional purposes. The kitchen contained modern state-of-the-art all-electric devices to be used in the home. These facilities were used by various groups for meetings, and for the company to demonstrate how to use electricity more efficiently inside the home. The company employed a home economist, for years a role performed by Miss Mary Emma Hearn, who showed groups how to use electric appliances, such as oven, range, refrigerator, vacuum cleaners, electric washer, electric dryer, and automatic dishwasher.

Past the kitchen is another storage area with three walls of shelves that house more paper documents, old technology and holiday decorations. On the far right wall is a vending machine. Next to the shelves on the north wall is an employee-only door to the outside. This is the door that most of the office's employees use to enter and exit the building, as it is closest to the parking lot.

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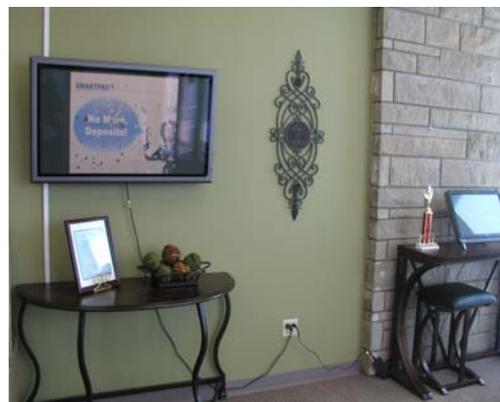
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Returning to the building's front lobby, another hall lays past the customer service desk, through the double doors. This hall leads to ladies' restroom on the left, which still sports peach tiles that cover the walls from the floor to a height of about six feet, and a men's restroom. Beyond the bathrooms is the Accounting and Finance Office. This bright yellow office houses five employees, two smaller offices and the vault. This office also has a row of windows on its south side.

Further down the hallway are two more offices on the right, another on the left and the boardroom straight ahead at the end of the hallway. Right after the restrooms is a small hallway that leads directly into the attached Shop. The Shop is a huge domed concrete-floored garage. The Shop has two electric garage doors that allow employee trucks to enter on the west side and exit on the north east side. The shop also houses a couple of offices on the north wall, one for the office's internet department and the other for the meter technician. The Shop also has a metal door leading to the parking lot at the west end of the north wall. After the door, the north wall is lined with huge paned windows that follow the north wall and wrap around and down the east wall, as well.

Changes to the Building since 1955

There haven't been many changes to the structure of the building since 1955. The lobby looks a little different because the customer service desk has moved, with a wall put in the old desk's place, which allowed an expansion of the Accounting/Finance Office, and installation of the vault.



The pull or push glass doors that customers used to use to enter the lobby have been updated to electric, motion-activated doors, to accommodate our customers with special needs.

All of the ceilings in the office used to be 10 feet high, some of the ceilings have now been lowered to 8 feet, to cut back on heating and cooling costs and to house central heat and air ducts.

The offices down the north hallway, housing the "home economics" kitchen, have been downsized to make more room for administrative offices.

Not only have there been structural changes, but the office has given up its stark white walls to more modern and "inviting" colors. The office furniture has been updated, from the metal desks and fabric chairs from the 1950s, by the use of wood desks and leather chairs. Since the advent of computers,

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the company has been able to store more information in machines, freeing up space that was once used for filing cabinets. The old asbestos-filled tile floors have been replaced with Berber carpet.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Government

Period of Significance

1955-1960

Significant Dates

1955

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Bisson, Max (Architect)

Period of Significance (justification)

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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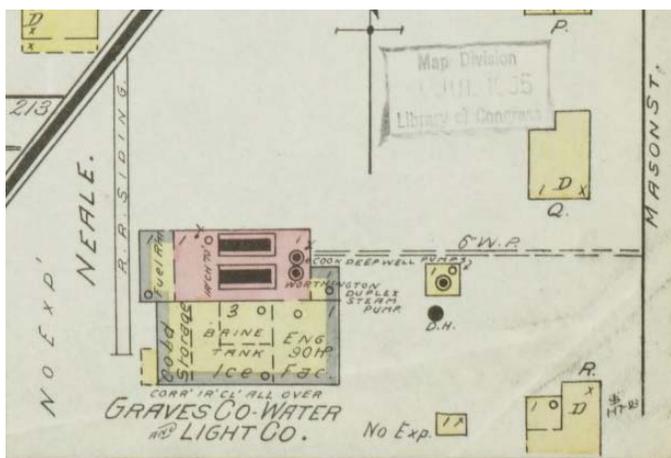
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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Mayfield Electric & Water Systems Building (GV-M-375, referred to throughout as “MEWS”) meets National Register Criterion A and is significant within the context, “Electric Power Service in Mayfield, Kentucky, 1891-1960.” This administrative office building of Mayfield local government helps tell an important story about the services that many smaller American cities provided in the twentieth century, services that cities have a more difficult time providing as time goes on. In the 20th century, it became common for Kentucky’s county seat towns to offer their citizens a whole range of services, from hospitals, electric, water, sewer, social welfare, etc. In many instances, these services would have been initiated by an individual as a for-profit venture, or by a charitable organization to help the needy, but at some point the city would acquire the operation for the benefit of all the community’s residents. This situation worked, as long as tax collections could support a growing portfolio of civic services. Toward the latter part of the 20th century, the costs of some services became burdensome for communities, and cities began to sell those operations back to private/for-profit entities. The Mayfield Electric & Water Systems Building houses an operation which continues to serve the community as a fiscally healthy municipal utility. It gives a glimpse to us of a time when communities agreed that a city’s operation consisted of a wide array of services attached to local governments. The building on the nominated property, particularly its bright marquee, sheds light on the expansion of government functions, a concept that thrived from the New Deal era well into the mid-20th century.

Historic Context: Electric Power Service in Mayfield, Kentucky, 1891-1960

Mayfield was first served with electricity in 1891. Graves County Water and Light Company was formed in 1891 and granted a franchise by the City of Mayfield for 25 years (Mayfield Ordinance Book 1, page 5). The company’s power generation station occupied a lot south of Walnut Street, between then 11th and 12th Streets. “It was a really interesting building. The coal used to be brought in on those railroad tracks. The train ran right beside the building and dropped it off,” said Joe Smith, hired in at MEWS in 1978. The early Sanborn maps of Mayfield show that the electric company’s physical plant underwent numerous expansions and upgrades in a short time:



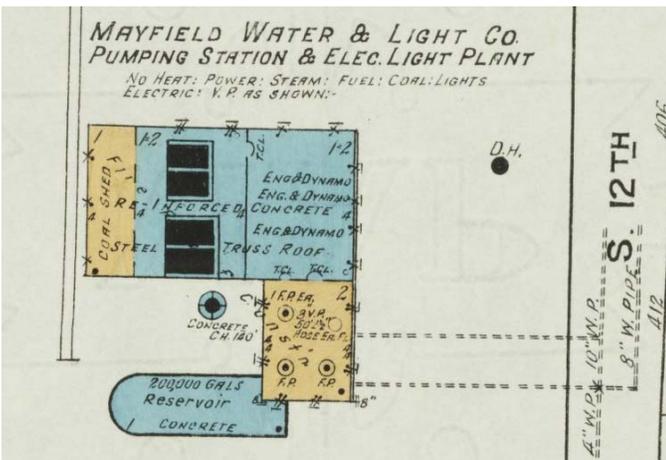
Graves County Water and Light Co., 1892, Sheet 1
(North is up; Mason Street was renamed 11th Street)

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Mayfield Water and Light Company, 1905 Sheet 7
(North is to the left; Walnut Street runs on the north side of block)



Mayfield Water and Light Company, 1916, sheet 15
(North is to the bottom of image; 12th Street runs on the West side of block)

With the agreement between the City and Mayfield Water and Light Company set to expire in 1916, the City began to contemplate the option that the original agreement provided: allowing the City to purchase the company at the end of the 25-year term. The City Council began contemplating this matter in 1915, empowering Mayor C.M. Parkhill to enter negotiations with Mayfield Water and Light for purchase. The City hired American Appraisal Company of Milwaukee to establish a fair price for the company (Murray Collection).

The company had proved to be a profitable enterprise, which the City knew at least through the amount they paid to the company annually. One bill to the City, dated January 1, 1911, shows that the City was paying \$15,522 just for rent on the company's numerous fire hydrants and street lights

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throughout the community; electric current to those lights was an additional cost to the City. By comparison with present power costs, Mayfield citizens were charged a relatively high rate for electricity: 10 cents per kilowatt hour for the first 50 KWH used, which dropped to 9 cents per KWH for the next 50 hours of use. Because it was a high consumer of electricity, the City was charged only 5 cents per KWH for the power in its street lights. In a letter to the City dated June 26, 1916, Mayfield Water and Light Company offered itself for sale at \$275,000 (Murray Collection). The company was acquired by the Kentucky-Tennessee Light and Power Company in 1916.

On May 18, 1933, Congress passed the TVA Act. By the end of WWII, TVA had become the nation's largest electricity supplier. Today, TVA services seven different states, including Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. Tennessee Valley Authority eventually absorbed Kentucky-Tennessee Light and Power, but K-TLP continued to operate Mayfield's electric system until June 10, 1942. At that time, TVA released control of the system to the City of Mayfield, who still owns and operates the system today. Mayfield Electric and Water Systems continues under the guidance of an electric plant board appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council.



Mayfield Electric & Water Systems was located at 213 W Broadway, Mayfield, KY until its new building was constructed in 1955 at 301 E Broadway.

MEWS has been a vital part of the city of Mayfield since it was acquired from Kentucky-Tennessee Light Company in 1942. It provided Mayfield with three services that have become vital to the modern sense of community life: electricity, running tap water and a sewer system. While providing prosaic functions, MEWS has promoted itself as a provider of more than mere utilities. It identifies itself with Mayfield's growth and accomplishment—bringing customers relatively low electric rates, a sense of comfort and pleasure to everyday living, and a safer, more secure city. When the building opened in 1955, the corporation claimed it had become one of the most important businesses in the city of Mayfield. Backing this claim, were points established in its 13th Anniversary Booklet:

- (Electric, water and sewer services) have lines and equipment valued at well over 2 million dollars. Customers pay more than \$625,000/year for these services.
- The utility provides round-the-clock service to homes and businesses--to every part of the community. Few businesses have the 24-hour-a-day responsibility.

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- The utility provides services that are absolutely essential to daily living. Electric power to do all kinds of jobs, every hour of every day. Water and Sewer services...essential to modern community life.

The brochure immodestly claimed, "Yes, Mayfield Electric & Water Systems is perhaps the most important business in town. And the new headquarters building, financed completely by the electric system, is designed to give you the best, most efficient service from this vital organization."

When this building was constructed in 1955, it was perhaps the area's introduction to Modernist architectural style. It replaced the previous building at 213 West Broadway, which did not have adequate space and equipment to provide for the System's mid-20th-century needs. Demand for electricity especially had risen since the close of World War II. In Mayfield 1954, 4300 customers of the system consumed about 36 million kilowatt hours of electricity—six times as much as the 2780 customers used in 1942. Mayfield homes were using about 450 kilowatt hours a month, which was about twice the national average of use at that time. In 1957, the average yearly use of electricity in a Mayfield home was 6192 kwh. The average home in America used about 2800 kwh yearly.

As to the boast of providing inexpensive utilities, in 1942, Mayfield Electric & Water Systems' customers were paying over 3½ cents/kwh; by 1955, power rates had declined, so that customers were charged *one third* of the 1942 rate, an average cost of 1-1/8 cents per kwh, which was half the national average of 2-2/3 cents per kwh. That year the electric system paid \$15,537 to Mayfield's general fund, and another \$21,188 to state and county government. The electric and water system during the Period of Significance was completely self supporting, paying for maintenance and expansion out of fees paid rather than relying upon tax revenues.

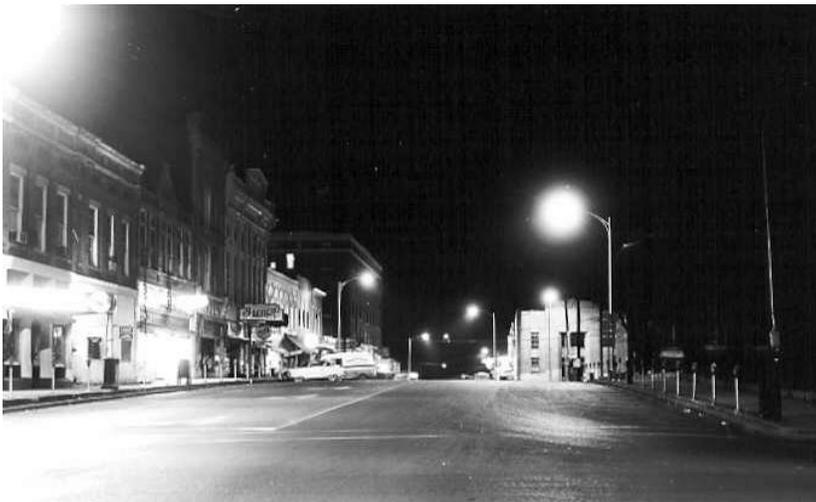
The rise in popularity of electrically-driven labor-saving devices for the home coincided with America's great home building boom during the post-war years. New electric appliances came to symbolize this country's achievement of a good life. By 1955, Mayfield Electric and Water Systems could encourage greater electric use by promoting the all-electric home, a residence which used automatic washers, electric clothes dryers, electric ranges, home freezers, dishwashers and vacuums. These conveniences certainly colored the emerging domestic landscape that arose in post-war subdivisions. The Modernist design of the Electric and Water Systems building could not help but reinforce these messages about the services the utility provided.



(Left) Mayfield resident, Mrs. William McDade, Jr. does her kitchen work the easy and electric way. Lots of Mayfield's homemakers enjoyed the many wonderful benefits of the all electric kitchen. Electricity did wonders toward giving the homemaker more leisure time in 1940's and 50's.

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Mayfield Electric & Water Systems paved the way for a safer, more secure city in 1954. On December 10, 1954, Mayfield turned on its new street lighting system. At the time, the system called for 59 20,000 lumen mercury vapor lamps mounted on 32" aluminum standard poles. These 59 poles replaced 72 old 2500 lumen incandescent lamps. Good street lighting not only improved the general appearance of the city, but it significantly reduced the number of night accidents, helped to prevent night crime

and worked to improve business conditions by giving impetus to a city-wide clean-up movement at that time.

Evaluation of Significance of the Mayfield Electric and Water Systems Building in its context "Electric Power Service in Mayfield, Kentucky, 1891-1960"

The Mayfield Electric and Water Systems Building is significant within the context of Electric Power Service provision in Mayfield, Kentucky. Electric power became ubiquitous in American life during the 20th century, in Mayfield and around the nation. The nominated building provided the public in this county seat town the main point of contact with the business of that utility. It is an important aspect of that the operation that it started out as a private business, and later was purchased by the city of Mayfield, which continues to operate it. Other sites within the city also have a claim on importance within this context, particularly the power generating plant location which was at Walnut and the then 11th Streets, and the earlier location of the administrative offices, at 213 West Broadway.

Evaluation of the Integrity of the Mayfield Electric and Water Systems Building

The Mayfield Electric and Water Systems Building is evaluated as significant according to the terms of Criterion A. Any property found historically significant within the context of evaluation, "Electric Power Service in Mayfield, Kentucky, 1891-1960," must have integrity of location, materials, and design. If a property has these 3 integrity factors, then it will be said to have integrity of associations, which makes the property eligible, as association is the key aspect of Criterion A, that the "Property is **associated** with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history."

The property has changed so little from its original construction that the normal practice of defining what constitutes integrity of the primary factors—location, materials, and design—for this nomination, seems unnecessary. The property has very high integrity, recognizable as a mid-20th-century construction. This property has the highest integrity among the few properties that populate this context.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

The Mayfield Messenger: December 27, 1969.

Progress in Mayfield: The New Home of Mayfield's Electric and Water Systems: 13th Anniversary Booklet, December 16, 1955.

Service Is Our Business: 15th Annual Report, December 1957.

Interview with Joe Smith, by Mary Beth Paschall, February 15, 2011.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Kentucky Heritage Council

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): GV-M-375

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property Less than one Acre

UTM References

1	_____	_____	_____	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Mayfield Electric & Water Systems is surrounded by streets on 3 sides. The front of the building stops at East Broadway, the west side of the building stops at North 5th Street and the back parking lots stop at East North Street. The east side of the building stops at the next property line.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

NA

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Beth Paschall/Customer Service and Marketing Representative
organization Mayfield Electric & Water Systems date 09/29/2010
street & number 301 E Broadway telephone 270-247-4661
city or town Mayfield state KY zip code 42066
e-mail mbelder@mewsbb.net

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Mayfield Electric & Water Systems

City or Vicinity: Mayfield

County: Graves State: KY

Photographer: Mary Beth Paschall

Date Photographed: March 25, 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 5: West side, camera facing northeast
- 2 of 5: West and South sides, camera facing northeast
- 3 of 5: South side, camera facing northeast
- 4 of 5: East side, camera facing west
- 5 of 5: East side, camera facing southwest

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Mayfield
street & number 211 East Broadway telephone 270-247-1891
city or town Mayfield state KY zip code 42066

N 5th St



Shop

E Broadway



AMERICAN HOTEL
REAR ENTRANCE

PARKING FOR
CARR'S
STEAK HOUSE
REAR ENTRANCE →

NO
LEFT
TURN

↩ →



PARKING FOR
CARR'S
STEAK HOUSE
& REAR ENTRANCE →

DO NOT
BLOCK
INTERSECTING
STREET

SHELYON



WALNUT

TVA
POWER
MAYFIELD ELECTRIC & WA



RESERVED
PARKING






TVA

POWER

MAYFIELD ELECTRIC & WATER SYSTEMS

CHEVROLET



**TVA
POWER
MAYFIELD ELECTRIC & WATER SYSTEMS**





NOTICE

NOTICE

DANGER
LOOK OUT
FOR TRUCKS







TVA
POWER

MAYFIELD ELECTRIC & WATER SYSTEMS



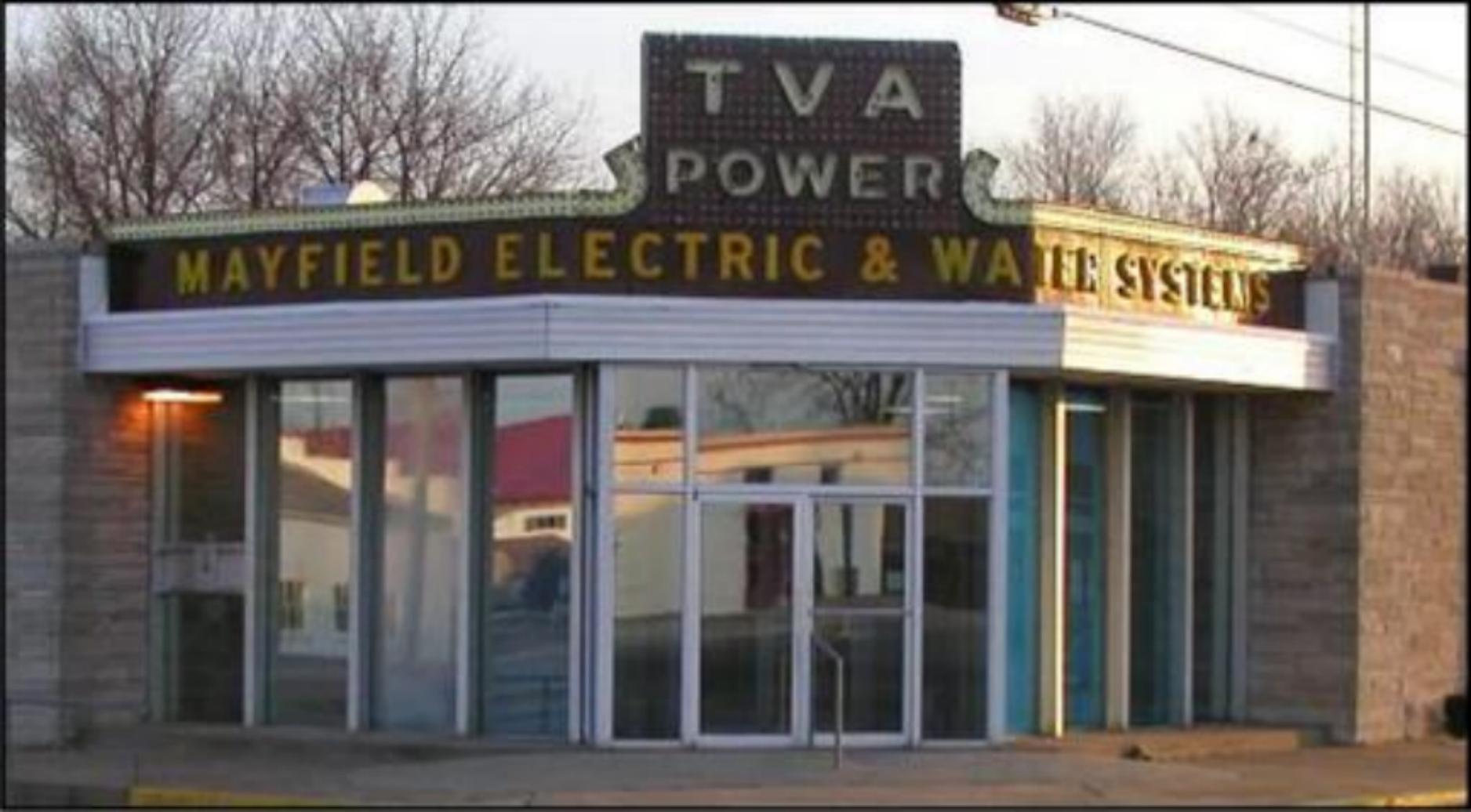
TVA

POWER

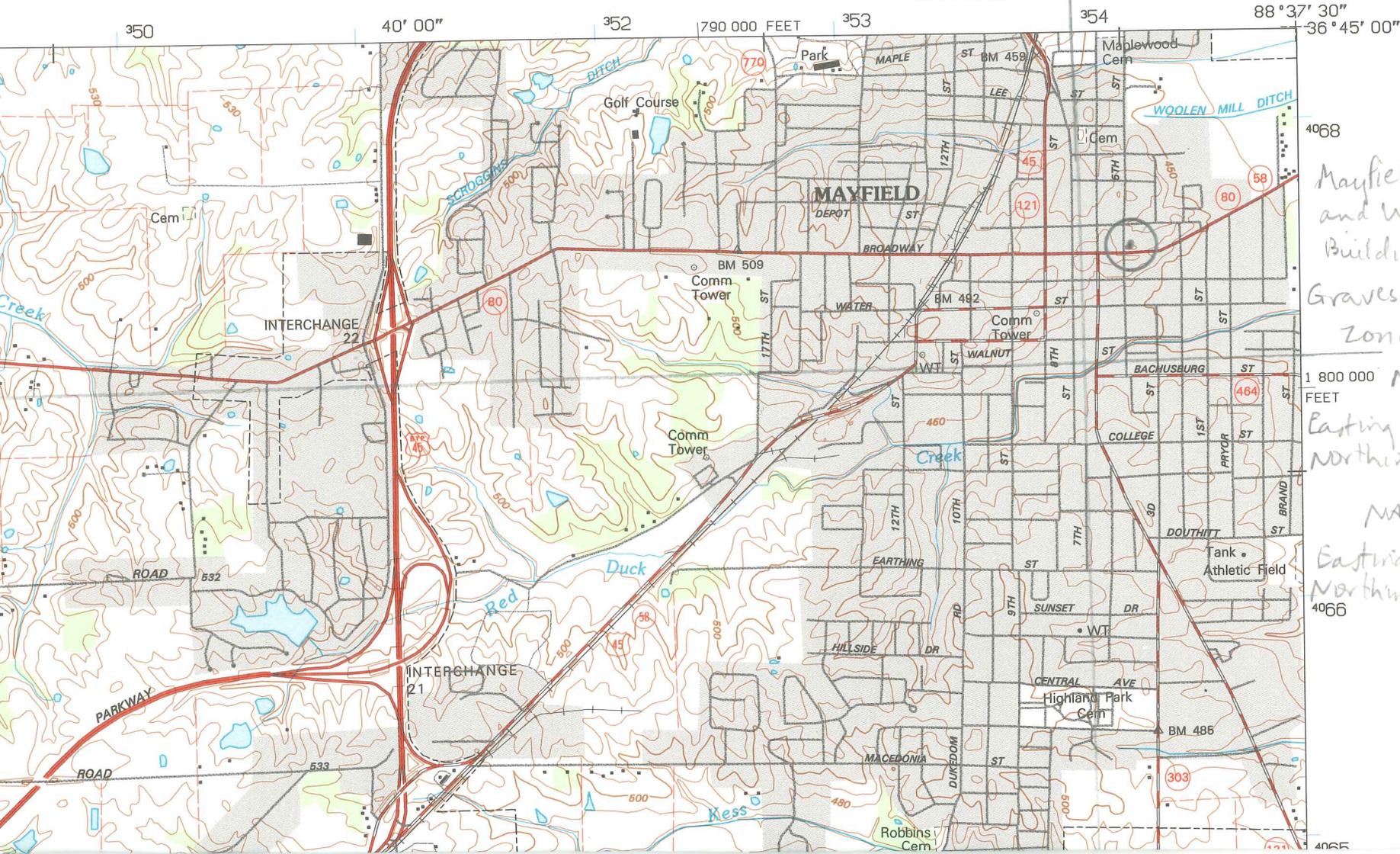
ELECTRIC & WATER

TVA
POWER

MAYFIELD ELECTRIC & WATER SYSTEMS



MAYFIELD QUADRANGLE
KENTUCKY-GRAVES CO.
7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



4068
 Mayfield Electric
 and Water Service
 Building
 Graves Co., KY
 Zone 16
 1 800 000 MADS 27
 FEET
 Easting 354 208
 Northing 4067 266
 MADS 83
 Easting 354 207
 Northing 4067 474
 4066