



**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

**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	
28	26	buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
28	26	<b>Total</b>

**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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 1

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store; specialty store, financial institution, business, warehouse

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

Same as historic

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Neo-Classical

Other: Mid-century Modern

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Brick; concrete

walls: Brick, stucco

\_\_\_\_\_

roof: Other: tar and gravel

other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph:

Nashville is located in the generally flat agricultural land of southeastern Howard County in southwest Arkansas. The boundaries of the proposed downtown commercial district encompass 55 buildings. With one exception, all of the contributing buildings were commerce-related historically. The exception is the U. S. Post Office, which is individually listed in the National Register. Contributing buildings in the district range in date from circa 1895 through the 1950s. Even with a 47% non-contributing rate, the district is able to convey its historic identity (and National Register significance) as the focus of commerce for the town and surrounding rural areas.

Overview:

Three potent historical forces that shaped the lower American South toward the end of the nineteenth century are largely responsible for Nashville’s establishment and continued development: 1) the large-scale construction of railroads; 2) the post- Civil War recovery of cotton as a cash crop; and 3) the coming of industrial lumbering. Additional prosperity came to Nashville from the harvesting, packing and shipping of fruit – especially peaches. Early Sanborn fire insurance maps give ample evidence of fruit packing platforms, cotton gins, compresses and cotton warehouses, as well as lumber yards, lumber sheds, saw mills and planing mills. Especially noteworthy was the massive Nashville Lumber Company, set south and east of downtown. It is thought to be the largest industrial facility ever to operate in the area. A few exposed foundations and a short row of much altered company housing are all that survive to represent it.

Nashville is manifestly a railroad town. Its principal thoroughfare, Main Street, parallels the old Arkansas and Louisiana Railroad corridor one block to the west. Historically the 100 foot wide street featured a grassy median down the center. Three blocks of tightly packed party wall commercial buildings line Main Street. There are a few buildings in the boundaries located just off Main Street on intersecting streets. The most important of these is a large c. 1905 warehouse set adjacent to the rail line. Also located on the railroad corridor is a non-historic grain elevator complex with associated features reaching five stories. It has a large visual presence in the historic district, but is outside the district boundaries. It may be said to continue the industrial character of the busy, still active railroad corridor.

The Nashville Commercial Historic District is a discrete and distinctive whole sharply in contrast to the parking lot and big box retail (post-1970) landscape that characterizes other commercial sectors of the town. It is cohesive in terms of scale, massing, setback, fenestration pattern and, for the most part, building materials. Building facades are chiefly of brick. A small minority are stucco over brick. Almost all of the district’s buildings are technically one story, but most of these are of sufficient height to accommodate two stories easily. Indeed, at first glance, one would think they were two stories. Ceilings in the buildings in question are very high. In some cases, lofty interiors are serviced by decorative cast-iron ventilators set in the façade above the shopfront and transom. Elaborate brickwork often sets off the ventilators.

Breakdown by Period:

In most instances buildings were dated using Sanborn fire insurance maps (1900, 1908, 1914, 1919, 1930, and 1945). A detailed building-by-building inventory is at the end of Part 7.

c.1895 – 1919	17 buildings	31%
1920 – 1930	4 buildings	7%
1931 – 1945	4 buildings	7%
1946 – 1960	4 buildings	7%
Non-contributing	26 buildings	47%

Nashville's very earliest commercial buildings would have been wooden. None of these survive. In 1898, in response to various fires of the previous few years, the town council passed Ordinance 27 outlawing the construction of wooden buildings. This, and the opening of a brickyard, gave us many of the district's early brick buildings.

As in most any community, Nashville's architectural heritage reflects the ups and downs of the local economy. The seventeen buildings (31%) in the circa 1895 to 1919 category represent the town's early period of cotton and lumber prosperity. Many of these have a strong visual presence in the downtown due to their elaborate decorative brickwork. The product of a talented local brick mason (or brick masons), they should be viewed within the overall context of the commercial Italianate style, although it is doubtful their builders conceived of them in this manner.

Particularly noteworthy brickwork is found at 110 N. Main (#16) and the former Howard County Bank at 111 N. Main (#43). Both have the two story scale explained above. Decorative brick features on the upper façade of 110 N. Main include a row of lozenges, a strongly articulated row of brackets formed of corbelled brick, pilaster-like strips ending in corbelling, and multiple bands surrounding round cast-iron ventilators. Even more elaborate, more richly textured, is the building constructed in 1899 to house the Howard County Bank (#43). Here the brick mason seemed to be showcasing all of his talents. The three segmental head cast-iron ventilators are set off almost as if they were windows. Above each is a treatment with brick laid in a manner to suggest basket weaving. Setting off each composition are bricks laid with their headers protruding beyond the main wall plane. The building is capped with an intricately worked, asymmetrically placed parapet, extending above the main parapet, to showcase a date and name tablet.

The Nashville economy was in decline in the 1920s (see Part 8) -- a situation that only deepened with the Great Depression. There are only eight contributing buildings from the twenty-five year period from 1920 to 1945. Almost all of these are relatively small buildings, and two are not new construction, but older structures that were remodeled. The most noteworthy buildings from this period are the New Deal-funded Nashville Post Office (#29) and the handsome Neo-classical bank at 103 N. Main (#47).

The district's post- WWII (1946-1960) heritage is also, on the whole, fairly modest. There are four buildings from this period – one "motor bank," one warehouse, one small retail building, and one small office building. Easily the most architecturally important building from the post-war era is the 1950s "motor bank," with its dynamic mid-century modern geometry (#11).

#### Non-contributing Buildings:

The district has 26 non-contributing buildings, for an overall 47% rate. The vast majority of these are remodeled historic buildings, and they generally conform to the district in terms of building mass and rhythm along the block. 219 N. Main (#31), with its New Brutalist façade, is a particularly noticeable non-conforming altered historic building. Its inappropriate façade (for a historic downtown) is mitigated to some degree by the building's small scale and footprint. There are also several historic buildings fitted with metal slipcovers, and three historic buildings received new brick facades in the first decade of the twenty-first century designed to mimic the look of old Nashville.

Four of the non-contributing buildings are entirely new construction (late 1960s and beyond). All of these are either lower in scale or comparable in scale to the district's historic buildings and are of fairly modest profile.

#### Assessment of Integrity:

The Nashville Commercial District is a distinct, unified entity that stands apart from nearby residences and peripheral low-scale, broadly spreading, automotive commercial development. It has signature historic CBD elements such as pedestrian oriented party wall development and buildings constructed primarily of brick. And while 47% of its buildings are classified as non-contributing, this number alone does not convey the character of downtown Nashville. One still has a strong sense of being in a historic downtown. The historic buildings (53%) are on the whole visually dominant because of their scale, and more importantly, their many intensively styled and detailed facades. Alterations notwithstanding, the proposed district is able to convey its historic identity as a regional commercial center.

### Inventory:

1. 117 South Main. Non-contributing Element. One story pre-engineered steel brick-faced building dating from the mid-1970s, per phone interview with the builder, Corky Carlton of Nashville. Features distinctive steel brackets supporting an angled front roof.
2. 115 South Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1905 one story brick commercial building (on 1908 Sanborn map, not on 1900 map). Upper façade has three decorative brick panels with a ventilator in each. Crowned with corbelled brick cornice. Transom windows covered. Shopfront not original, but follows general pattern of a historic shopfront, and, in fact, may be one (at least 50 years old).
3. 113 South Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1905 one story brick commercial building (on 1908 Sanborn map, not on 1900 map). Upper façade identical to #3 above. Transoms windows covered. Shopfront, which provides for two stores, retains original cast-iron columns. Shopfront not original, but appears to be historic (at least 50 years old).
4. 111 South Main. Non-contributing Element. One story historic brick building with entire façade (above shopfront) covered by metal slipcover c.1970.
5. 109 South Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1905 one story brick commercial building (on 1908 Sanborn map, not on 1900 map). Upper façade has three decorative brick panels and is crowned by a particularly pronounced corbelled cornice. One suspects that the shape in each of the three panels is the infill of a decorative ventilator. Transom windows above shopfront are covered. Shopfront is not original but appears to be historic (50 years or older).
6. 107 South Main. Non-contributing Element. This one story building has a c.2000 façade and shopfront designed to mimic the look of old downtown Nashville (although it is clearly new).
7. 103 South Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1905 wide one story brick commercial building articulated as two stores (on 1908 Sanborn map, not on 1900 map). Upper facade is fairly plain. It is articulated as two matching units, each with layered brickwork at the cornice and a corbelled brick member at the center. Transom windows covered; both shopfronts appear to be non-historic, although they follow the general lines of historic shopfronts. One of the stores has a modern cloth barrel shaped awning; the other a metal fixed awning.
8. 101 South Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1950 one story plain brick commercial building. Despite different brickwork on the façade and the side elevation, the building appears to have been constructed all at the same time. Long side elevation features decorative breeze block accent strips and provides for a side entrance. Shopfront openings are original.
9. 127 E. Howard. Contributing Element. Located adjacent to the railroad, this large one story c. 1905 building appears on the 1908 Sanborn map as the St. Louis Compress Company Cotton Warehouse. For most of the historic period, it was a grocery warehouse (per Sanborn maps). Wide segmental head openings are found along the long side elevation facing the railroad. Some of the same openings survive along the other side elevation, but some openings have been changed to square head and fitted with garage-like doors. The façade of the building features a slight pediment shape at the top, with the central section rising slightly higher than the main mass. The façade has very few openings; two of these are covered. The vacant building has suffered some deterioration.
10. 117 E. Howard. Contributing Element. Circa 1950 long one story warehouse constructed of hollow tile. Hollow tile was intended to have a covering, but none was ever applied. Wide openings (for truck loading) along western side elevation have been covered, although their pattern and shape are clearly discernible. Façade features windows with large single panes and a central wide entrance.

11. 100 N. Main. Contributing Element. First National Motor Bank (c.1955). Well executed mid-century modern motor bank sheathed in contrasting orange brick and gold colored ribbed metal. The composition consists of a striking interplay of horizontal and vertical planes. The small rectangular body of the building is capped by a roof (faced in golden metal) that extends perhaps a foot-and-a-half beyond the walls on three elevations. On the north side elevation, the roof extends several feet to create a drive-through. The building is defined at the corner with a tall vertical member (sheathed in golden metal) that thrusts probably three feet above the roofline. The front of the building (where a small lobby is located) is sheathed in large sheets of glass held in place with glazing bars of the same gold-colored metal used elsewhere on the building. The only alteration is the loss of the gold metal on the front of the vertical member.
12. 102 N. Main. Contributing Element. Small, one story, plain brick circa 1940 professional office building with new cloth awning.
13. 104 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. One story historic brick commercial building with metal slipcover over façade from circa 1970; shopfront is not historic.
14. 106 N. Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1910 one story brick commercial building. Upper façade is treated with three large brick panels with layers of brick at the top of each. Transom windows covered with metal. Shopfront is not historic.
15. 108 N. Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1910 one story brick commercial building divided into three bays by thin brick piers that extend from the bottom of the shopfront to the top of the building. Upper façade has a pronounced visual character. Between each pier are a series of exaggerated brick corbelled elements. (They read like brackets.) Below the "brackets," one each bay, is a decorative brick inset panel with a ventilator. Transom windows covered.
16. 110 N. Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1905 one story brick commercial building displaying some of downtown Nashville's most elaborate brickwork. Richly worked upper façade features corbelled brackets, a series of diamond patterns, pilaster strips with corbelled bottoms, and distinctive roundels with ventilators at the center. Shopfront retains original decorative cast-iron columns. Transom windows covered; new treatment within the shopfront bays; metal awning.
17. 112 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. McLaughlin Building. Circa 1910 one story brick commercial building with notable brickwork. Façade is divided into three bays of unequal size via thin brick pilaster-like members. Each bay has a segmental head ventilator. At each end of the building the pilaster strip protrudes above the parapet, ending in a pyramidal brick cap. The top of the parapet features corbelled brick brackets. A row of corbelled brick brackets also appears lower on the façade to mark a horizontal band displaying the name (in painted letters) "McLaughlin Bldg." The original flat roof is gone. A modern much lower flat roof has been installed, below the level of the ventilators. The shopfront is not historic.
18. 114-116 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. The present façade of this wide stuccoed building dates from a c.2000 conversion of the building for religious use. Sanborn maps show a two story building here in 1945. Tax assessor records show a one story metal covered building in place before the present façade was created.
19. 118 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. The present façade of this building is non-historic (circa 1970). The upper façade is sheathed in metal. Prominent cables hold a metal canopy in place. Shopfront level is mainly glass.
20. 120 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. Notably altered one story historic commercial building. Upper brick façade's decorative brickwork seriously compromised by application of thick coating of stucco. Eyelid-looking elements presumably are covering historic ventilators of the type found elsewhere in downtown. Brick shopfront features small glass block windows and is sheltered by an oversized barrel-shape cloth awning.
21. 122 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. One story pre-engineered steel building (faced in brick) dating from 1980s, per phone interview with builder, Corky Carlton of Nashville. Like #1, it has distinctive steel brackets supporting an angled front roof overhang.
22. 112 E. Clark. Non-contributing Element. Circa 1925 one story brick commercial building that has been notably altered. About two-thirds of the façade is filled in with painted wood; new inappropriate door.

23. 116 E. Clark. Non-contributing Element. Circa 1915 one story wide brick commercial building with about two-thirds of the facade notably altered (crudely built shopfronts, garage door insertion).
24. 200 N. Main. Masonic Hall. Non-contributing Element. Date of 1903 appears in tablet on building. Italianate two story brick corner building with a masonic hall on the second floor and commercial space on the first. Cast-iron cornice has been lost. In its place is a modern metal treatment. Surviving original features include decorative cast-iron columns at the shopfront level, segmental head windows, a segmental head section with a date tablet, and above the windows, a particularly elaborate brickwork treatment consisting of decorative panels with a ventilator in each, inset panels featuring rows of brick laid with their corners thrusting outward, and exaggerated brackets formed of corbelled brick. First floor openings along side elevation bricked in. Rear addition is not on 1919 Sanborn map, but appears on 1930 map. It has since been fitted with modern windows.
25. 202-204 N. Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1910 wide one story brick commercial building providing for two stores. Divided into four bays by brick pilaster-like elements extending down to the shopfront level. Between each pilaster is an inset brick panel with layered brickwork at the top. Shopfront configuration is original (although glass and doors are not).
26. 210 N. Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1925 one story plain brick commercial building. Transom windows remain uncovered and shopfront appears to be historic. The metal awning is not historic.
27. 214 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. Circa 1925 wide one story brick commercial building being labeled non-contributing because its original character was notably changed by the application of stucco.
28. 216 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. Circa 1905 one story brick commercial building being labeled non-contributing due to notable alterations (application of stucco has obscured original brick features; unsympathetic shopfront replacement).
29. 220 N. Main. Nashville Post Office, 1937. Individually listed on the National Register. Contributing Element. One story brick free-standing building in a restrained Art Deco style. Depression-era mural on interior depicts growing and harvesting of peaches.
30. 101-111 W. Shepherd. Non-contributing Element. Balton Square, built in mid-1970s, according to phone interview with builder, Corky Carlton of Nashville. Like #s 1 and 21, this is a pre-engineered steel building of one story sheathed in brick. It features six shops divided into bays via prominent steel brackets supporting an angled roof overhang.
31. 219 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. Small one story historic building which received a stucco New Brutalist façade circa 1980.
32. 217 N. Main. Contributing Element. Plain "no style" one story circa 1955 commercial building with stucco façade. Shopfront shape is original; cloth awning is fairly recent.
33. 215 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. Two story historic commercial building that received a metal slipcover circa 1970.
34. 213 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. Two story historic commercial building that received a metal slipcover circa 1970.
35. 207-209 N. Main. Contributing Element. Wide one story commercial building constructed circa 1915, but present stucco façade dates from c.1940. (For National Register purposes, the building will be considered to be circa 1940.) Shopfront and awning are newer.
36. 205 N. Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1910 one story brick commercial building. Building is plain except for corbelled brick cornice. Retains a historic shopfront pattern. Transom windows survive under shed-roof metal awning.
37. 203 N. Main. Contributing Element. Rector Drugstore. This circa 1895 one story brick commercial building sited prominently on the corner of N. Main and W. Clark is among the oldest and most architecturally distinctive buildings in downtown Nashville. Façade is of painted brick; side elevation is stuccoed. Romanesque Revival influence can be seen in the repeating round arches on the façade and on the one bay of the corner entrance. An elaborately worked cast-iron ventilator is found within each of the façade's round arches. Most of the round

arches spring from pronounced, stocky, buttress-like elements. Other notable features are a band of bricks laid with their corners pointing outward and a crowning parapet with a large rounded shape at the center of the façade. The great rounded shape extends above the parapet as do various short elements with decorative brick caps. The shopfront is relatively recent, as is the awning. The Art Deco style neon side was added for the present business.

38. 121 N. Main. Contributing Element. This circa 1895 one story commercial building features noteworthy decorative brickwork, including unusual lozenges. First appears on 1900 Sanborn map. Double shopfront appears to date to circa 1940.
39. 119 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. This small circa 1970 one story commercial building is inset at the lower level. Above is metal sheathing.
40. 117 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. Circa 1900 one story brick commercial building being labeled non-contributing due to alterations, which are visually dominant. Brick has been stuccoed over (upper two-thirds of façade). Some of shopfront may be 50 years old.
41. 117 N. Main Rear Dependency. Contributing Element. Circa 1895 small two-story warehouse dependency constructed of brick laid up in common bond. Appears on 1900 Sanborn map. Only surviving rear warehouse dependency in district. Retains original barred openings and wooden doors.
42. 113 N. Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1920 brick one story commercial building. A building of this footprint first appears on the 1908 Sanborn map, but the present upper façade, with its large central panel and shaped parapet, dates from a circa 1920 remodeling. Contrasting brick shopfront is less than 50 years old; shopfront transoms covered.
43. 111 N. Main. Contributing Element. Howard County Bank (1899). One story brick building with the finest brickwork in the district. Original three-bay shopfront culminates in three great round arches (arches presently filled in with metal). This is surmounted by three ornamental ventilator grilles set in intensively worked decorative brick panels with segmentally arched tops. Above this is a pronounced decorative brick cornice. The left side features an asymmetrically placed parapet which rises well above the main parapet. It features additional decorative brickwork and a tablet giving the building's name and date.
44. 109 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. Historic one story brick commercial building slipcovered in mauve metal circa 1970; received matching fixed awning with sloping sides. Shopfront may be 50 years old. (Classified as non-contributing because the slipcovered upper façade is visually dominant, non-historic and not in keeping with building materials in the district.)
45. 107 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. Historic one story brick commercial building with a c.1970 light green sheet metal slipcover. Tilework shopfront bearing the name "Carl's" may well be 50 years old. (Classified as non-contributing because the slipcovered upper façade is visually dominant, non-historic and not in keeping with building materials in the district.)
46. 105 N. Main. Non-contributing Element. Older one story brick commercial building fitted with new brick façade c.2000.
47. 103 N. Main. Contributing Element. Handsome one story brick Neo-Classical bank building constructed in 1923, per date in arch keystone over central entrance. Parapeted protruding entrance bay with strong round arch and engaged Tuscan columns gives the building a Beaux Arts feel. Round arch windows appear on the façade (one to each side of the entrance) and down the long side elevation. Present windows are recent replacements.
48. 100 S. Main. Non-contributing Element. Nashville Drugs. Historic single story brick commercial building with a modern (2003) brick façade designed in a manner similar to early twentieth century buildings in the district. The same brickwork continues down part of the side elevation. (The 2003 project was undertaken to improve the appearance of the building. The brick facade had been stuccoed and later slipcovered in metal.) The design and brickwork are very convincing. Nashville Drugs is one of the community's oldest businesses. The building retains its original decorative tilework at the shopfront entrance bearing the word "drugs."
49. 104 – 106 S. Main. Contributing Element. Earlier wide one story brick building being dated to circa 1945 remodeling. The façade was stuccoed and a new shopfront built. The original brick panel design is still visible in the stuccoed upper façade.

50. 110 – 112 S. Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1915 wide one story brick commercial building (not on 1914 Sanborn map, first appears on 1919 map). Noteworthy for its upper façade with decorative brick panels. Transoms are covered, shopfronts are from the 1950s.
51. 114 S. Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1910. This two story brick commercial building first appears on the 1914 Sanborn map and is labeled “offices.” (It is not on the 1908 map.) Noteworthy superimposed brick denticular cornices cap the facade. Multi-pane shopfront window design is recent as are the two nine-over-nine window units on the second story. (The second story openings themselves are original.)
52. 116 S. Main. Contributing Element. Circa 1940. This one story variegated textured brick building appears as a drugstore on the 1945 Sanborn map. (It is not on the 1930 map.) The shopfront is original.
53. 118 S. Main. Non-contributing Element. Historic one story brick commercial building with a circa 1970 sheet metal slipcover. Shopfront, with its interesting shape, may well be 50 years old. (The building is being classified as non-contributing because the slipcovered upper façade is visually dominant, non-historic and not in keeping with the building materials of the district.)
54. 120 S. Main. Non-contributing Element. Historic one story brick commercial building with a prominent circa 1970 sheet metal slipcover. Slipcover is done in the shape of a mansard roof. Shopfront, with its complex footprint and windows featuring decorative black bands, is historic. (Building is being classified as non-contributing because of its strongly articulated upper façade, which is non-historic and not in keeping with the district’s building materials.)
55. 114 W. Hempstead. Contributing element. This large functional one story brick commercial building does not appear on the 1919 Sanborn map; first appears on 1930 map. It is labeled “auto sales” and “service station” on that map and the 1945 map. It features a plate glass shopfront and garage openings (2) on one side elevation.

**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

commerce  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

Circa 1895 - 1960  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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.
- N/A Criteria Considerations not applicable

**Period of Significance (justification)**

See statement of significance.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) NA**

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The Nashville Commercial Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A as the focus of commercial activity for the town and large surrounding rural area. The period of significance begins circa 1895, the date of the earliest commercial buildings, and ends in 1960, to follow the present Register fifty year cutoff. Downtown Nashville continued to be the center of commerce for the area until the early 1970s when competition arrived in the form of Walmart.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

Historical Background:

Located at the junction of Dodson and Mine creeks, Nashville traces its origins to the 1830s, when settlers from the Upper South arrived. Particularly prominent among them was Isaac Cooper Perkins, who came from his native North Carolina first to Alabama, and later to Arkansas. In the 1830s, Perkins, a farmer and preacher, owned the land that included most of present-day Nashville. Another early settler was Michael Womack, from Bedford County, Tennessee. The small scattered rural settlement received a post office, named Mine Creek, on June 9, 1848. The name was changed to Nashville on June 13, 1856. At this time, the little settlement was just north of present-day downtown Nashville. It is referred to by local historians as "Old Nashville." (Deeds for parcels of land in today's downtown bear the name "New Nashville.")

Two critical, and related, events occurred in the post-Civil War years that changed forever the history of the tiny rural community of Nashville. Howard County, of which Nashville is now the seat, was created April 17, 1873. Originally the county seat was aptly named Center Point. Nashville, barely within the new county on the east side, became the seat of government in 1884. Why? One presumes because of the arrival of the railroad (the Louisiana and Arkansas) to the small community in 1883. (Nashville had a population of 172 in 1880.)

The focus of commercial activity moved a short distance from "Old Nashville" to present-day downtown due to disastrous fires in the late 1880s and the 1890s in the old town and the arrival of the railroad. When the Louisiana and Arkansas reached Nashville, a townsite was surveyed just south of "Old Nashville." J. D. Beardsley, a railway official, platted a downtown with a 100 foot wide Main Street parallel to the railroad. Parallel streets were given numbers, intersecting streets, names. The depot (no longer extant) was located just south of the proposed district. (Today there is nothing left above ground of Old Nashville's central business district.)

By the close of the first decade of the twentieth century, Nashville had a second railroad, the Memphis, Dallas and Gulf. The two railroads were the economic foundation of Nashville, enabling the community to acquire and sustain various industries and agricultural pursuits. Chief among them were lumber and cotton, and to a lesser but still important extent, wholesale warehousing. The one-page Sanborn insurance map for 1900 shows a cotton warehouse with a large cotton platform adjacent to the railroad. Nearby are two cotton seed houses and another cotton platform. On the outskirts of town is the fairly small El Dorado Lumber Company (with a sawmill and a planing mill).

By 1908, per Sanborn maps, Nashville had a quite large sawmill complex just southeast of downtown, the Nashville Lumber Company, plus one other planing mill and a box factory. Two cotton gins and a large cotton warehouse represented that important industry. Other endeavors located near the railroads were a foundry and a woolen mill. The 1914 and 1919 maps tell a similar story, but by 1919, there had been a notable growth of wholesale warehouse facilities along the railroad.

Generally speaking, the 1890s through the end of World War I were the economic boom years for Nashville. And there was a corresponding population boom, from 928 in 1900 to 2,144 in 1920. By contrast, the 1920s were fairly lean years economically, and population growth was almost stagnant (2,469 in 1930). The timber industry, having cut most of the virgin forests, began to decline in importance in the early to mid 1920s. The 1930 Sanborn map for Nashville shows lumber to be a small player. The once huge Nashville Lumber Company site is now occupied by a small box factory. Cotton farmers entered a period of economic depression in the 1920s, caused by numerous factors, including the collapse of artificially high wartime (WWI) prices and bad weather. Cotton had peaked at 33.9 cents per bale in 1920. By 1929, before the beginning of the Great Depression, it was down to 19 cents. Nonetheless, cotton far from disappeared as a pillar of the local economy. Farmers were still growing it, storing it, making oil from the cotton seed, etc. They were

just not making good wages doing it. Cotton is represented on the 1930 Sanborn map with two gins, a warehouse and a cotton oil company.

Peach harvesting was another player in the local economy. Here again, the railroads were essential in transporting this commodity out-of-state. Bert Johnson is credited with starting the first major peach operation in the Nashville area when he planted 70 acres in the early years of the twentieth century. Eventually this grew to thousands of acres.

Peaches were shipped from Nashville in ice-cooled cars (made possible by an ice plant south of downtown). According to the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, peak peach production in the Nashville area occurred in 1950, with over 400,000 bushels collected from 425 orchards. The peach industry was virtually wiped out in the early 1950s due to bad weather. Nashville's role in this agricultural business is represented on the 1930 Sanborn map by a railroad-owned fruit packing platform, a produce company, and a fruit packing company.

#### Downtown Nashville as Center of Commerce:

The Nashville Commercial Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A because of its role as the center of commercial activity for Nashville and the surrounding rural areas. As noted in a 1930 source, "The mercantile section [of Nashville] is large as befits a city which caters to so large a rural section." (The population of Howard County at that time was 17, 489.)

Proprietors and shopkeepers dispensed a wide variety of goods and services from the buildings within the district boundaries – providing everything the rural householder might need. To the small farmer or sawmill worker and their families, it would have been quite an occasion to come to the "big town" of Nashville with its fine historic buildings. Even into the 1950s, across rural America, going to "town" was a much anticipated, sometimes day-long event, often on a Saturday.

Southwest Arkansas was (and is) decidedly rural. For example, in 1930, eighty percent of Arkansans lived on farms or in villages. Downtown Nashville was the only commercial center of any size in Howard County and one of only three in the general area. The other two are DeQueen, some 30 miles to the west, and Hope, some 30 miles to the southeast. Both are county seats. DeQueen's downtown is roughly comparable in size to that of Nashville. Hope's is roughly twice the size. (Texarkana, located about an hour south of Nashville, would have been truly "big city" shopping.)

Nashville would have been the shopping "mecca" for its citizens and for rural householders, perhaps within a fifteen mile radius. Sanborn maps document that the bustling county seat offered about anything a person needed or wanted. The buildings in the district represent a good cross-section of commerce in the town. The ubiquitous general mercantile, represented by various extant buildings, carried everything from clothing, to furniture, to patent medicines, to buggy harnesses. By the 1920s general mercantile stores were sometimes being called department stores. One of the South's leading department stores of today, Dillard's, began in downtown Nashville in 1938. Regrettably, the building that housed Dillard's would not be recognizable to someone from the early days, having been fitted with a metal slipcover.

And, of course, there were various specialty retail businesses in any downtown. Three contributing buildings represent the staying power of drugstores in downtown Nashville. All three operated for long and often overlapping periods of time. They are Rector Drug, which operated in Building #37 from c.1895 through at least 1945; Building #2, which operated as a drugstore from its construction circa 1905 through at least 1945; and Building #52, Rexall Drugs, dating from circa 1940. Other known specialty retail businesses represented by extant contributing buildings include shoe, jewelry, furniture, and auto supply stores.

But people came to downtown Nashville for more than shopping. Many services were provided from contributing buildings in the proposed district. Chief among these was banking, which generally arrived in small southern towns at the turn of the twentieth century. The importance of a secure place to hold money and obtain loans cannot be overestimated for rural America. Three buildings, from different periods, represent this critical function in the local economy. It appears that only one of them was functioning at a given time. The earliest is the Howard County Bank, a masterpiece of the brick mason's art dating to 1899. It must have been the community's first bank. By the time of the 1914 Sanborn map, it is labeled "office." The 1914 and 1919 Sanborn maps show no bank in the town. Chronologically, the next bank is Building #47, a neo-classical local landmark built in 1923. The arrival of drive-through banking is represented by First National Motor Bank, a mid-century modern landmark from the 1950s.

Other services represented by contributing buildings include barbershops, one auto sales/garage, and a few small office buildings where one might have seen the dentist or consulted a lawyer. The U. S. Post Office represents an important service provided by government.

Finally, downtown Nashville provided an important warehousing function in the local rural economy, as represented by two historic warehouses in the district. The most important is #9, a massive building from circa 1905. Once served by a spur from the north-south railroad, the building is labeled "St. Louis Compress Company Cotton Warehouse" on the 1908 Sanborn map. For most of the historic period, it was a grocery warehouse. Immediately adjacent, but away from the rail line, is Building #10, a circa 1950 warehouse serviced by trucks. Downtown Nashville is also fortunate in retaining one warehouse dependency, Building #41. Sanborn maps show that at one time various commercial buildings fronting onto Main Street had small warehouses at the rear.

Downtown Nashville continued to be the place for goods and services in the local area until the early 1970s when the then largely unknown Walmart Corporation opened a store on the outskirts of town in the purpose-built Southpark Shopping Center. Walmart was the first occupant, and the strip center grew as new tenants were added. But it appears that downtown Nashville never became the proverbial ghost town. Various long-time businesses continued to operate and still operate today.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

See Above

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

*Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas.* Chicago, Nashville & St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1890.

Hempstead, Fay. *Historical Review of Arkansas: Its Commerce, Industry & Modern Affairs.* Vol. 1. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1911.

Herndon, Dallas T. *Centennial History of Arkansas.* Chicago & Little Rock: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1922.

Howard County Heritage Club. *Howard County Heritage.* Dallas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1988.

Moneyhon, Carl H. *Arkansas and the New South, 1874-1929.* Fayetteville, Arkansas: The University of Arkansas Press, 1997.

Sanborn Insurance Co. Maps, Nashville, 1900, 1908, 1914, 1919, 1930, 1945.

Thomas, David Y. *Arkansas and Its People: A History, 1541-1930.* Vol. II. New York: The American Historical Society, 1930.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- Not applicable – no previous documentation on file

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Approx. 9 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>421600</u>	<u>3756240</u>	3	<u>15</u>	<u>421820</u>	<u>3755900</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>15</u>	<u>421820</u>	<u>3756240</u>	4	<u>15</u>	<u>421600</u>	<u>3755900</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

Boundary is shown as a broken line on the attached district map.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

Boundaries were chosen to encompass the historic central business district of Nashville. The eastern boundary does not include the rail line because of the presence of a large non-historic grain complex between the district and the rail line (at the northeast end). The boundary line at the rear of Building #30 is a party wall. (A non-historic commercial building shares a party wall with Building #30.)

There are a few non-historic buildings located within the boundaries at the very edges. To have excluded them seemed artificial, for they are party wall buildings that form part of a given blockface.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Donna and Jonathan Fricker (Revised by Arkansas Historic Preservation Program staff)  
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date April 2010  
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city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201  
e-mail ralph@arkansasheritage.org

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**Property Ownership**

name/title MULTIPLE  
organization \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive black and white 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:** Nashville Commercial Historic District

**City or Vicinity:** Nashville

**County:** Howard      **State:** AR

**Photographer:** Donna Fricker

**Date Photographed:** March 2010

**Location of Original Digital Files:** 6810 Jefferson Hwy., Apt. 1206, Baton Rouge, LA 70806

**Number of Photographs:** 15

Photo #1  
Building #9, camera facing northwest

Photo #2  
Buildings 2-3, camera facing northeast

Photo #3  
Building 10, camera facing northeast

Photo #4  
Buildings 1-8, camera facing south/southeast

Photo #5  
Building 11, camera facing east

Photo #6  
Buildings 15-21, 24 camera facing northeast

Photo #7  
Building #11-17, camera facing southeast

Photo #8  
Building #24-29, camera facing northeast

Photo #9  
Building 29, camera facing east/southeast

Photo #10  
Buildings 30-37, camera facing northwest

Photo #11  
Buildings 38-47, camera facing southwest

Photo #12  
Buildings 43-48, camera facing southwest

Photo #13  
Building 43, camera facing west

Photo #14

Buildings 38-47, camera facing north/northwest

Photo #15

Buildings 48-54, camera facing southwest

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.