



# Historic Main Street, Little Rock

*Reminder of Our Past, Foundation for Our Future*



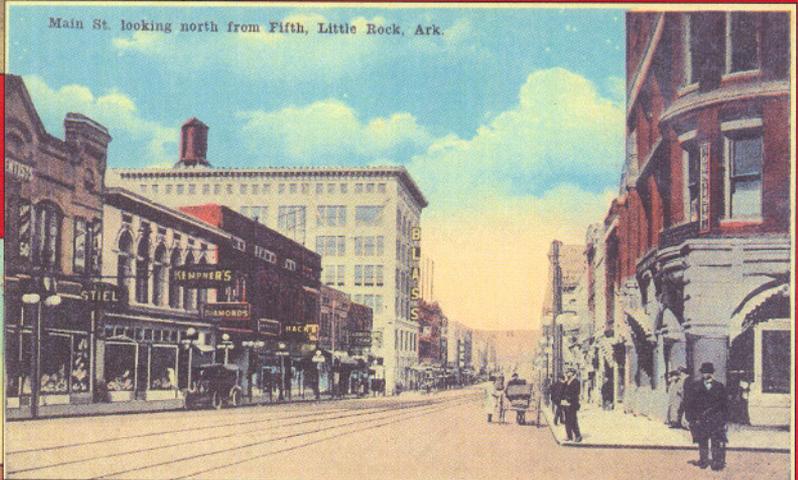
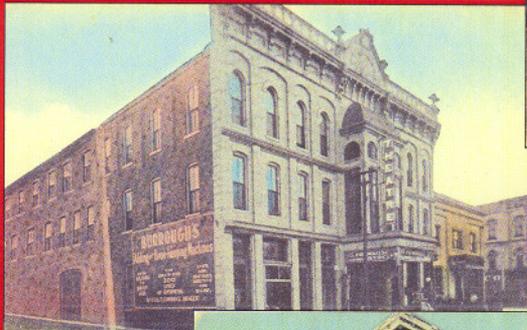
~1963~  
Looking Down Main Street, Little Rock, Ark.



Southern Trust Building, Little Rock, Arkansas.



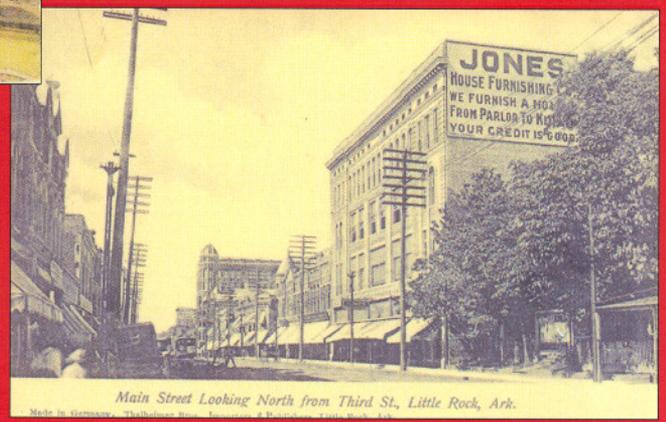
LOOKING NORTH ON MAIN STREET LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS



Main St. looking north from Fifth, Little Rock, Ark.



206



Main Street Looking North from Third St., Little Rock, Ark.

# Historic Main Street, Little Rock

## *Reminder of Our Past, Foundation for Our Future*

*The historic buildings in the 300 through 600 blocks of North Main Street present a continuum of the commercial development of one of Little Rock's premier thoroughfares. The following pages include a brief summary of the history and distinct architecture of these historic buildings.*

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Main Street. Downtown just doesn't feel like a destination without one. The name itself indicates that this was the beginning of a community. It held an importance due to the services it offered, the people who established their businesses there and it was the point from which the entire town radiated outward.



Street names change to accommodate inhabitants that have touched lives within the city or the nation but often “Main Street” remains untouched. The buildings that line the street are not so lucky. There may be remnants here and there shouldered next to modern structures but streetscapes dating from another century are happy surprises. Just as the people who make up the community can have an impact personally and culturally, buildings can do the same. When the character of Main Street is altered irrevocably through demolition of sound structures it can also change the attitude that the community has toward its downtown. Understanding the history and architecture that makes up a structure, creates in us a sense of pride and feeling of ownership. We care about our city.

We are impacted by changes to our historic built environment on several levels. “Going to town” means many things to people. To someone born in the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century, entertainments and commercial amenities were concentrated in a smaller area.

As you walked to your destination you could encounter neighbors participating in the same activities or the families who owned the businesses. These people had a personal stake in the life of a downtown, which contributed to a protective pride in the storefronts and streetscapes. Such a feeling of excitement and proprietary sentiment can be translated to the 21<sup>st</sup> century as has been proven with the success of the River Market in Little Rock.

The architecture of buildings constructed before the turn of the century exhibited stylistic elements that indicated dependability and strength. Facades were comprised of sturdy exterior materials that absorbed light, large columns showcased inviting storefronts and architectural elements emulating natural forms lent grace to masonry walls. These features attracted the eye to the various forms found on every level and made a walk down Main Street interesting. Historic architecture and interior layouts can be incorporated into modern life so that they are environmentally sensitive as well as engaging for tourists and residents alike.



The cultural transformation of commercial centers can easily be attributed to the automobile. Now that the effects of sprawl are hitting home the early form of attached multi-story buildings makes sense. This forms a safe environment for customers and encourages people to get out of their cars. Engagement on a personal level with historic

architecture can be achieved and people tend to linger resulting in more sales since they don't have to get back in their car to go to the next store. Concerns about parking can be allayed since the walking distance for a downtown core can be the same as the trek from a typical big box parking lot to the storefront. With improvements in public transportation the dependence on the automobile and fuel can be reduced.



Most importantly, the link with a town's history that Main Street provides should be considered a number one priority. The names and the memories that fade away are the reason that residents come back. A unique reverence for a town's past can be appreciated by returnees who share what they care about with tourists and new community members. Those buildings that remain from Little Rock's early commercial area can be vital parts of 21<sup>st</sup> century life. The energy of the River Market could be tied in to Main Street through a continuation of historic rehabilitation and a revitalization of the cultural and social facets that made it work in the beginning.

The northernmost portions of Main Street that exhibit endangered historic architecture run from the 300 block to the 600 block. A look at historic photographs reveals haunting streetscapes of increasingly rare commercial building forms. Many buildings were destroyed by fire and rebuilt or remodeled in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. While the losses were unfortunate, new structures often displayed classic architectural forms based on European styles. Some of these elements remain on facades in part or in whole.

## 300 BLOCK MAIN STREET



(RIGHT TO LEFT) THE FULK AND C.M. TAYLOR BUILDINGS,  
300-302 MAIN AND 304 MAIN, 1920s

### 300-302 Main, the Fulk Building

The Fulk Building gracefully commands a spot at the intersection of Third and Main. An original structure that housed a dry goods store was situated on that site in 1890. The building burned in 1900 and was rebuilt by Frances M. Fulk, a Little Rock attorney. The new Fulk Building utilized load-bearing brick construction with interior iron posts. In 1927 Fulk remodeled the current three-story building, adding large casement windows and storefront alterations.

The resulting architecture displayed slight Romanesque influence with rounded casement windows topped with fanlight transoms and keystones on the third floor. The decorative cornice displays a series of small arches over rectangular attic vents. A metal name plate reading "FULK" is centered in the cornice. A plaque located on the north side of the building indicates that it was the site of the first meeting of the Little Rock City Council.



**(LEFT TO RIGHT) THE MENKE AND ISAAC KEMPNER BUILDINGS, 301-303 MAIN AND 305 MAIN, C. 1955**

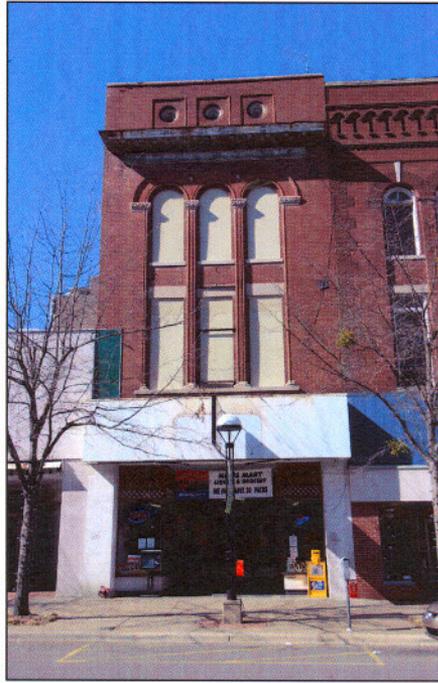
### **301-303 Main - The Menke Building**

The Menke Building on the southeast corner of Main and Third housed a hotel in 1879. The two-story structure built for Otto Menke displayed decorative corbelling and rows of double-hung windows. A fire in 1900 destroyed the block of Main from 301-303 to 317. At that time a hardware company was a tenant as well as a hotel. After the fire, 1913 Sanborn maps show that a new structure occupied the same footprint but the second story had been removed.

In 1976 it was reported that Stein's, a men's store had continuously occupied 301 Main since 1936 except for a period in 1955 when there was a fire. The building today is covered with a stucco veneer and false wooden parapet above the storefront. The 1913 Sanborn map notes that there were pilasters spaced every twelve feet, which can be seen on the north side of the building today. It is probable that the alterations that currently obscure any 1900 features were applied at the time of the 1955 fire.

Standard Luggage had been the occupant of 303 Main Street since 1936 but by 1986 it was leaving downtown for a busier location at the University Mall.

303 Main Street is covered with a corrugated metal façade above the recessed storefront. It is not known whether stucco or brick lies beneath the false slipcover. A women's clothing store occupies 303 while a men's clothing store is the occupant of 301.



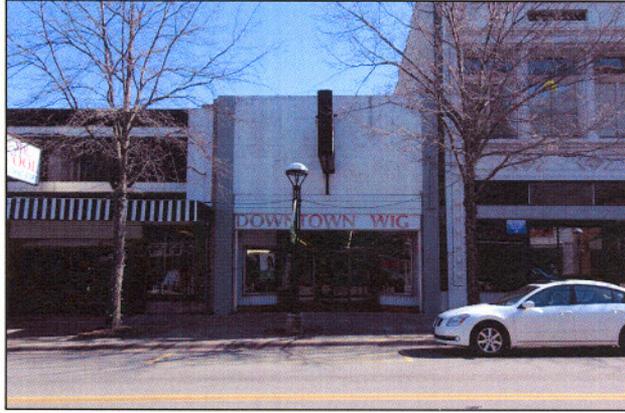
**C.M. TAYLOR BUILDING**

### **304 Main - The C.M. Taylor Building**

304 Main, the C.M. Taylor Building, abuts the Fulk Building to the south and is easily as beautiful. Circa 1895 photographs show a two-story brick building fenestrated by rows of windows with false arches topped by a projecting cornice. The building at this address is listed as the Epstein and Kempner Building. The construction date of the brick C.M. Taylor Building is reported as circa 1900. The Epstein and Kempner Building was probably the victim of a 1900 fire on the east side of Main.

The three-story Taylor Building displayed a false façade above a recessed storefront. The second and third floors were fenestrated with multi-pane casement windows. Those on the second floor were topped with rectangular transoms while the third floor was topped with fanlights. A triple arcade adorned the third-floor windows while cushion capitols at the spring of the arches displayed a foliated design. A large projecting wooden cornice was supported by modillions and three circular attic vents infilled with wrought-iron scrollwork were centered above the cornice.

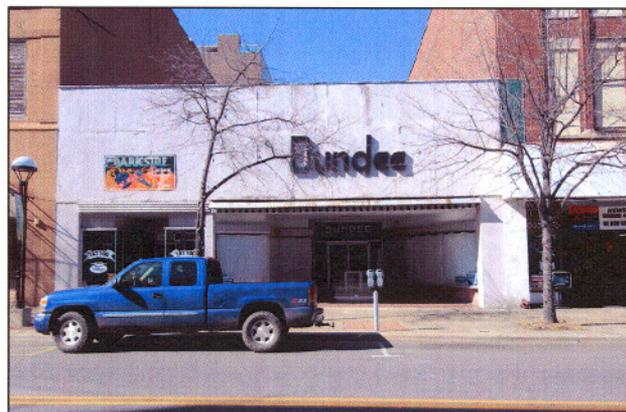
The C.M. Taylor Building has historically housed retail businesses, and a 1991 National Register of Historic Places survey records it as being occupied by Wauzi Records but in 2009 the Newsmart Liquor Store is the occupant. Other than the wear of time and storefront alterations, the C.M. Taylor Building accurately reflects its historic appearance.



**ISSAC KEMPNER BUILDING**

### **305 Main - The Isaac Kempner Building**

305 Main, the Isaac Kempner Building, has a recorded construction date of 1875. No details of the one-story building are visible in historic photographs and the earliest information regarding occupants is a saloon operated by Samuel Blum from 1886 to 1905. It appears to have historically been a simple building and its 2009 exterior features a stucco veneer over brick, which was in place in 1991. Various retail businesses were in the Isaac Kempner Building through the 1990s. In 2009 it is occupied by Downtown Wig. It is possible that a historic façade dating from at least 1900 exists beneath the modern stucco veneer.

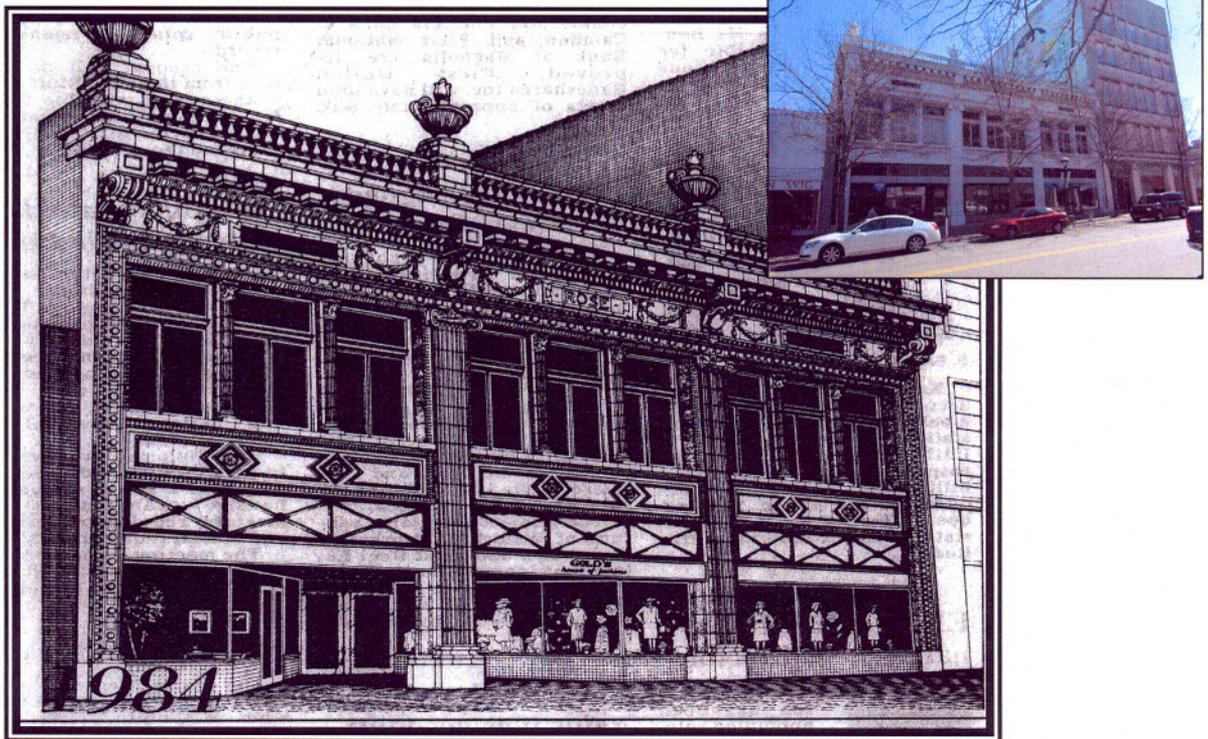


**DUNDEE CLOTHING STORE BUILDING**

### **306-308 Main – The Dundee Clothing Store Building**

Dundee Clothing Store was constructed in 1950. A 1939 Sanborn map places a three-story building supported by iron posts on this lot. By 1950 the maps record a one-story building with steel joists. Photographs in the archives of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program show that the façade of this building was covered with a veneer of

granite panels over recessed storefronts. 306-308 Main exhibits the typical simple form of 1950s commercial architecture, which was devoid of embellishment. It is likely that the original smooth structural glass façade seen in 1991 photographs was original. By 2009 the granite had been covered with a stucco-like veneer. It is unknown whether the panels remain beneath. In 1991 Stan's Jewelers occupied a small space at 308. Dundee is still the occupant at 306 but 308 holds a tattoo parlor.



**THE ROSE BUILDING, 307-311 MAIN**

### **307-311 Main - The Rose Building**

The Rose Building is an excellent example of early restoration efforts in downtown Little Rock. The building was named for Judge Uriah Rose, who purchased three lots on the Peyton Block of Main Street by 1880. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs of the building show a two-story structure fenestrated with arcaded windows embellished with decorative cushion capitals and keystones on the second story. Heavy corbelling is visible on the cornice and a centered gabled parapet displays heavy decorative masonry detail.

In 1900 a fire in Arkansas Book & Paper Company at 307 Main spread to the Dickinson Arms Company in 311. Flames made their way into the gun and powder store resulting in three explosions that destroyed the Rose Building as well as several neighboring buildings and broke out every plate glass window down to Seventh Street.

This fire was the reason for the large amount of new construction along Main Street in 1900.

By 1901 Rose constructed a new building on the lot. This Rose Building was less elaborate but displayed three bays fenestrated by four ribbons of arcaded windows at the second floor topped by a projecting corbelled cornice.

In 1916 a second fire broke out at 307-311 Main. This one was not a total loss however, and Rose's son, George rebuilt in the same year. The 1916 incarnation of the Rose Building was vastly different from the previous two. The two-story structure now displayed a symmetrically massed Neoclassical façade designed by George R. Mann.

By 1963 the Rose Building began to suffer from deterioration. A newspaper photograph in that year shows that the transom windows were boarded over and wrought-iron detail had been removed. The four urns on the roof were missing. Alsopp and Chapple Bookstore, which had held the Pulaski County School District's textbook contract for four decades, had occupied the two north bays of the building since 1900 but it went out of business in 1963. The Houck Piano Company originally had occupied the south bay but upon their departure several tenants had come and gone.

Dave Grundfest, Jr., the 1965 owner of the Rose Building, leased the northern bays to Capital Typewriter Company, later Capital Business Machines, Inc. Company president Paul McWilliams came to an agreement with Grundfest that the façade of the building needed a modern appearance in keeping with the new technology of the product sold there. Grundfest hired Noland Blass to design the new look. Blass's vision was for a square front necessitating the removal of all extensions and overhangs for the application of pebble and concrete slabs on a steel framework. The terra cotta volutes and sections of the egg and dart molding on the architrave were destroyed with a sledgehammer and the entire historic façade was obscured.

Capital Business Machines stayed at 307-311 until 1982 when they moved to Tenth and Main. At this point Donald Gold had inherited his parent's business, Gold's House of Fashions. Through his involvement in Little Rock Unlimited Progress and the Quapaw Quarter Association Gold realized that "urban renewal" had not achieved its objective and he joined in a partnership with urban planner James Moses to restore a historic commercial building. They believed through this effort they could inspire other rehabilitation projects and reinvigorate interest in downtown, which had virtually bottomed out from the late 1970s through the early 1980s.

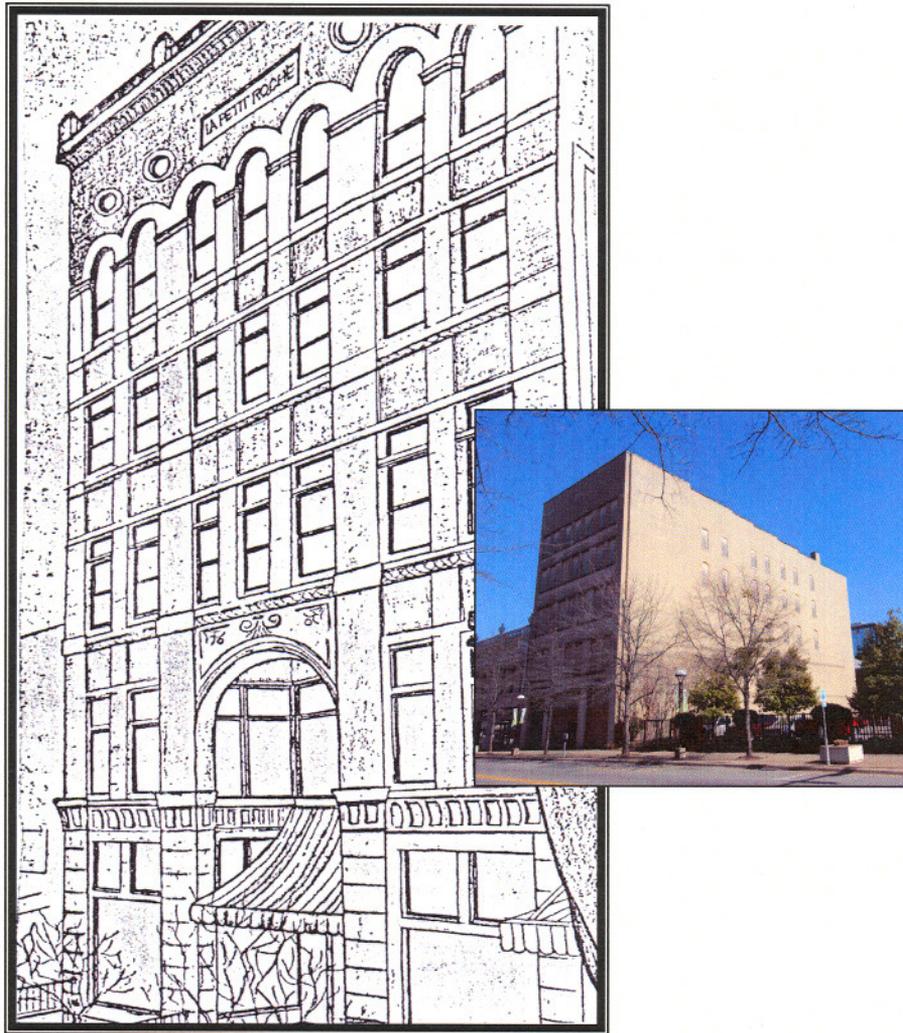
Gold hit upon the vacant Rose Building, purchasing it in 1983 and beginning the removal of the concrete slipcover. Restoration of the terra cotta details in like materials

was too expensive so Gold contracted with Campbellsville Industries of Kentucky to fabricate missing elements in zinc alloy coated with aluminum. In December 1985, an easement was donated to the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Work on the Rose Building was completed in 1984 and it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 with a historically correct facade. At that time Gold's House of Fashions' corporate headquarters was installed on the second floor and the southern bay was leased.



### **310-312 Main - The Gus Blass Dry Goods Company Building**

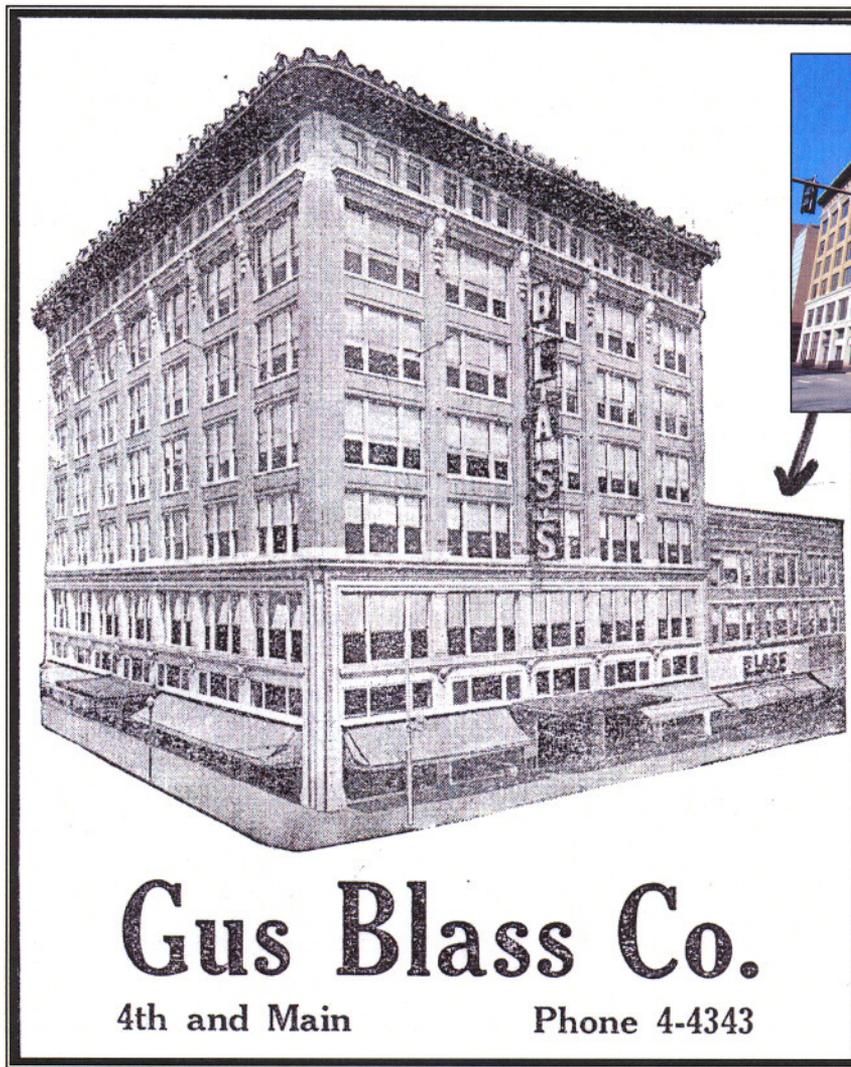
The Gus Blass Company was using 310-312 Main as a dry goods store by 1890. The building on the lot in 1895 featured ribbons of windows in groups of three on the second and third floors. A cornice of corbelled brick appears to be topped with decorative finials. In 1887 Gus Blass had leased a space at 311 Main in the Rose Building. In 1889 Blass had moved to the west side of the street to 310-312 Main where he had a retail concern at 316 Main. The Arkansas Architectural Resources Form on file at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program recorded in 1991 states that the Gus Blass Dry Goods Company Building was remodeled in 1907. The reason for this was not reported. The building appears to have been remodeled again on the first floor when it appeared in the 1942 Little Rock City Directory. The ribbons of windows are covered by louvered panels but the 20<sup>th</sup> century cornice featuring heavy brackets and modillions remain. With the removal of the panels the building could easily display a historic façade.



**GUS BLASS WHOLESALE COMPANY BUILDING,  
313-315 MAIN, C. 1902**

**313-315 Main - The Gus Blass Wholesale Company Building**

313-315 Main was another of Gus Blass's commercial buildings. Constructed after the 1900 explosion of the Rose Building it was the tallest building on the block. By 1902 Blass had decided that the store at 310-312 Main was too small so he erected a five-story building for his wholesale business on the east side of Main. The building featured a two-story recessed entry with decorative spandrel. The second, third and fourth floors were fenestrated by ribbons of double-hung windows with rectangular transoms. The fifth floor was spanned by arcaded windows. Four round attic vents topped the arcade and a decorative projecting cornice completed the façade. The Gus Blass Wholesale Company Building was later altered with the application of a blank stone façade—reflecting the then fashionable International style of architecture--and the replacement of original wood windows with metal awning openings. Although the building suffers from advanced deterioration, historic materials remain beneath the veneer.



**(LEFT TO RIGHT) THE GUS BLASS DEPARTMENT STORE AND  
GUS BLASS WHOLESALE COMPANY BUILDING, 320-322 MAIN  
AND 313-315 MAIN, 1942**

**320-322 Main - The Gus Blass Department Store Building**

320-322 Main housed the Gus Blass Department Store. Built in 1912 it became Little Rock's fifth skyscraper. The seven-story department store was built by David D. Terry for lease to Blass. George Mann, who collaborated on the Arkansas State Capitol, was engaged as the architect for the reinforced concrete structure and it was completed in two phases. The prominent building at the corner of Third and Main featured terra cotta egg and dart architraves on the south and east elevations. A sixth-story belt course was adorned with dentilwork and cartouches embellished with vegetal detail. The building was topped with a projecting wood and concrete cornice coated with copper supported by massive scrolled brackets spanned with decorative rooftop finials.

The Gus Blass Department Store remained in the building for 60 years but by 1972 customers were abandoning downtown. At that point the Dillard's Company had purchased the Blass concern and made the corporate decision to relocate to McCain Mall in North Little Rock, citing better parking and highway access. First Arkansas Bankstock Corporation (FABCO) purchased the building after the department store moved for its corporate headquarters. FABCO then embarked on a restoration project for the building's new use. As engineers began work they found original plans within the building. The plans showed that the Gus Blass Department Store Building was one of the first buildings to use two-way flat slabs in the area; possibly among the earliest in the world since the technology did not come about in the United States until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The use of the flat slab did away with reinforced beams and allowed the use of grids of reinforcing steel to transfer stress on the slabs to bearing walls and columns. 320-322 Main was an engineering first for Little Rock and remains significant today because of the early use of such a technique.

**400 BLOCK MAIN STREET**



**400 BLOCK OF MAIN FROM NORTHWEST, EARLY 1950s**



**(RIGHT TO LEFT) WOOLWORTH COMPANY VARIETY STORE, 400 MAIN, CHANDLER'S SHOE STORE, 406 MAIN AND METZGER BUILDING 408-414 MAIN, EARLY 1960s**

**400 Main - The Woolworth Company Variety Store Demolished 2009**

400 Main was constructed in 1950 for the Woolworth Company. The three-story building exhibited an International influence with its cantilevered concrete storefront awning and sparse use of windows in smooth surfaces.

Woolworth's was among the first "five-and-ten" stores in Little Rock and had occupied 402 Main Street since 1913. The original building was destroyed and the company moved to its modern building at 400 Main, which featured an "electric stairway, elevator service and employes' cafeteria." The building was the site of the first civil rights sit-in demonstration in Little Rock when 50 African-American students from Philander Smith College seated themselves at the segregated lunch counter in 1960.

By 1981 Woolworth started closing stores and sold the building to Wilson Company, Inc. Wilson leased the structure to the Union National Bank for a data processing and credit card service center. Alterations to the building included the replacement of awning-type windows with stationary openings and the infill of storefront windows with glass block. Such changes can easily be reversed since the building retains the bulk of its 1950 architectural character.



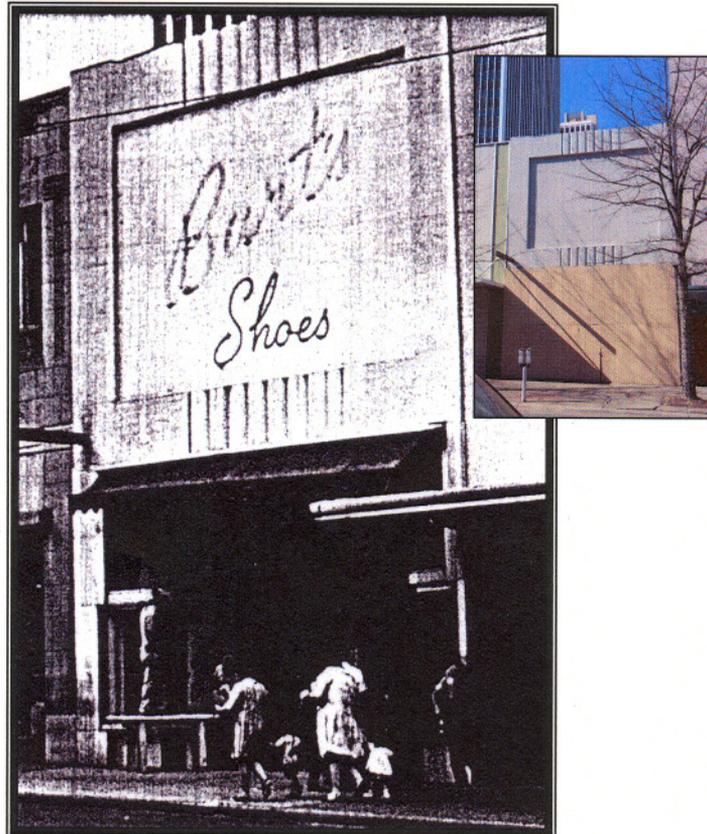
**THE WORTHEN BANK BUILDING, 401 MAIN, EARLY 1960s**

### **401 Main - The Worthen Bank Building**

The Worthen Bank Building is situated on the northeast corner of Fourth and Main streets. The Art Deco-influenced building was constructed for the bank in 1928. The company moved to the three-story structure from its 500 Main Street location in September 1929. A rendering of the building in the 1947 Little Rock City Directory showed an ornate broken pediment over the centered entry on Main. A second double-leaf entry minimally embellished with a decorative panel at the head of the surround was on the southwest corner. A tri-partite window consisting of a stationary light flanked by narrow casements and rectangular transom opened into the northwest corner. The second and third floors featured three windows. Panels with embossed floral detail topped each second floor window. Bas relief panels carved with abstract designs emulated capital cushions at the third floor. A boxed cornice spanned the roof line. The frieze of the west elevation read W.B. WORTHEN CO. BANKERS. The Fourth Street façade was fenestrated with ten windows on all three levels. Embossed panels like those on the front façade adorn the second level. It was reported that the interior of the bank featured a mezzanine and the third floor was rented for office space.

“The Vaults of Time” by Mary Phyllis Walsh relates that the building was remodeled in 1955. In 1959 an International style motor bank and parking deck was appended to the 1928 building on the east with a hyphen. The Worthen Bank Company Building was remodeled again in 1962 when an electronic data processing division was added. In 1969 Worthen moved to its new facility on Capitol and Louisiana and KATV television located their studio and offices to the vacant building at 401 Main.

The Worthen Bank Building maintains its essential form today. The cut stone veneer of the building, bas relief panels and casement windows are intact. The broken pediment of the front entry is gone and the southwest door has been replaced with a window. The name of the building on the frieze has been covered with a blank panel of stone. Alterations to the exterior are minimal.



### **CHANDLER'S SHOE STORE BUILDING, C. 1960**

**406 Main – The Chandler’s Shoe Store Building** Demolished 2009

Chandler’s Shoe Store featured a minimal façade. Built in 1950 when the adjacent Woolworth’s Store was constructed, the two-story building consisted of a concrete paneled façade. A recessed center that displayed the name of the store is now blank. A heavy surround featured a grooved pattern of eight striations above and below the

recessed panel. A recessed entry with canted display windows extended deep under the pediment.

This façade treatment appears to be original down to the storefront display windows and narrow interior space. The building would not have to undergo any restoration to be considered a historic structure on Main Street.



**THE CENTER THEATER, 407 MAIN, 1949**

**407 Main – The Royal Theater Demolished 2009**

407 Main has historically been a theater. The Royal Theater was last known as the Center Theater and was a Main Street entertainment stalwart until 1977. The original 1912 structure was designed by Theo Sanders. In 1948 the theater was closed for a complete remodeling.

The Center was one of five movie theaters in downtown after World War II. Suburban shopping malls and movie theaters drew business away and the numbers of downtown entertainment venues dwindled down to two by 1977. After it had reached the

point that the common fare was X-rated movies for a dollar, the Center Theater closed. The building was briefly used by KATV but has been vacant for some years despite a handful of attempts to install new businesses.

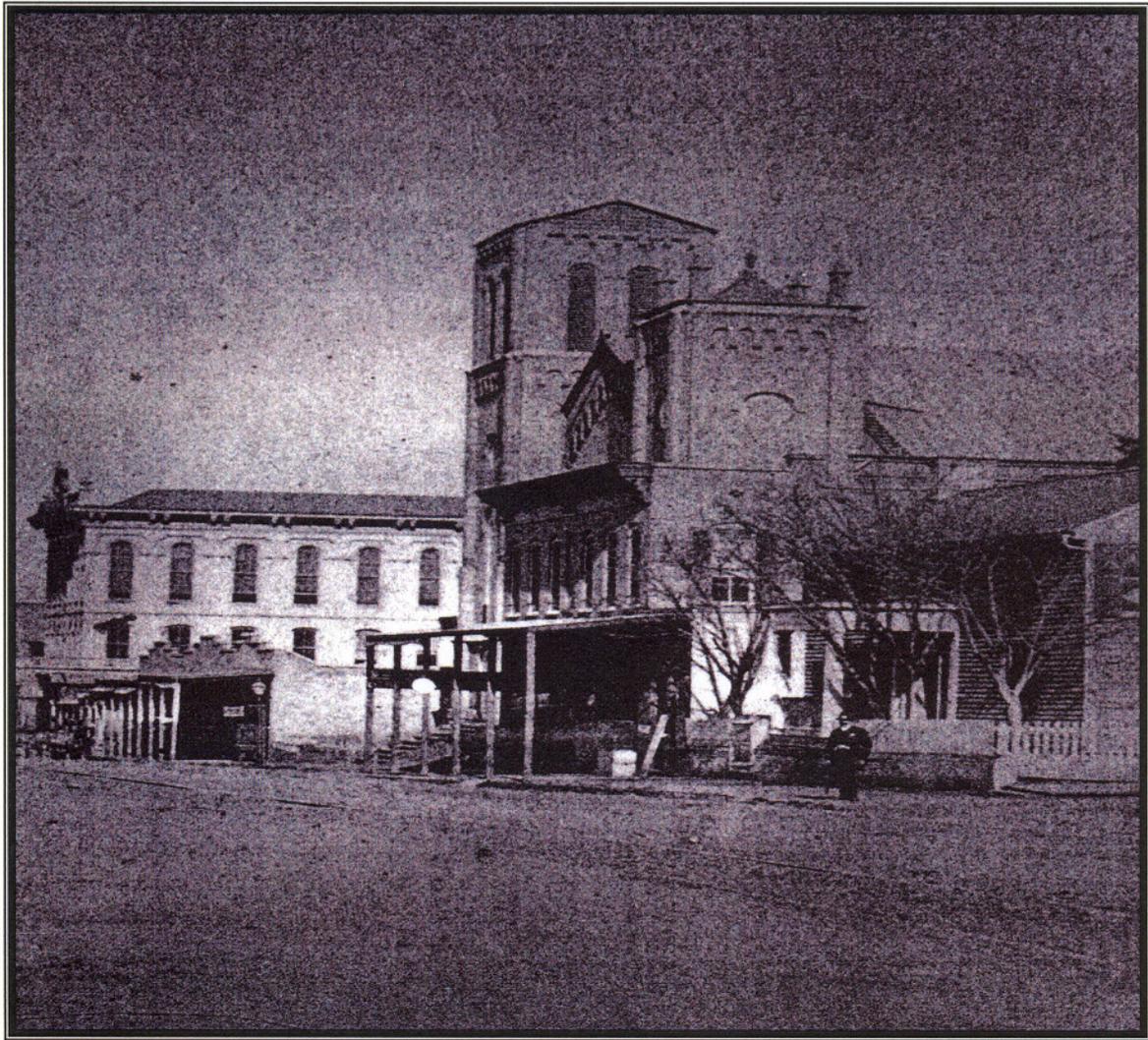
The current façade is historically intact, featuring a folded blonde-brick pediment. The neon sign has sustained damage but still features the theater name and original form. A tall slab sign with neon raised letters reading THE CENTER is missing. Movie poster display windows, ticket booths and ribbon of double doors are present in the tiled storefront entry. It is doubtful that any 1912 material remains beneath the brick veneer since a 1948 newspaper article used words like “dismantle” and “raze” to describe the work undertaken by the remodeling crew. It would not take much to restore the exterior of the building but the interior, which retains some historic fabric, would not reflect its 1948 appearance. Despite this, the building would be an integral part of a historic Main Street and could lend itself well to use as an entertainment venture.



## THE METZGER BUILDING

**408-414 Main – The Metzger Building** Demolished 2009

408-414 Main, the Metzger Building was built for the Montgomery Ward Company as a retail store in 1934. Urban renewal photographs from circa 1960 show a two-story Art Deco building with steel casement windows on the second floor. Between 1960 and 1991 the entire second floor was covered with concrete panels but recessed storefronts remained. Recently, a panel was removed to reveal original Art Deco abstract detail and steel windows intact beneath. In the late 1990s the storefronts were enclosed with wood and concrete block and they remain in-filled in 2009. The presence of original material indicates that this building could be restored to its 1934 appearance.

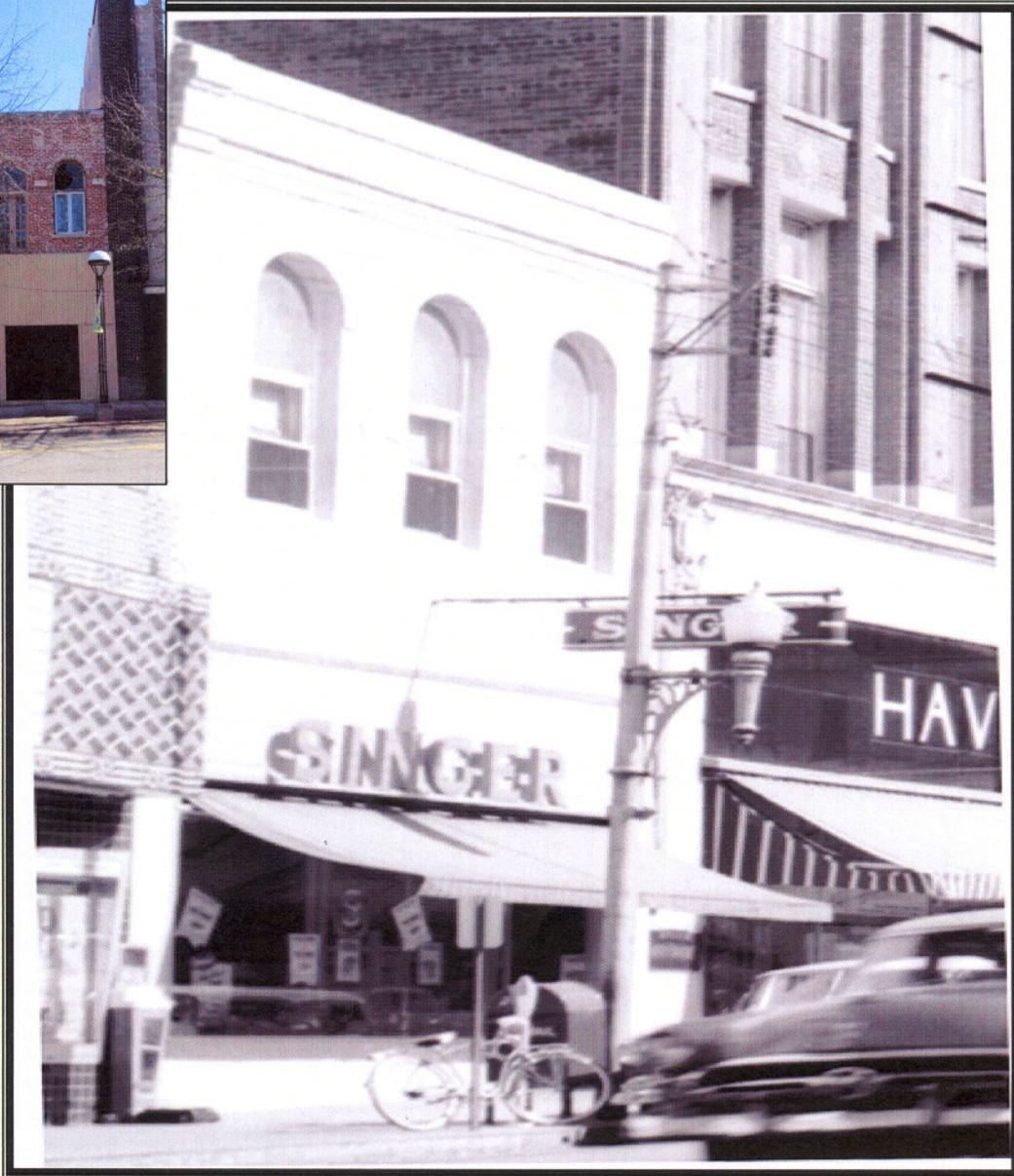
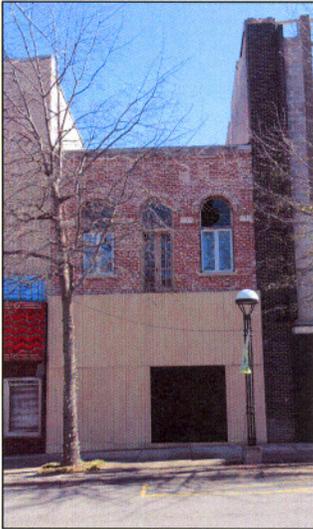


**THE STONE BUILDING OR MAIN STREET METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 409 MAIN, C. 1882**

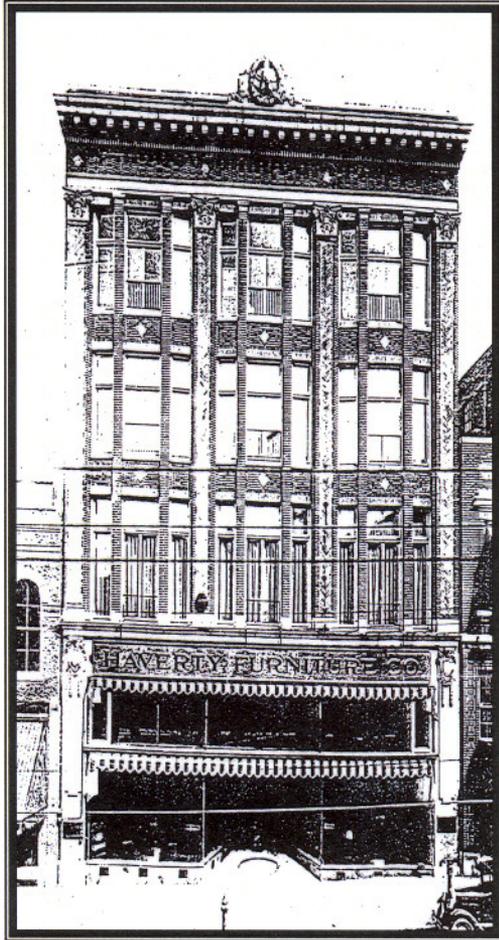
### **409 Main – The Stone Building**

409 Main is a small portion that remains of the Main Street Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1872. In 1882 the brick church was remodeled to two stories with commercial space on the first floor and church facilities upstairs. By 1897 the building had grown to span four lots on Main Street but by 1915 the only part remaining of the church was the northern bay. The 1913 Sanborn maps no longer denoted the building as a church. The small remnant was used as a retail building and restaurant and was fenestrated with three arched windows. No projecting cornice embellished the building and there was minimal corbelling at the pediment.

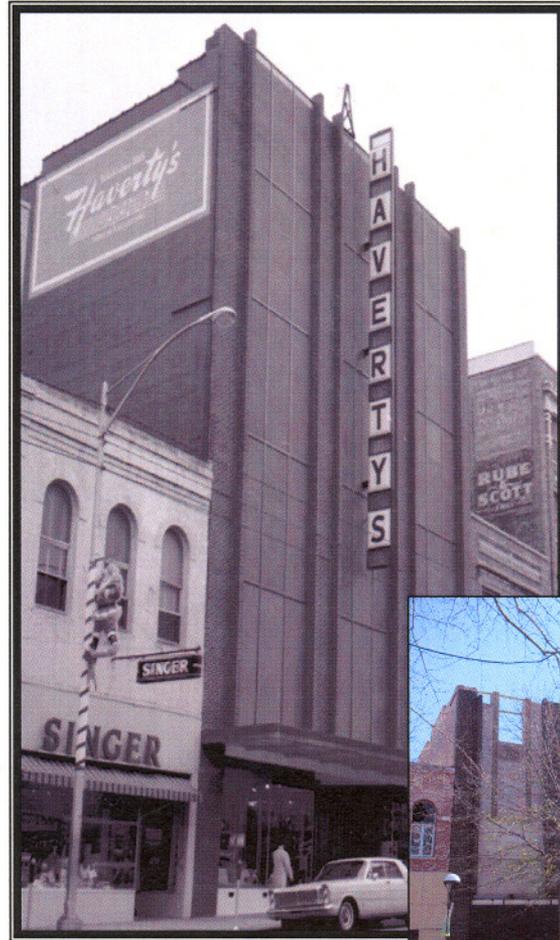
After 1965 the building was covered with a metal mesh screen, which was removed in circa 2007 to reveal original window openings beneath. Now known as the Stone Building, this small two-story structure is the oldest building on the block and is an important vestige of Little Rock's downtown history. With careful rehabilitation the building would be a beautiful landmark on Main Street.



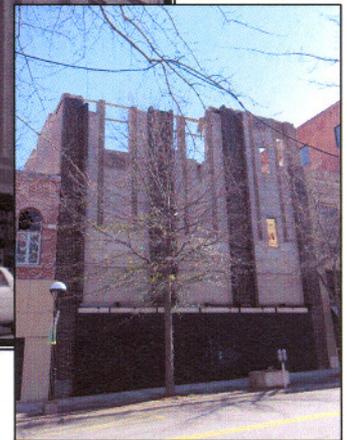
**THE STONE BUILDING C. 1950s** Demolished 2009



C. 1915



C. 1965



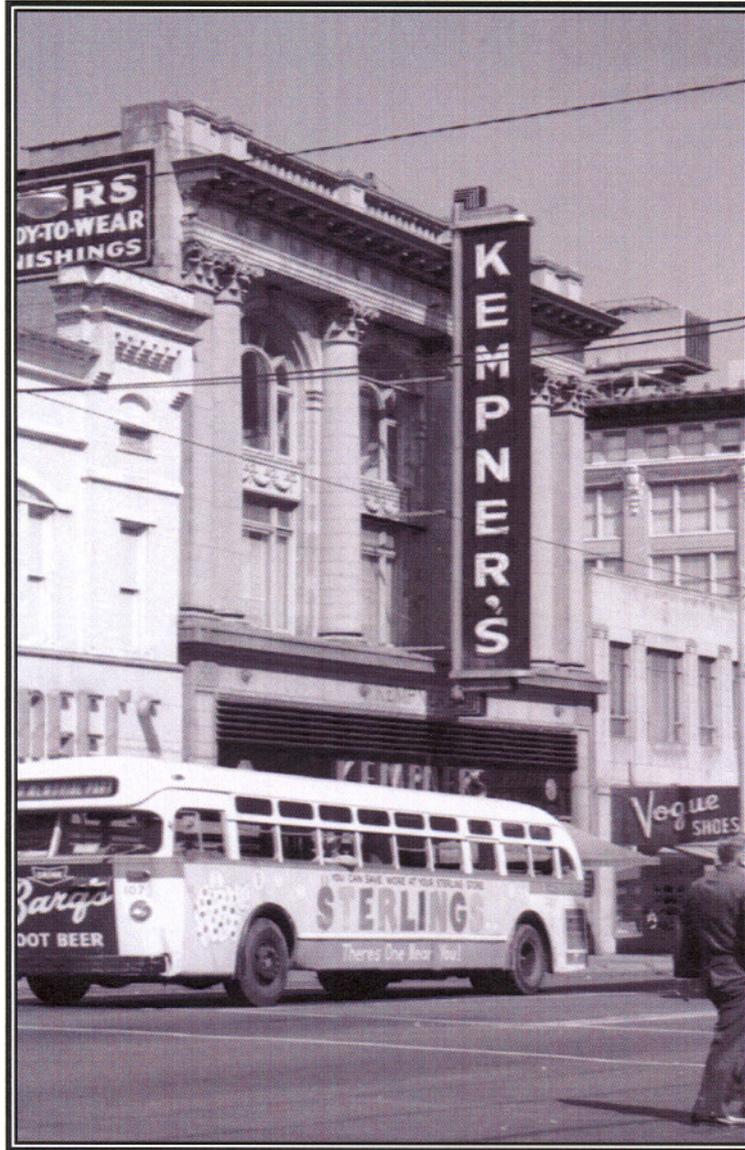
**(LEFT TO RIGHT) THE KAHN BUILDING  
BEFORE AND AFTER, 411-413 MAIN**

**411-413 Main – The Kahn Building**

411-413 Main was built on a portion of the site of the Main Street Methodist Episcopal Church. The Kahn Building was constructed for the Bowser Furniture Company in 1915. The four-story building exhibited Classical detail. In 1930 Haverty's Furniture Company bought the building and remodeled it for their line. A brick and metal mesh slipcover was added to the front of the building in 1964.

In 1943 the building housed a USO for World War II troops. The Haverty's Company remained in the building for sixty years but in 1982 they were forced to close because of a decrease in business, which was part of the overall shopper exodus to the suburbs.

The mesh screen is still on the façade in 2009 but architectural details from 1915 remain. Some historic elements could be retained and the Kahn Building could again display its original beauty.

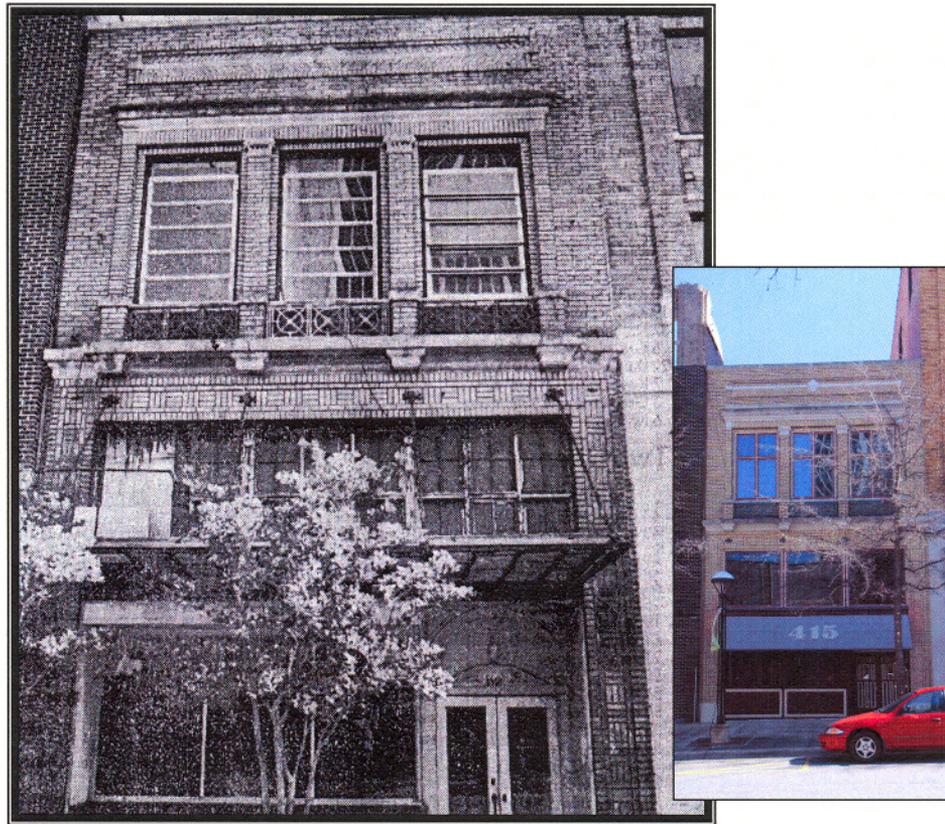


**KEMPNER BROTHERS SHOE STORE,  
416-420 MAIN, C. 1950s**

**416-420 Main – Kempner Brothers Shoe Store Demolished 2009**

416-420 Main was built in 1916 for Kempner's as a department store. Its Neoclassical design was a beautiful addition to the fourth block of Main. The symbolism of such architecture was revealed in ads for Kempner's in the 1936 *Arkansas Democrat* that stated the building "stands as a monument to foresight and faith of its founder." The company was proud of its standing in 1982 as one of the city's oldest commercial ventures, as it had been in the same location for forty-six years. Unfortunately, in that year Kempner's fell prey to falling profits and its stores downtown, at Park Plaza, McCain Mall and Hot Springs were closed.

Between 1953 and 1991 the Kempner's Building was covered with a veneer of concrete panels. Four projecting bands of blue panels extended from the roof to just above the first floor. Eight rectangular blocks at the roofline held single letters spelling out KEMPNERS. By 2009 the storefront has been in-filled with wood. This modern veneer completely obscured the original façade but since it projects out from the wall of the building it is highly likely original detail remains. If the veneer were removed it could again be a beautiful example of Neoclassical architecture in the fourth block of Main.



**THE HOLLENBERG MUSIC COMPANY, 415 MAIN, 1982**

### **415 Main – The Hollenberg Music Company Building**

415 Main, built circa 1917 displays a primarily intact façade. It was constructed for the Hollenberg Music Company; a piano and music retail concern. The three-story brick building's storefront featured a Colonial Revival pediment over double doors situated off-center on the first floor.

After Hollenberg Music Company left the building it was used for various retail businesses and restaurants. By the mid-1950s the three third-story windows had been replaced with aluminum awning-type windows and by 2009 the entry level had been

altered. Despite these changes the Hollenberg Music Company Building presents historic massing and is a good representative of 1917 Classical Revival architecture.



### **THE H.G. PUGH AND COMPANY BUILDING, C. 1970S**

#### **417-421 Main – H.G. Pugh and Company Building**

417-421 Main was built in 1920 as the headquarters for H.G. Pugh and Company, an office supply firm. The five-story brick building exhibited Craftsman influence in concrete inset detail on the first-floor architrave, on panels beneath windows on the front façade and below the projecting cornice.

Original windows were replaced and the storefront was altered in 1986 with steel frame stationary openings but the brick sheathing and concrete detail remained. The Pugh Building could easily represent the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century architecture of Main Street in its current condition.



**THE EXCHANGE BANK BUILDING,  
423 MAIN, C. 1950s**

### **423 Main – The Exchange Bank Building**

423 Main was built on the site of the Masonic Temple, which burned in 1919. Original plans were for a new building to rise to 20 or 24 stories but it was constructed for Exchange National Bank with only five stories. After a merger in 1930 the name of the company was changed to American Exchange Trust Company until it closed during the Depression. The building was formed from brick, concrete, stone and terra cotta.

By the late 1950s the first floor columns on the west elevation were gone and storefronts with large display windows surrounded in black vitrolite were installed for tenants Rexall Drugs and Lane Drugs. The front entrance was moved to the southwest corner. Through the early 1970s the first floor was used by David's of Arkansas and later wig shops occupied the space. In the 1980s the building was bought by Stephens, Inc. At that point the first story had been sheathed in gold aluminum paneling. In 1984 Stephens engaged the Cromwell Firm to restore the building to its historic appearance. Prior to that time the upper floors had been renovated for the occupancy of Stephens, which included

the removal of double-hung windows and replacement with stationary steel frame openings. The 1984 restoration involved repair to damaged limestone and replacement of the one-story fluted columns using Indiana limestone. A black granite foundation and entrance steps and bronze double doors were added. The first story is occupied in 2009 by the Downtown Partnership. The restoration of the Exchange Building's historic façade demonstrated the impact historic architecture could have on the face of Main Street.

# 500 BLOCK MAIN STREET



MAIN STREET NORTH FROM SIXTH, LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

**FIFTH BLOCK OF MAIN FROM THE NORTH, C. 1900**



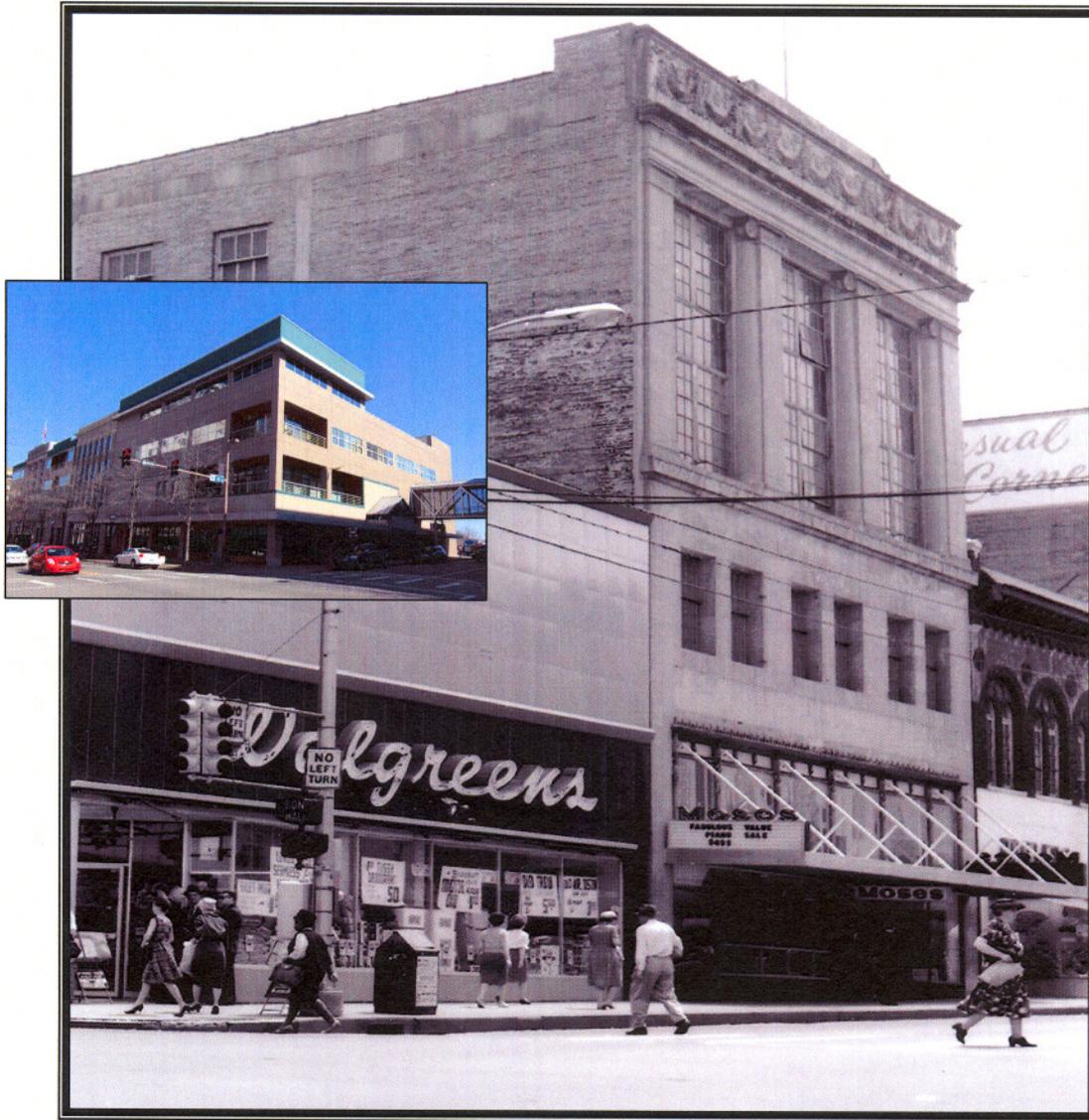
**THE STATE BANK BUILDING, 500 MAIN, C. 1900**

### **500 Main Street – The State Bank Building**

The State Bank Building is a landmark on the southwest corner of Fifth and Main. The eleven-story State Bank Building was Little Rock's second skyscraper at the time of its construction in 1909. Following the classic configuration of base, shaft and capital, the building originally featured entrances on the east and north elevations. The north entrance featured a Classical gabled surround with columns while the smaller east entrance displayed an arched surround. The terra cotta architrave of the first and second floors featured foliated detail. A terra cotta stringcourse traversed the third and ninth floors with similar detail. Heavy fluted brackets supported a projecting cornice.

The State Bank went out of business in 1911. John Boyle, president of Boyle Realty, paid the back taxes in 1916 and purchased the lease on 500 Main, which he re-named the Boyle Building. Several prominent Arkansas companies occupied the building through the years and in 1960 M.M. Cohn signed a forty-year lease for five floors. In 1949 a penthouse was added to the roof and glass blocks were added around the windows on the second floor. The first floor entrances have been removed and pink granite was added to the northeast corner but in 2009 original wooden double-hung, one-over-one

windows remain and all terra cotta detail is intact. First floor storefronts are in-filled but can easily be exposed. The Boyle Building is a wonderful example of Sullivanesque architecture and an impressive element of Main Street.

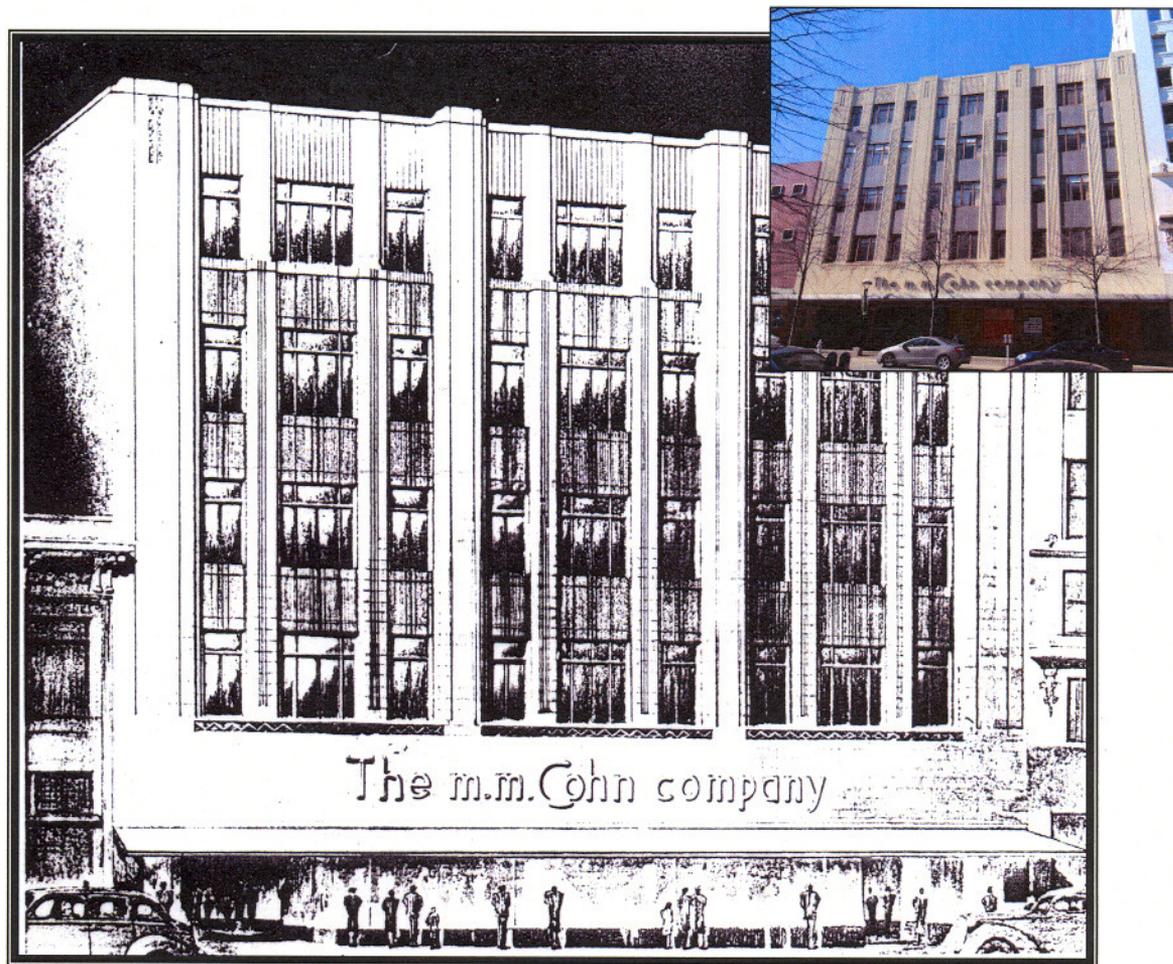


**THE BACK BUILDING, 505 MAIN, C. 1950s**

### **505 Main – The Back Building**

505 Main was built in 1925 for Back Brothers Department Store and designed by Eugene Stern. The Back family had previously operated a department store at 410-412 Main Street. The four-story building exhibits Classical Revival architecture in its smooth stone veneer. The Back family lost the building during the Depression and it was occupied by J.C. Penney Company until 1957, when it was replaced by Moses Melody Shop.

The Back Building underwent some modernization on the first-floor entry as part of the Main Street Mall project in the early 1980s but its historic upper floors remain intact. The Back Building presents historically correct Classical Revival elements and its architectural detail is a striking facet on Main Street.



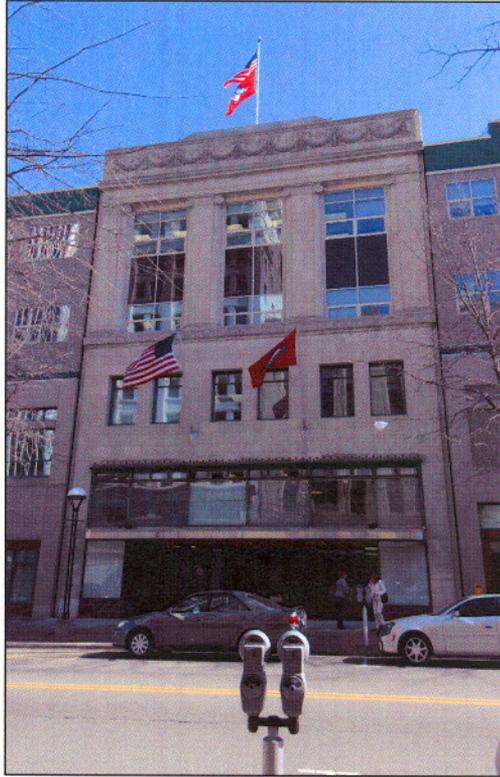
**THE M.M. COHN COMPANY BUILDING, 510 MAIN**

### **510 Main – The M.M. Cohn Building**

510 Main Street became the home of the M.M. Cohn Building when it was constructed in 1940. A late example of Art Deco designed by Sanders and Ginocchio, the five-story building was sheathed in fabricated stone with dark granite panels between floors. The front, eastern façade was divided into three bays with fluted pilasters and chevron detailing at the second floor and cornice line. Steel casement windows spanned each floor.

M.M. Cohn occupied this building until the 1980s when it closed because of low profits. The M.M. Cohn Building remains historically intact with original detailing, stone sheathing and windows. The first-floor storefront is virtually the only part of this building

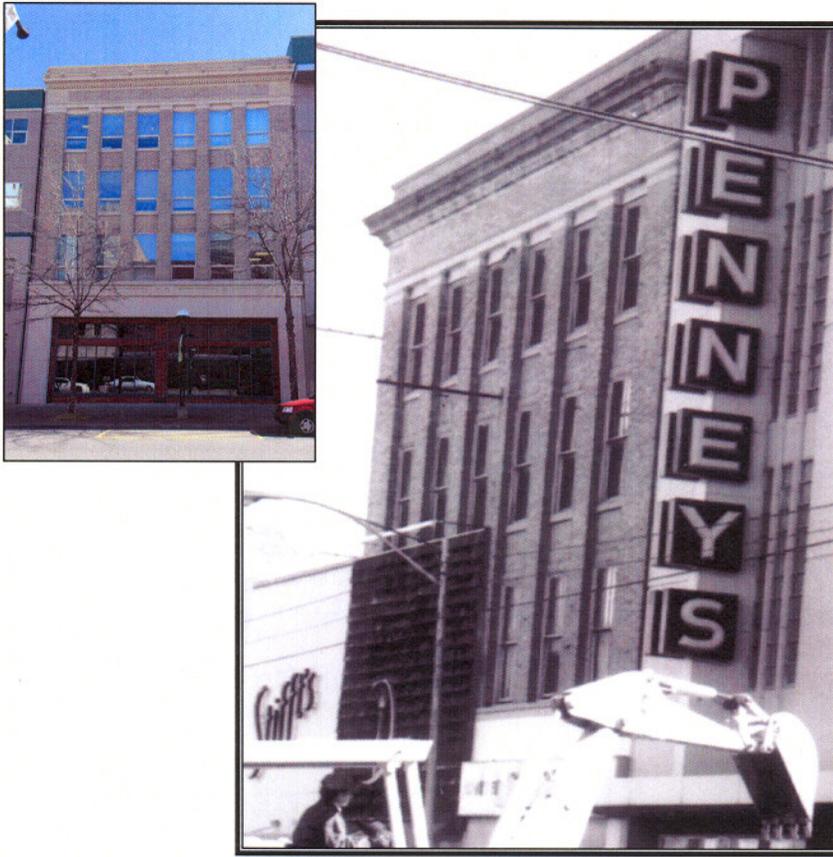
that does not date from 1940. Art Deco was not a common architectural style in Little Rock and is an important chapter in the city's structural history.



## **THE WASSELL-CRAWFORD BUILDING**

### **509-511 Main – The Wassell-Crawford Building**

509-511 Main was historically known as the Wassell-Crawford Building and was built in 1884. The building had undergone several alterations over the years and one hundred years later it was completely remodeled with a second-story and new front elevation for inclusion in the Main Street Mall. This building no longer resembles its historic predecessor.



## **THE BRACY HARDWARE COMPANY BUILDING**

### **513-515 Main – The Bracy Hardware Company Building**

513-515 Main was built in 1923 for the Bracy Hardware Company. Bracy Brothers Hardware Company remained in the building until 1934. Various retail ventures occupied the building through the 1960s and into the 1990s. In 1984 it was included as part of the Main Street Mall and the first floor was remodeled. The double-hung windows remained in the building until after 1991 when they were replaced with stationary single-light openings. The essential character of the 1923 building designed by George Mann and Eugene Stern remains and it can be considered an intact representative of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Little Rock architecture.



**(RIGHT TO LEFT) THE PFEIFER BROTHERS DEPARTMENT STORE BUILDING AND PFEIFER DEPARTMENT STORE ANNEX, 524 MAIN AND 516 MAIN, 1980s**

### **516 Main – The Pfeifer Department Store Annex**

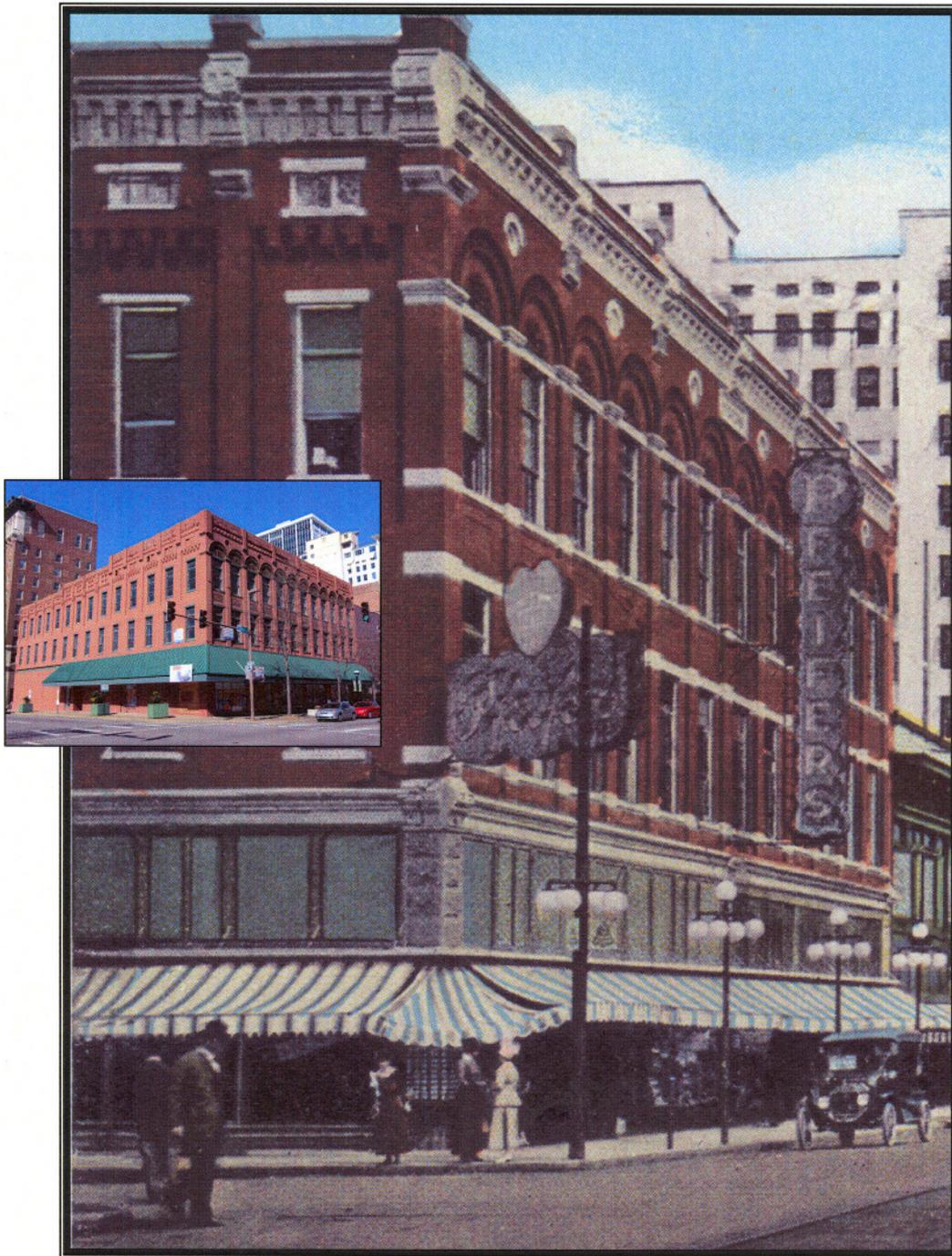
The Pfeifer Department Store Annex was built in 1954. The three-story building exhibited the International style commonly used in 1950s commercial buildings. The first floor storefront was covered by a cantilevered awning and the second and third floors featured three small square windows in heavy continuous surrounds symmetrically arranged on the north end of the façade.

The building was occupied by Pfeifer Blass Department stores, which later became Dillard's Department Store, until the 1990s when the concern moved its stores to suburban malls.

516 Main still displays its International style architecture and original sheathing of red granite panels with the only alterations occurring on the first floor. Along with Woolworth's at Fourth and Main this is only one of two buildings on Main Street that was originally built in the minimal styling of the early 1950s.

### **517 Main – The JC Penney Company Department Store Building**

517 Main was built in 1957 for the JC Penney Department Store, which closed in 1982. The four-story building was remodeled in 1984 to fit in with the Main Street Mall complex and except for the ribbons of windows on the top story, it does not reflect its original International architecture.



**THE PFEIFER BROTHERS DEPARTMENT STORE BUILDING,  
524 MAIN, C. 1900**

### **524 Main – The Pfeifer Brothers Department Store Building**

Pfeifer Brothers Department Store was an important part of Main Street's commercial character. Built in 1899, the building's interior was remodeled in 1939 and the exterior was remodeled in 1960. Pfeifer Brothers Department Store was originally occupied by Arkansas Carpet and Furniture Company. In 1911 Joseph Pfeifer leased the building for his clothing company.

The Pfeifer Brothers Department Store was designed by prominent Arkansas architect Charles Thompson and built in two stages. The south half being built first in 1899 and the north half added about a year later. In 1939 Pfeifer Brothers remodeled the interior first floor with streamlined, chrome-trimmed fixtures. A marble façade was added on the Sixth Street elevation.

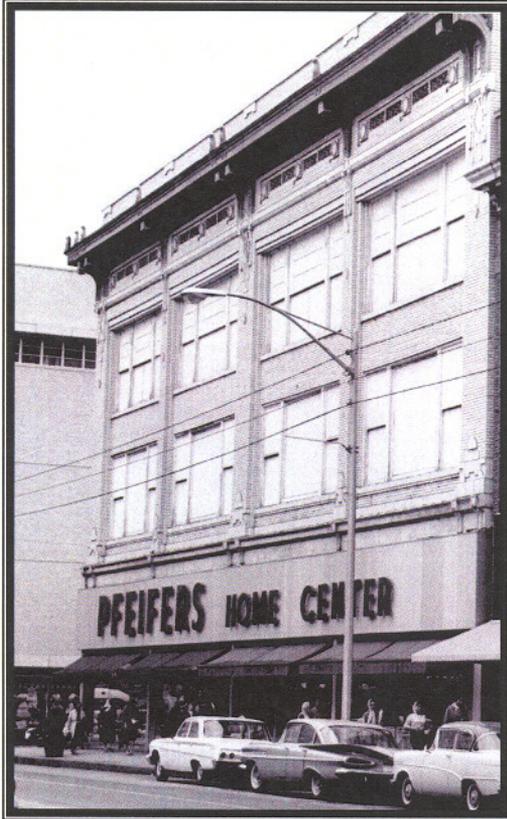
A major exterior renovation was undertaken in 1960 when a false façade of granite panels was wrapped around the Main and Sixth street elevations, covering all openings and detail. At this time the original cornice was destroyed but the majority of historic detail remained.

In 1963 Pfeifers was bought by Dillard's Department Stores and as a new entity the store continued in business at 524 Main until closing in 1990. In 1996 a new owner undertook rehabilitation of the historic structure by removing the granite panels and exposing original windows and terra cotta elements. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2000 and is a beautiful testament to revitalization.

600 BLOCK MAIN STREET



THE SIXTH BLOCK OF MAIN LOOKING SOUTH, C. 1950s



C. 1960



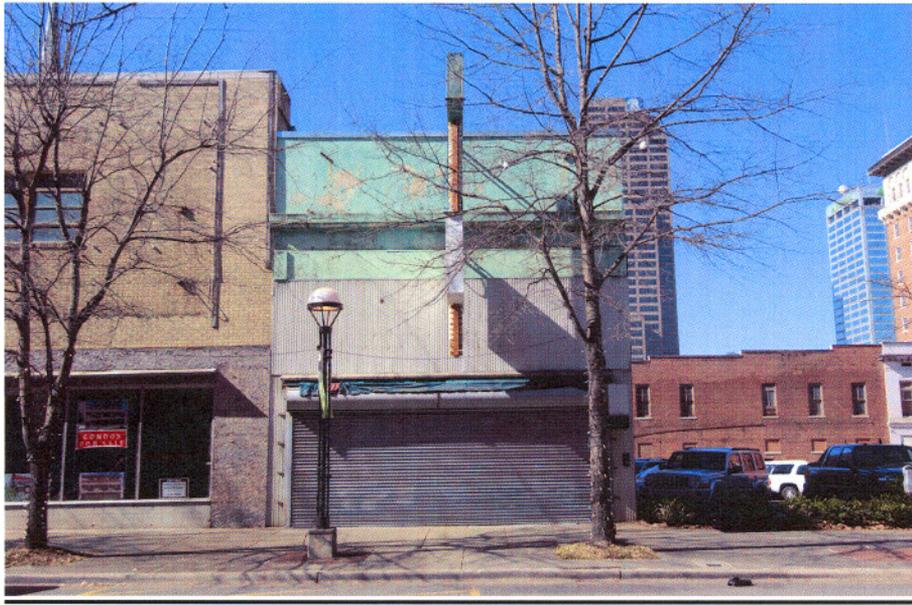
C. 1984

## THE GALLOWAY BUILDING, 601 MAIN

### 601 Main – The Galloway Building

601 Main was designed in 1912 by Charles Thompson. In 1922 the building was renovated by Thompson to its current Sullivanesque appearance. The three-story Galloway Building was built for W.P. Galloway, president of the Galloway Electric Light Company.

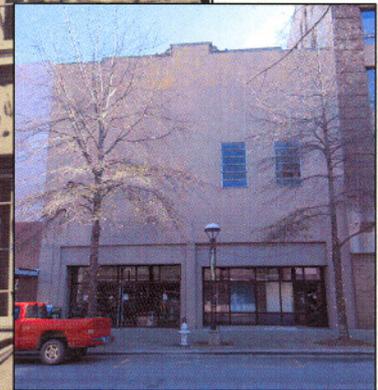
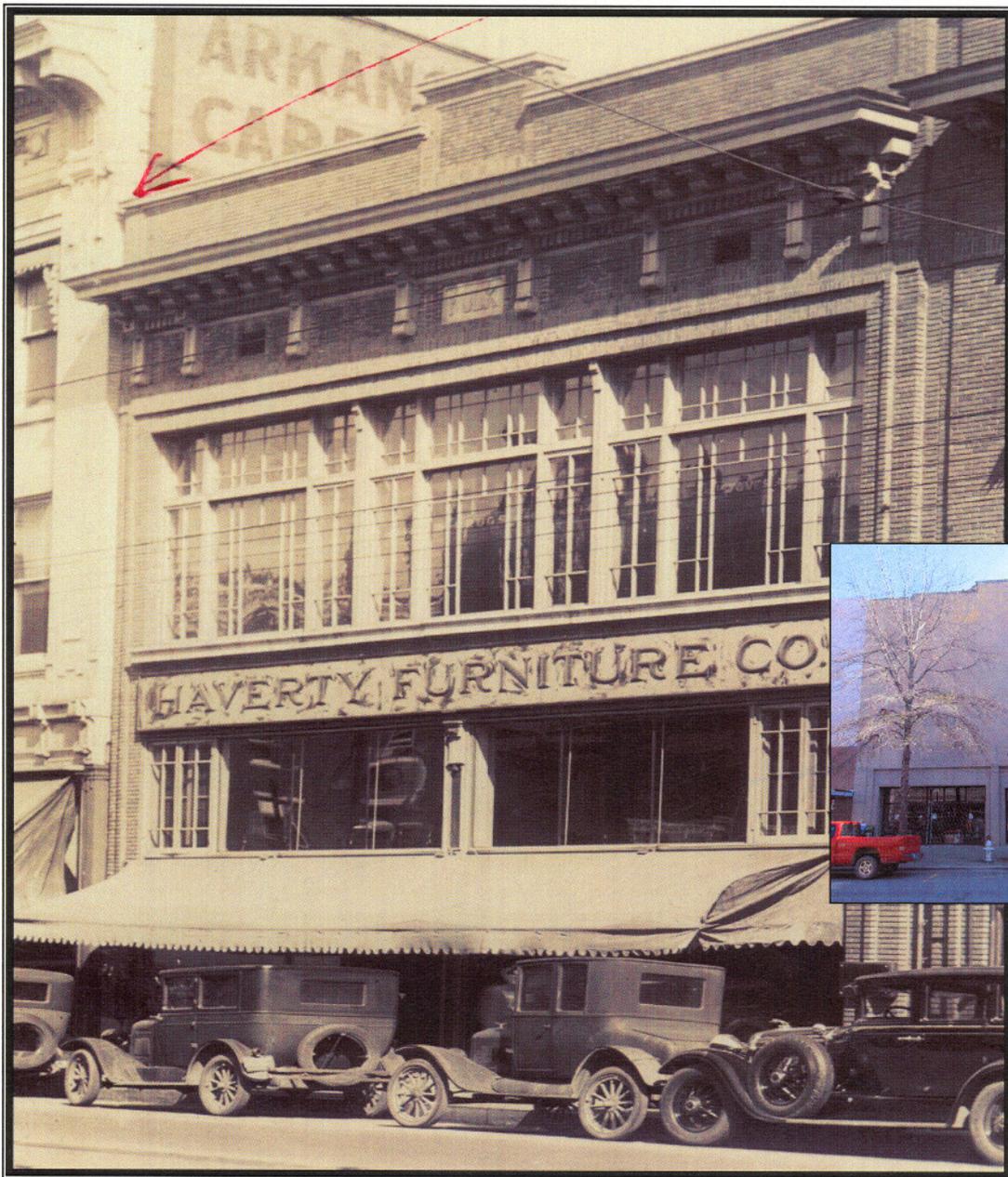
The Galloway Building was built for Arkansas Carpet and Furniture Company but in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century it became the Pfeifer Home Center and later Dillard's Home Center. In 1986 the Arkansas Repertory Theater proposed the purchase and restoration of the Galloway Building for use as their performing venue. The granite façade was removed exposing 1922 white brick and terra cotta details. The application of the false front had destroyed the projecting cornice but a portion remains on the north elevation. The project was completed in 1988 and Thompson's beautiful detail serves as an inspiration to others considering a return to the quality and splendor of historic architecture.



### **608 Main – The Penzel Building**

608 Main was constructed in 1907. The Penzel Building is what remains of a four-bay building that burned in 1942. Cromwell and Ginocchio designed the new building on the site for the Dan Cohen Shoe Store. Phillips Men's Store was a longtime resident during the 1970s and 1980s.

A 1942 *Arkansas Gazette* photograph of the fire shows that the upper story was fenestrated by three double-hung windows and a projecting cornice. In 2009 the east façade exhibits a plain green stucco veneer and metal slipcover over a recessed storefront, which is enclosed by a metal roll-down door. It is possible that historic elements remain beneath the stucco and with removal of the veneer the Penzel Building could be an attractive link to the architectural history of Main Street.



**THE FULK-HAVERTY BUILDING, 609 MAIN, C 1920s**

### **609 Main – The Fulk-Haverty Building**

609 Main, designed by Charles Thompson in 1916, originally displayed a Classical façade. The brick two-story Fulk-Haverty Building was fenestrated on the second story by a ribbon of three tri-partite casement windows beneath a projecting cornice supported by heavy brackets. A nameplate centered under the cornice read FULK.

The Fulk-Haverty Building was the 1916 home of Haverty's Furniture Company and after 1930 Standard Furniture occupied the building up to the mid-1950s. The building became an annex to the Dillard's Home Center Building (601 Main) on the north. Circa 1960s a veneer of black vitrolite covered the area above the storefront.

Probably at the same time the Galloway Building was covered with a pink and red granite veneer, 609 was also sheathed completely in the panels. Jimmy Karam's Men's Store was a longtime occupant of the building. In 2009 an optometrist and a movie rental facility are in the bottom floors.

The granite panels remain on the building and it is likely that the projecting cornice was a victim of the modernization. Other original historic details and windows could remain beneath and if missing historic elements were recreated the Fulk-Haverty Building could again be an example of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Classical commercial architecture.

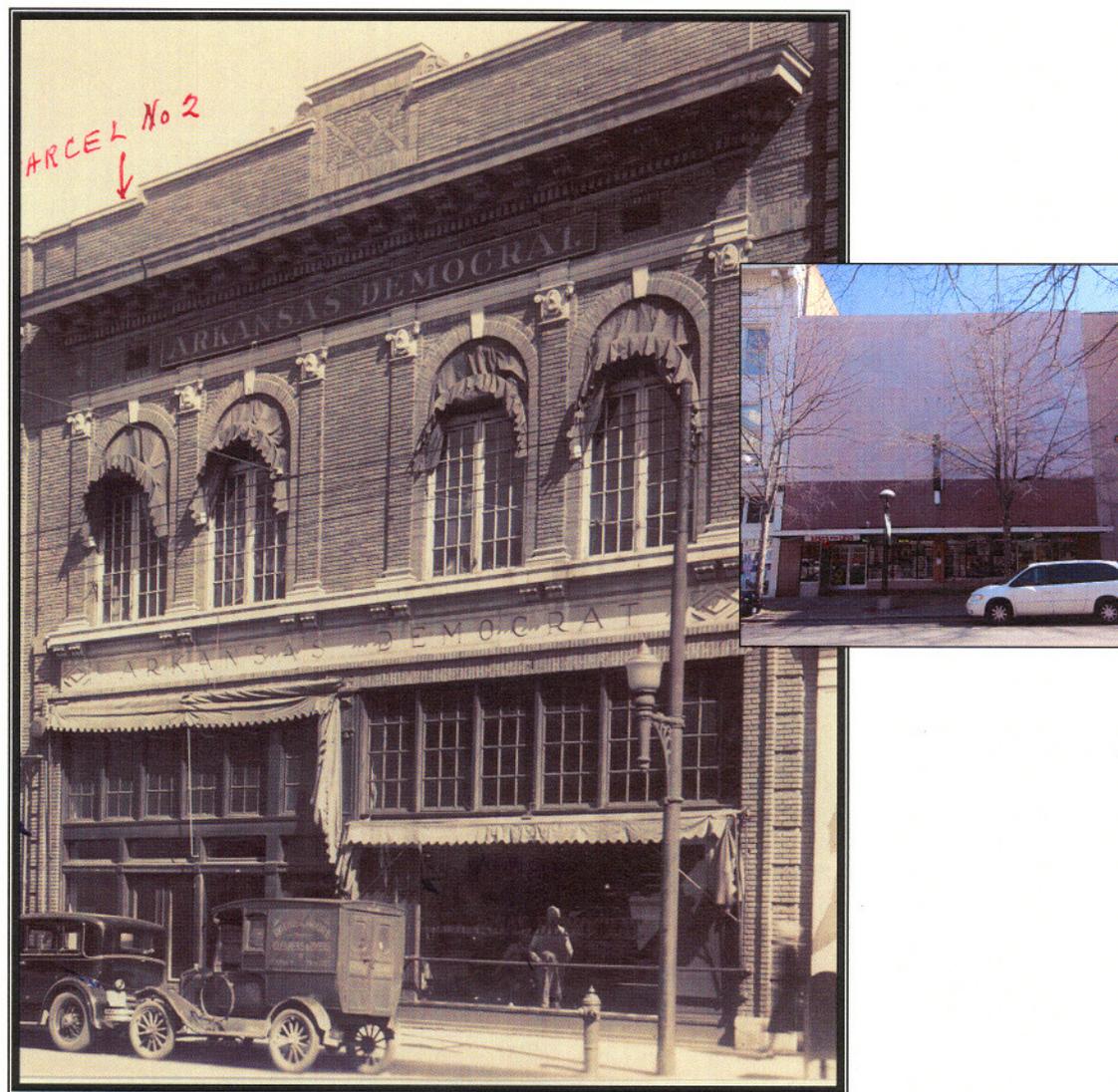


**THE S.H. KRESS AND COMPANY BUILDING, 612 MAIN, C. 1950s**

**612 Main – The S.H. Kress and Company Building**

The S.H. Kress and Company Building is a complete example of a 1943 commercial building designed by Cromwell and Ginocchio. The Original Kress Building

on the lot was destroyed by fire in 1942 and a two-story brick structure was erected with a ribbon of eleven metal awning-type windows centered in the second story. The west elevation was covered with a metal mesh and metal paneled slipcover featuring a large raised letter neon sign reading OSCO DRUG. By 2009 the slipcover had been removed revealing intact mid-1940s commercial architecture devoid of embellishment beneath. The storefront entry remains unchanged. As it stands in 2009, the building presents a historic appearance.



**THE FULK-ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT BUILDING,  
613-615 MAIN, C. 1920s**

**613-615 Main – The Fulk-Arkansas Democrat Building**

613-615 Main was another beautiful example of Charles Thompson architecture. The Fulk-Arkansas Democrat Building was built in 1916 for the Arkansas Democrat newspaper in the Classical style.

By 1984 all historic detail except the stepped parapet and decorative scrolls had been obscured with a concrete veneer. Two large metal awning-type windows were placed off-center on the second floor. Photographs of the interior taken in 2006 reveal that original window openings remain beneath the veneer but no casement windows are present. With this evidence it is shown that 613-615 Main can be restored to a part of its Classical origins.



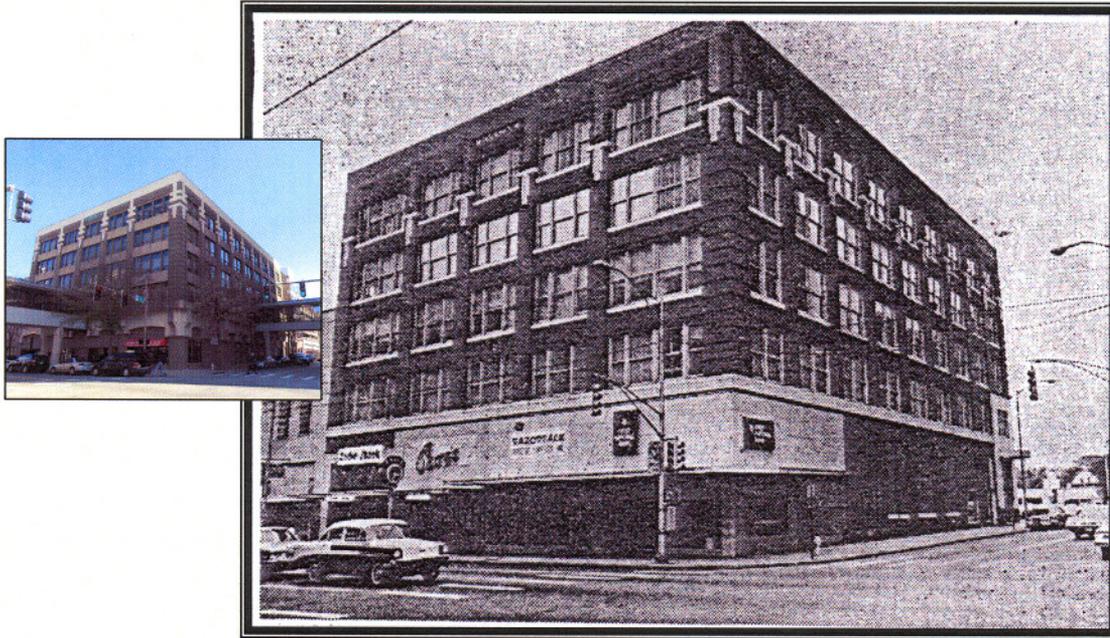
**SEARS AND ROEBUCK BUILDING**

### **618 Main – Sears and Roebuck Department Store Building**

618 Main was built in 1938 as a two-story structure of stone and brick. The first floor was sheathed in black structural glass. Sears Roebuck and Company was the first occupant and in 1939 the building was hailed as the first structure of importance located in the business section in the last five years. Two thousand square feet of the building was utilized for automobile servicing.

In 1947 two floors were added. 618 Main exhibited minimal detailing in ribbons of double-hung windows within concrete surrounds on the third and fourth floors. Decorative stone panels at each corner of the building surrounded window openings on every floor. Lines of stone detail spanned the windows on the second floor. In 2009 the double-hung windows have been replaced with stationary single-light openings but detail on the upper floors is original to its 1938 appearance. Raised pedestrian hyphens connect the Sears Roebuck Building to the Waldon Building at 613 Main and the building on the

southwest corner of Seventh and Main streets. The first floor has undergone alterations within the last twenty years but with the Craftsman elements of the upper floors intact it can be considered a historic element within the Main Street commercial area.



**THE WALDON BUILDING, 617-623 MAIN, 1975**

### **617-623 Main – The Waldon Building**

617-623 Main on the northeast corner of Seventh and Main was built in 1911 for Arkansas Governor George W. Donaghey. A fire had destroyed the 1906 building on the site and the Donaghey Building was constructed on the lot.

Designed by Charles Thompson and Donaghey of brick and stone with Craftsman detail, it was five-stories with ribbons of windows on every floor. Heavy stone detailing adorned each bay and the corners of the building

Built for Governor George W. Donaghey it was originally called the Donaghey Building, but in 1925 he built a second structure by that name to the south in the seventh block of Main. In order to avoid confusion he took the first part of his wife's maiden name "Wallace" and combined it with the first syllable of "Donaghey" designating it the Waldon Building. In 1978, 617-623 Main was remodeled with stationary windows and prominent first floor alterations. The 1984 Arkansas Architectural Resources Form on file at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program states that a projecting cornice and some detail were removed.

Despite the removal of portions of historic elements on the Waldon Building, it continues to be an important example of Thompson's architectural collection



## Determination of Eligibility for Main Street in Little Rock

The potential historic district encompassing the commercial core of Main Street in Little Rock was identified by the AHPP Staff on October 24, 2003. With respect to the buildings in the district, there are four types of categories.

- 1) Contributing – Buildings that are considered to be contributing are buildings that reflect those qualities (i.e., architecture or commerce) that make the district significant.
- 2) Non-contributing – Buildings that are considered to be non-contributing are buildings that no longer reflect those qualities that make the district significant. Reasons for a building to be considered non-contributing include alterations or its date of construction.
- 3) National Register-listed – Buildings that are National Register-listed have already been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- 4) Demolished – The building is no longer extant.

## *Little Rock Main Street Historic District*

<i>Address</i>	<i>Building's Historic Name</i>	<i>Status</i>
501 S. Louisiana	Atkins Building	Non-contributing
510 S. Louisiana	Kempner Opera House	Demolished
523 S. Louisiana	Lafayette Hotel	National Register Listed
617 S. Louisiana	St. Andrew's Catholic Cathedral	National Register Listed
705 S. Louisiana	Southwestern Bell Telegraph & Telephone Building	Non-contributing
715 S. Louisiana	Southwestern Bell Telephone Company Building	Contributing
300 S. Main	Fulk Building	National Register Listed
301 S. Main	Menke Building	Non-contributing
304 S. Main	Taylor Building	National Register Listed
305 S. Main	Isaac Kempner Building	Non-contributing (Depends on the date of the modifications to the front façade.)
306 S. Main	Dundee Clothing Store	Contributing
310 S. Main	Gus Blass Dry Goods Company Building	Contributing
313 S. Main	Gus Blass Wholesale Company Building	Non-contributing (Depends on the date of the modifications to the front façade.)
315 S. Main	Rose Building	National Register Listed
317 S. Main	Jacob Kempner Building	Demolished
318 S. Main	Gus Blass Department Store	National Register Listed
324 S. Main	Blass Building	National Register Listed
400 S. Main	Woolworth Company Variety Store	Contributing
401 S. Main	Worthen Bank Building	National Register Listed
406 S. Main	Chandler's Shoe Store	Contributing
407 S. Main	Center Theater	National Register Listed
408 S. Main	Metzger Building	Non-contributing (Depends on what is behind the current front façade.)
409 S. Main	Stone Building	Contributing
411 S. Main	Kahn Building	Non-contributing
412 S. Main	Kempner Brothers Shoe Store	Non-contributing (Depends on the date of the modifications to the front façade.)
415 S. Main	Hollenberg Music	Contributing

	Company Building	
417 S. Main	Pugh Building	Contributing
418 S. Main	McDonald's Restaurant Building	Demolished
423 S. Main	Exchange Bank Building	National Register Listed
500 S. Main	State Bank Building	Contributing
501 S. Main	Thompson Building	Non-contributing
505 S. Main	Back Building	Non-contributing
510 S. Main	M. M. Cohn Building	Contributing
511 S. Main	Wassell-Crawford Building	Non-contributing
514 S. Main	Pfeifer's Department Store Annex	Contributing
515 S. Main	Bracy Hardware Company Building	Non-contributing
517 S. Main	J. C. Penney Company Department Store	Non-contributing
524 S. Main	Pfeiffer Brothers Department Store	National Register Listed
601 S. Main	Galloway Building	Contributing
608 S. Main	Penzel Building	Non-contributing (Depends on what is behind the current front façade.)
609 S. Main	Fulk-Haverty Building	Non-contributing (Depends on the date of the modifications to the front façade.)
612 S. Main	S. H. Kress & Company Building	Non-contributing (Depends on the date of the modifications to the front façade.)
613 S. Main	Fulk-Arkansas Democrat Building	Non-contributing (Depends on what is behind the current front façade.)
617 S. Main	Donaghey-Waldon Building	Non-contributing
618 S. Main	Sears & Roebuck Department Store	Non-contributing
701 S. Main	Donaghey Building	Contributing

# Historic Main Street Little Rock

## Map of Key Historic Buildings



Arkansas Historic  
Preservation Program  
An Agency of the  
Department of Arkansas Heritage

