

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For HCRS use only

received FEB 23 1982

date entered

MAR 25 1982

## 1. Name

historic Bank of Commerce

and/or common

## 2. Location

street &amp; number 200 North Washington St. N/A not for publication

city, town El Dorado N/A vicinity of congressional district 4th

state Arkansas code 05 county Union code 139

## 3. Classification

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

## 4. Owner of Property

name Richard Mason

street &amp; number 3737 Calion Road

city, town El Dorado vicinity of state Arkansas

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Union County Courthouse

street &amp; number Main &amp; Washington Streets

city, town El Dorado state Arkansas

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town state

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### SUMMARY

Situated one block northwest of the Union County Courthouse Square, the Bank of Commerce building occupies a corner site in a downtown El Dorado commercial block. The building's distinctive Classical facade is outstanding in a downtown business district that succumbed to aluminum storefront "remodeling" of the 1950s and 1960s. Built in 1919-20, the two story brick building is raised above street grade on an ashlar base and is capped with a high parapet with frontal gable and white stone coping. The Classical vocabulary is interpreted in stone decorative details and in the creation of the bank's distinctive temple front inspired principal elevation.

#### ELABORATION

The principal (east) facade of the Bank of Commerce building clearly conveys the monumental potential of the Classical styles. This entry facade is eminently articulated with a temple front that reflects the impact of early twentieth-century Neo-Classicism and Renaissance Revivalism alike. Two prominent features create this impression and thus dominate the elevation: a projecting metal triangular pediment with broken base and a two-story Roman-arched entrance. Formed by a cornice-like projection, the pediment protrudes from the gabled parapet with truncated peak which rises slightly above it and spans almost the full width of the elevation. This distinctive feature is enriched by dentiling and a cartouche that appears in its tympanum on the central axis of the facade. The pediment base breaks to frame this cartouche. Although the base resembles gable-end returns, it is actually created by an entablature that wraps around the building, extending the full length of the south (side) elevation, and serves to organize and unify the building's two exposed elevations. This entablature consists of a banded stone architrave, brick frieze and over hanging dentiled metal cornice. On the principal facade, the entablature is carried on two pairs of brick Ionic pilasters which flank the two-story tall Roman-arched entrance. Emphasized with a cast stone surround, the arch articulates and frames the bank's main entrance, a deeply recessed double-door arrangement. The doors are composed of single lights over panels and are framed by wood pilasters. They are further accented by sidelights over panels and are capped by double segmental multi-light transoms. Vertical and horizontal lights fill the remaining upper extremes of the archway.

The seven bay, secondary (south) elevation is visually divided into two sections which distinguish the public banking room from the supporting office space. The three east bays of this elevation project slightly to identify the banking room, a two-story high space. The configuration of this area is communicated by the fenestration of this section of the facade. Each one-over-one double-hung window is almost floor-to-ceiling in height, extending from the elevation's ashlar base to its architrave, and has sidelights and a three light transom. The windows are slightly recessed in the Flemish bond brick wall. Most interesting and unusual features of these windows are the pairs of low brick piers with cast stone bases and copings that appear in front of each window on axis with the window frame. These piers are capped with a cast stone sphere.

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Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

The remaining bays of the south elevation reflect the interior design of the rear of the building which is comprised of two stories of office space. A secondary entrance to the building, providing direct access to the offices, is asymmetrically located in the second bay from the west end of the facade. Though not as monumental as the principal entrance, it is carefully and Classically detailed. This entrance is faced with ashlar blocks and capped with an unembellished frieze and an overhanging cornice that is surmounted by a small triangular pediment. The doorway is recessed in a segmental arched opening with articulated keystone and is raised above grade with three steps offering access. Fenestration of the rear section of the south elevation, like the east end, is dominated by the rhythm of recessed windows and brick pilasters. The first and second stories are pierced by pairs of double-hung one-over-one light windows in each bay. However, the second story windows are slightly shorter than those below and have articulated cast stone sills. Raised brick panels appear between the first and second story windows. The building's aforementioned full entablature greatly enriches this facade. The parapet rises above it to cap the elevation. The north and west walls of the Bank of Commerce abut adjacent buildings and therefore are not visible.

The evolution of the building has been impacted by two renovation projects undertaken in 1947 and in 1954. Both of these construction projects removed and destroyed the original interior fabric of the bank building. The 1954 project involved covering the principal elevation with a new brick front. Fortunately, the south side of the building has never been altered and the principal elevation's original fabric remained largely intact beneath the 1954 facade. Recently, the Bank of Commerce has been restored to its original 1920 appearance. However, in the absence of surviving substantive original fabric, the interior of the building was adaptively reused to provide contemporary office space for a local petroleum/geology business firm. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program participated in and approved the character of the exterior restoration and the interior rehabilitation.

## 8. Significance

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

<b>Specific dates</b>	1919–20	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	unknown
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### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bank of Commerce presents a sophisticated example of the Classically-derived architectural styles that were dominant in the Arkansas architecture of the first decades of the twentieth century. The building's temple-like principal facade, featuring a triangular pediment with broken base, prominent cornice and monumental Roman-arched entrance flanked by pairs of Ionic pilasters, reflects an interest in a Renaissance influenced Neo-Classicism unusual in the building stock of southwest Arkansas. In addition to its architectural significance, the Bank of Commerce represents a transitional phase in El Dorado's economic history. Built in 1919–20, the facility originally served the city when it was a small lumber and farming community of 3,887 citizens. However, within a year, the discovery of oil outside El Dorado in 1921 turned the rural town into a tumultuous industrial city with a population that fluctuated between 15,000 and 30,000 people. The impact of this growth led to a 1923 reorganization of the bank, which doubled its capital stocks and surplus, received a federal charter, and saw its resources skyrocket from \$802,465 in 1921 to \$2,935,643 by April 1923. Noted in a 1938 newspaper article as one of Arkansas' soundest financial institutions, the Bank of Commerce maintained its financial stability throughout the depression. Today the building stands as a vital representative of El Dorado's transformation from a small town into the "oil city" of Arkansas. The architectural and historical significance of this building and the importance of its recent restoration are underscored by the absence of other unaltered building fabric in downtown El Dorado.



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

The Work Project Administration, Gas & Oil. (subject file) Arkansas State Archives.  
Little Rock, Arkansas.

"Record of Service Began in 1919 for New Bank", El Dorado Daily News-Times  
(El Dorado, Arkansas), August 24, 1973, p. 1.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name El Dorado, Ark.La.

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UMT References

A 1 5 5 3 1 2 7 5 3 6 7 4 7 1 0 1 0  
Zone Easting Northing

B                                                     
Zone Easting Northing

C                                                   

D                                                   

E                                                   

F                                                   

G                                                   

H                                                   

### Verbal boundary description and justification

South 30 feet of lots 7 & 8, Block 3 of original town of El Dorado, Union  
County, Arkansas

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ethel Goodstein, Architectural Historian - Donald R. Brown, Historian

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date June 9, 1981

street & number Suite 500, Continental Building telephone (501) 371-2763

city or town Little Rock state Arkansas

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

   national    state   X   local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Wilson Stiles*

title SHPO

date 2-12-82

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

Keeper of the National Register

date 3/25/82

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

82002145

Property: Bank of Commerce  
State, County: AR, Union  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Working No. 2/23/82-547

Fed. Reg. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Due: 3-25-82 / 4-9-82

Action: ☒ ACCEPT 3/25/82

Entered in the ☐ RETURN  
National Register ☐ REJECT

photos 6  
maps 1

- ☐ resubmission  
☐ nomination by person or local government  
☐ owner objection  
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

☐ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: ☐ technical corrections cited below  
☐ substantive reasons discussed below

### 1. Name

### 2. Location

### 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Acquisition	Accessible	

### 4. Owner of Property

### 5. Location of Legal Description

### 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

### 7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph  
☐ completeness  
☐ clarity  
☐ alterations/integrity  
☐ dates  
☐ boundary selection

## 8. Significance

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_

Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- \_\_\_\_\_ summary paragraph
- \_\_\_\_\_ completeness
- \_\_\_\_\_ clarity
- \_\_\_\_\_ applicable criteria
- \_\_\_\_\_ justification of areas checked
- \_\_\_\_\_ relating significance to the resource
- \_\_\_\_\_ context
- \_\_\_\_\_ relationship of integrity to significance
- \_\_\_\_\_ justification of exception
- \_\_\_\_\_ other

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## 10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UNIT References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. Form Prepared By

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_

## 13. Other

- \_\_\_\_\_ Maps
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photographs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: 202 272 - 3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet







Bank of Commerce  
El Dorado, Arkansas  
Richard Mason, Photographer  
September, 1981  
Negative at Arkansas Historic Preservation  
Principal (east) elevation  
Number 1 of 6

FEB 23 1982

E



Bank of Commerce  
El Dorado, Arkansas  
Richard Mason, Photographer  
September, 1981  
Negative at Arkansas Historic Preservation  
Program  
East and south elevations taken from  
southeast  
Number 2 of 6

FEB 23 1982







Bank of Commerce  
El Dorado, Arkansas  
Richard Mason, Photographer  
September, 1981  
Negative at Arkansas Historic Preservation  
Program  
South elevation showing side entrance  
Number 3 of 6

FEB 23 1982

Side



Bank of Commerce  
El Dorado, Arkansas  
Richard Mason, Photographer  
September, 1981  
Negative at Arkansas Historic Preservation  
Program  
South elevation  
Number 4 of 6

FEB 23 1982







Bank of Commerce  
El Dorado, Arkansas  
Richard Mason, Photographer  
September, 1981  
Negative at Arkansas Historic Preservation  
Program  
Detail: windows on south elevation  
Number 5 of 6

FEB 23 1982



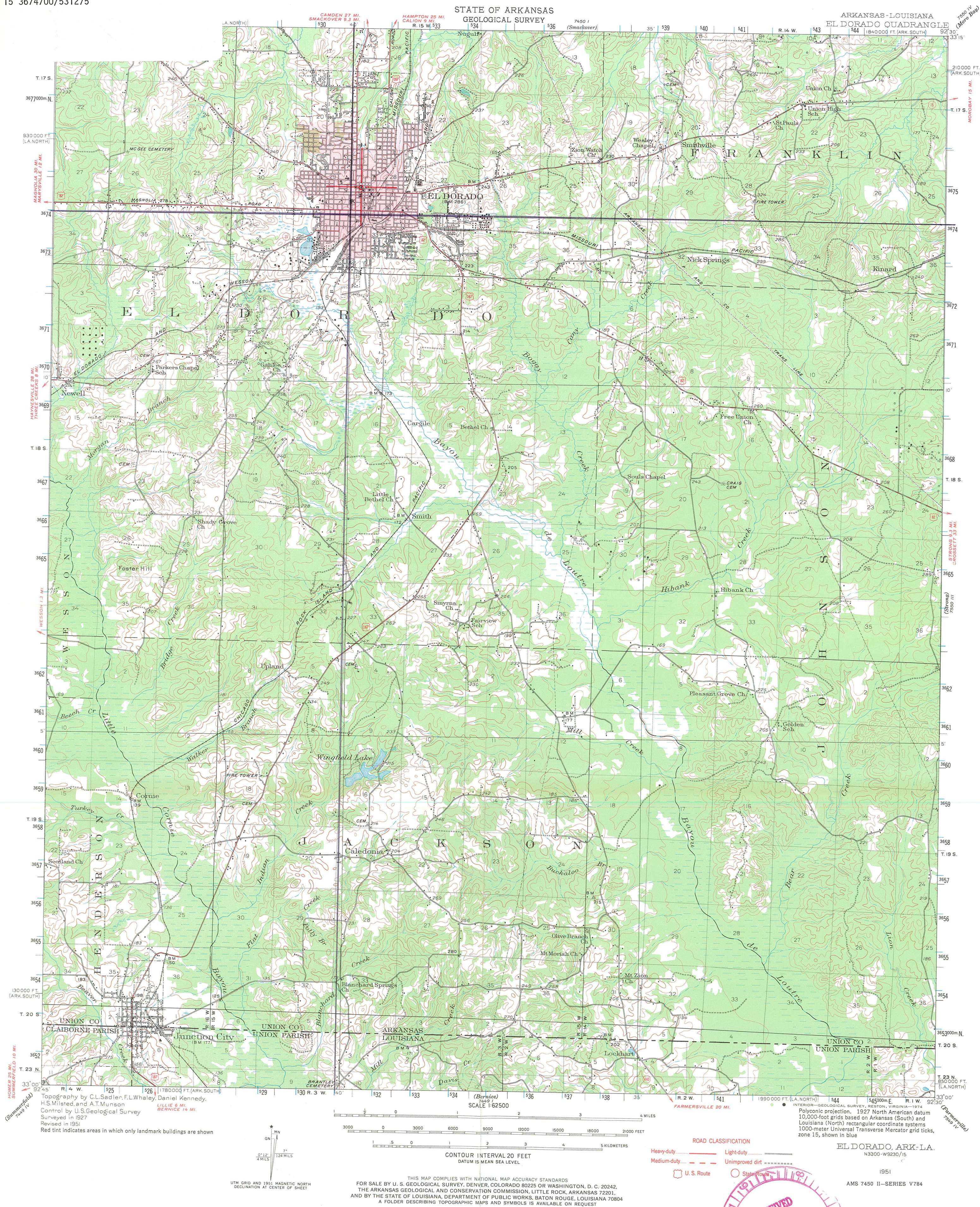
Bank of Commerce  
El Dorado, Arkansas  
Richard Mason, Photographer  
September, 1981  
Negative at Arkansas Historic Preservation  
Program  
Detail: entrance  
Number 6 of 6

FEB 23 1982



UTM Reference:  
15 3674700/531275

ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA  
F. B. I. - MEMPHIS







## ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Suite 500, Continental Building · Markham and Main · Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Phone: (501) 371-2763

February 11, 1982

Ms. Carol D. Shull  
Acting Keeper of the National Register  
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
440 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240



Re: National Register nomination- Bank of Commerce  
El Dorado, Union County, Arkansas

*Carol*  
Dear ~~Ms.~~ Shull:

Enclosed for your review please find a National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the Bank of Commerce in El Dorado, Arkansas. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

I would like to bring to your attention that the Bank of Commerce received a preliminary certification of significance on March 25, 1981, and a preliminary certification of rehabilitation on March 26, 1981. Additionally, the owner granted a facade easement to the Arkansas Commemorative Commission on December 30, 1981. As you know, in order for a charitable contribution deduction to be taken for such a transfer the structure must be actually listed on the National Register by April 15, the due date of the owner's tax return. Due to this time constraint I would greatly appreciate an expeditious processing of this nomination. If you foresee any problems in meeting the April 15 deadline please contact me.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Wilson Stiles  
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosure

WS/js

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

STATE    ARKANSAS

Date Entered    MARCH 25, 1982

Name

Location

Bank of Commerce

El Dorado  
Union County

Garrison, Augustus M., House

Texarkana  
Miller County

Notified

Honorable Dale Bumpers  
Honorable David H. Pryor  
Honorable Beryl F. Anthony, Jr.  
Southwest Regional Office, NPS

State Historic Preservation Officer  
Mr. Wilson Stiles  
Director, Arkansas Historic  
Preservation Program  
Continental Building, Suite 500  
Markham and Main Streets  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201