

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Formreceived MAR 29 1984  
date entered AUG 14 1984See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

Cover 5/2/84

## 1. Name

historic ~~Galveston~~ <sup>MRA</sup> Central Business District / Downtown, Historic Resources of ~~Galveston~~

and/or common same

## 2. Location

Galveston Central Business District; see individual  
street & number site forms for specific locations.

N/A not for publication

city, town Galveston N/A vicinity of

state Texas code 048 county Galveston code 167

## 3. Classification

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

## 4. Owner of Property

name Multiple ownership; see site forms for individual properties

street &amp; number

city, town N/A vicinity of state Texas

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office, Galveston County Courthouse

street &amp; number 722 Moody

city, town Galveston state Texas

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title	(1) Historic American Buildings Survey (see continuation sheet)	has this property been determined eligible?	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	
	(2) Historic Sites Inventory				
date	(1) 1966	(1) federal	(2) state	county	local
	(2) 1984	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
depository for survey records	(1) Library of Congress				
	(2) Texas Historical Commission				
city, town	(1) Washington				
	(2) Austin	state Texas			

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 6

Page 1

title: (3) Texas Historical Commission

date: 1969, state survey

depository: Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas

title: (4) Galveston Architectural/Historical Survey

date: 1974-1975, local survey

depository: Galveston Historical Foundation, Galveston, Texas

## 7. Description

### Condition

☒ excellent  
☒ good  
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☒ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved date N/A

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

The multiple resource area for the Galveston Central Business District (CBD) represents the governmental and business core of the city. The City Hall and County Courthouse are among its prominent structures, as are numerous commercial buildings. The CBD is an area of mixed use; it contains five churches, the historically important Rosenberg Library, and notable early apartment buildings. Most of its buildings date from the middle nineteenth century to the early twentieth, and reflect the range of styles of that lengthy period: Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Romanesque Revival, and simple but interesting vernacular forms. Although there are vacant buildings in the area today, renovations are taking place and a healthy business environment is developing. Twenty-two properties are nominated herewith.

### Boundaries

The overall boundaries of the Galveston Central Business District (CBD) Multiple Resource Area coincide with the planning unit defined by the City of Galveston as the Central Business District. Excluded from the multiple resource area but included in the planning unit are the blocks that form the Strand Historic District, a National Historic Landmark. Northern boundaries of the CBD Multiple Resource Area (see map) are Water (A) Street on the outside blocks on each side and the alley between Mechanic (C) and Market (D) streets from 20th Street to 25th Street. The eastern boundary is 19th Street; the southern boundary is Broadway or Avenue J; and the western boundary is 26th Street. The area is arranged on a grid pattern and encompasses 46 full city blocks and seven (7) half blocks. Seven properties in this area have previously been listed on the National Register and 22 more are included in this nomination, making a total of 29.

### Present Appearance

Two streets, Broadway and 25th Street, are major thoroughfares with landscaped medians. The intersection of the two streets, sometimes called the crossroads of Galveston, forms the southwestern corner of the multiple resource area. It is distinguished by the Texas Heroes Monument, with a 22-foot bronze figure of Victory (property no. 1).

Along with the Strand Historic District, the multiple resource area is the governmental, business, and cultural core of the city, a fact that is visually obvious. Both the Galveston City Hall (no. 2) and the Federal Post Office cover city blocks that front 25th Street; the Galveston County Courthouse complex covers two city blocks (see map) between 19th and 21st streets, and Ball (H) and Winnie (G).

Commercial and business buildings in the multiple resource area are concentrated along the south side of Market (D) to the north side of Church (F) between 20th/21st and 23rd streets. These two blocks are distinguished by a pedestrian mall, an uninterrupted building line, and no vacant lots. Commercial rows are scattered on other blocks in the area, including the north side of the 2300 block and the south side of the 2400 block of Market (D), both sides of the 200 block of Postoffice (E), and the north side of the 2200 block of Church (F).

The cultural center of the community, the Rosenberg Library (no. 7), is located on Sealy (E) between 23rd and 24th streets. Another structure, the 1894 Grand Opera House (listed 1974) on Postoffice (E), is being renovated for cultural activities.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

The CBD, both as a planning unit and a multiple resource area, is a mixed-use area. Residential structures are evident outside the commercial core, and serve as visual transitions to the adjoining residential neighborhoods. Several blocks are dominated by a church or church-related structures. Five denominations--Presbyterian, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Catholic, and Baptist--have major complexes in the CBD. Large and small office buildings, rooming houses, apartment buildings, bars, restaurants, service-related businesses, and fraternal institutions are found in the area.

There is a considerable amount of open space, much of it created by the demolition of structures, particularly west of 23rd Street. There always has been, however, a degree of open space due to the mixture of uses and the subsequent relationship of different types of buildings.

Historical Description

The patterns of use and development in the Galveston CBD Multiple Resource Area were established in the nineteenth century. As the town grew, commercial interests expanded from Galveston Bay to the south. By 1871, when the first bird's-eye view was drawn, the predominant building type from the bay through Postoffice (E) was commercial. An 1885 Sanborn map and an aerial view of the same date show that large commercial buildings existed on both sides of Market (D), similar to those on Mechanic and the Strand. South of Market (D), many of the commercial buildings were still of frame construction.

Whereas commission and wholesale businesses concentrated along the Strand (B) and Mechanic (C), Market (D) and Postoffice (E) became the retail strips. Postoffice and eventually Church (F) were in a state of flux during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Small frame buildings gradually were replaced by larger brick structures; it was a streetscape that evolved over a period of time and was constantly changing, a process that has continued into the twentieth century.

The construction of rows of commercial buildings never advanced south of Church (F). The east-west boundaries for the concentration of commercial activity always have varied from 19th to 21st streets on the east, and from 23rd to 26th streets on the west.

Traditionally, the blocks surrounding the commercial core have exhibited a variety of uses and building types. Residential buildings were mixed with institutional ones such as churches, the city high school (now part of the American Indemnity Insurance building), and government structures. Early maps and views illustrate that there was considerable construction on these blocks, as well as those in the commercial core, during the late nineteenth century. In many cases, institutions gradually consumed surrounding buildings and tracts, and either incorporated existing structures, as did Trinity Episcopal Church (listed 1979), or replaced them as did the Baptist Church. Other institutions moved from their early locations but stayed within the general area. Thus City Hall (no. 2) was moved in 1916 from 20th to 25th Street. The Post Office, originally located in the 1858-61 Federal Building on 20th, moved to a new site on 25th Street in 1893-94. Customs remained in the older building.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

Architectural Styles and Forms

Extant structures in the multiple resource area represent the major building periods in the history of Galveston. They also reflect a considerable range of styles and forms.

There are examples of simple, frame vernacular structures from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth centuries. This includes the double-gallery house and the corner store. In contrast, two of the most elaborate residential structures built in Galveston are located on Broadway; Ashton Villa was built in 1859 (listed 1969) in the Italianate style for J.M. Brown, and Open Gates was put up in 1887-1890 (listed 1969) in the Romanesque Revival style for George Sealy.

In addition to Ashton Villa, the area includes other antebellum buildings, including the Customs House (1858-61), St. Mary's Cathedral (1847-48) (listed 1973), Trinity Episcopal Church (1854-57) (listed 1979), and the Pix Building (no. 15), a brick commercial structure built in 1858 on Postoffice (E). Two Greek Revival houses at 2310 Ball (H) and 2102 Sealy (I) may be pre-Civil War, but have not been nominated because of relatively recent alterations.

Two commercial buildings constructed shortly after the Civil War are of interest. The Central Hotel Building (now Winston's), built at the corner of Market (D) and 24th Street in 1870, is probably the oldest and certainly the largest early frame commercial building remaining in Galveston. In contrast, the vernacular hotel building built by jeweler T.E. Thompson at the same time and just one block to the east is a three-story masonry structure in the Neo-Renaissance style. Both buildings have been substantially altered, however, and are not included in this nomination.

Many of the most distinguished commercial structures in the multiple resource area date from the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. They are brick, sometimes with a stucco finish, two to five stories in height, and can be described as late Victorian in style. Included in this list are the Star Drug Store (no. 8), the E.S. Levy & Co. or National Hotel Building, the Jacob, the Texas (no. 10), the Marschner (no. 22), and the Merrimax (Southwestern Telephone and Telegraph) buildings, the Grand Opera House (listed 1974). Unfortunately, many of these structures were altered, and are presently not eligible for the National Register.

Commercial buildings dating from the 1920s represent one of the most distinguished periods of construction in the multiple resource area. The U.S. National Bank (no. 11), the City National Bank (no. 12), and the Scottish Rite Cathedral (no. 14) all exhibit various revival styles. Until very recently, the skyline of downtown Galveston was dominated by the U.S. National Bank and two other 1920s buildings, the Jean Lafitte Hotel (no. 13) and the Medical Arts Building.

Numerous institutional buildings throughout the multiple resource area reflect a definite consciousness of style. Various phases of the Gothic Revival are represented by the Trinity Episcopal Church and the accompanying Eaton Memorial Church, the First

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 3

Evangelical Lutheran Church (no. 5), and the Masonic Temple, originally the B'Nai Israel Congregation. Other styles are represented or suggested. The Rosenberg Library (no. 7), built in 1902-04 in the Beaux Arts style, is one of the most sophisticated structures in the city. A clear expression of the Spanish Colonial Revival style was the Y.W.C.A., built in 1923-24 but currently undergoing a rehabilitation that alters its appearance. The Galveston City Hall (no. 2) borrowed details from the Neo-Classical and the Second Renaissance Revival when built in 1915-16.

Developments after 1930

The period of 1930-1960 saw only a limited amount of major construction, although the appearance and development of the multiple resource area were changed by other factors. Structures were adapted to service the automobile. Post-World War II saw a shift from residential to commercial uses for properties along Broadway. The number of rental properties in the core area increased, largely due to a growth in multiple heirs and aging owners. A considerable amount of demolition took place on Market (D) and on the western edge of the area.

Other changes occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. Owners continued to make alterations to a number of structures. In some cases, entire facades were covered; in others, alterations were confined to the first floor or to minor details. In 1970, the first block of the mall was opened on Postoffice (E) between 22nd and 23rd streets, and was extended one block east in 1974. The 1970s also saw the construction of large complexes by financial and insurance institutions, specifically the First Sealy-Hutchings National Bank (1970-72) and the 22-story ANICO Tower (1968-72).

Even with these changes, the character and use of the multiple resource area, especially east of 23rd Street, remain much as they were in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. The eastern edge along 19th Street provides a transition to the adjoining residential East End Historical District, now a National Historic Landmark. Postoffice Street has survived relatively intact as the core of the Central Business District. The original pattern of streets and alleys remains throughout the area.

Although the CBD Multiple Resource Area obviously needs an economic boost, as evidenced by a number of vacant buildings, there are examples of renovations and of healthy business activity. Continuing renovation projects include the Grand Opera House, the Y.W.C.A., the Shaw Building at 2427 Market (D) (no. 6), the Moser House at 509 19th Street (no. 19), and Open Gates or the Sealy Mansion which is being adapted as the Faculty Club of the University of Texas Medical Branch.

Other adaptive uses in the area have already proven successful. Two have been completed by Galveston County: the City National Bank (no. 12) is now the Galveston County Historical Museum, and a small frame house at 613 19th Street serves as offices for the county Parks Department.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 4

Survey Methods

In conjunction with the nomination of the Galveston CBD Multiple Resource Area, approximately 300 buildings and sites, including every primary structure, were surveyed within the defined boundaries. Within the area, there are seven (7) sites presently listed on the National Register: Ashton Villa, Open Gates or the Sealy House, the First Presbyterian Church, St. Mary's Cathedral, Trinity Church, the Grand Opera House, and the Custom House. The north side and parts of the east side of the multiple resource area abut districts that are designated National Historic Districts, specifically the Strand Historic District and the East End Historic District.

The basic field work and photography for the 300 buildings and sites were accomplished in late spring and summer of 1982. All the buildings and sites were checked and roughly dated by using the Sanborn Insurance Maps for Galveston that begin in 1885, and the 1871 and 1885 aerial views of the city. More extensive research was conducted on 104 buildings and sites that had one or more of the following broad characteristics:

1. exceptional or typical qualities of a particular architectural style, form, or type;
2. exceptional or typical qualities or a regional or local interpretation of a particular architectural style or building type;
3. association with significant individuals or with social or ethnic groups;
4. identification with specific events, broad movements of historical, cultural, and/or economic importance, and/or local associative value; and
5. visual importance as dominating and/or anchor or pivotal building (included large new structures built by financial institutions).

Of the 104 buildings and sites, 22 are being nominated herewith as part of the present multiple resource nomination. They exhibit architectural and/or historical significance, and maintain their overall architectural integrity. Although some of these buildings have been altered, the changes are reversible, and it is believed that their level of importance outweighs the effect of the alterations. Eiband's Department Store is an example. The historical significance of the Eiband's building far exceeds its architectural importance. Although the treatment of the canopy and the first-floor windows repeats earlier patterns, different materials were used. Also, the current paint selection does not enhance the upper three floors. Early photographs such as those for Eibands' and the Robinson Building were utilized in selecting buildings that should be nominated.

Some buildings were eliminated because alterations were extensive, even though they may be reversible in certain instances. Examples are the Southwestern Telephone and Telegraph Building and the YWCA. Structures like the YWCA, that were undergoing major alterations during the time of the survey, will be restudied. It is hoped that such major alterations can be prevented or reversed, and that more properties will eventually qualify for the National Register.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 5

All the survey materials are filed at the Galveston Historical Foundation. Included are photographs and negatives for approximately 300 buildings and sites, as well as copies of the Texas Historic Sites Inventory Forms for 104 buildings and sites. The originals of the forms and prints of the photographs have been filed with the Texas Historical Commission.

The following list includes the buildings and sites that are being nominated (see locational map):

- (1) Texas Heroes Monument, intersection Broadway (J) and 25th Street
- (2) City Hall, 823 25th Street (Rosenberg)
- (3) Model Laundry, 513-23 25th Street (Rosenberg)
- (4) 2528 Postoffice (E)
- (5) First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2401 Winnie (G)
- (6) M.W. Shaw Building, 2427 Market (D)
- (7) Rosenberg Library, 2310 Sealy (I), and 823 23rd Street (Tremont)
- (8) Star Drug Store, 510 23rd Street (Tremont)
- (9) Eiband's, 2201 Postoffice (E)
- (10) Texas Building, 2200 Postoffice (E)
- (11) U.S. National Bank, 2201 Market (D)
- (12) City National Bank, now Galveston County Historical Museum, 2219 Market (D)
- (13) Jean Lafitte Hotel, 2105 Church (F)
- (14) Scottish Rite Cathedral, 2128 Church (F)
- (15) Pix Building, 2128 Postoffice (E)
- (16) 2017, 2019, 2021, and 2123 Sealy (I)
- (17) I.O.O.F. Building, 505 20th Street
- (18) Robinson Building, 2009-11 Postoffice (E)
- (19) Moser House, 509 19th Street
- (20) 1921 Market (D)
- (21) 1925-27 Market (D)
- (22) Marschner Building, 1914-16 Mechanic (C)

Additional buildings have the potential of being nominated later. In other cases, new research may disclose that a building or site is eligible. In certain instances, an appropriate renovation may make it possible for a building to be nominated, especially where extensive alterations have been made. Age will eventually increase the importance and value of other structures.

Applying the above criteria, the following is a list of buildings that are considered to have the potential of being nominated to the National Register:

Residential structures:

- 2020 Broadway (J)
- 2205-07 Sealy (I)
- 910 23rd
- 2115 Ball (H)
- 2117 Ball (H)



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 6

2310 Ball (H)  
1907 Postoffice (E)  
2406 Church (F)  
2518 Church (F)  
1902 Postoffice (E)

Religious structure:

B'nai Israel Congregation, now Masonic Temple  
816 22nd Street

Commercial structures:

Model Dairy, 2325 Winnie (G)  
2401-03 Church (F)  
Martini Theatre, 524 21st  
Harmony Club Building, 2109-11 Postoffice (E)  
Beissner Building, now McCrory's, 2127 Postoffice (E)  
Merrimax Building, originally Southwestern Telephone and Telegraph Building,  
521-527 22nd  
Levy's, 2227 Postoffice (E or Central Plaza)  
Levy Building or National Hotel Building, 2221 Market (D) and 402 23rd Street  
Jacob Building, northwest corner Postoffice (E) and 21st Street (Moody)  
Schmidt Carriage Factory, 515 24th, northwest corner Church (F) and 24th  
Bruning Building, 2024 Postoffice (E)  
T.E. Thompson Building, now Schwartz's, 401 23rd  
Central Hotel, now Winston's, 2401 Market (D) and 405 24th  
Farmers Marine Copper Works, Inc., 1909-11 Strand (B)  
Walker Smith & Co. Building, 1921-27 Water and 102-112 20th

Finally, parts of the Galveston Central Business District Multiple Resource Area may eventually qualify as a district, if the number and quality of renovations in the area increase.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** see individual sheets **Builder/Architect** see individual sheets

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Central Business District Multiple Resource Area in Galveston, along with the Strand Historic District (which is included in the CBD planning unit of the City of Galveston), embraces what was the governmental, cultural, and business center of Galveston and the region from the late nineteenth century to the 1950s. The area remains the identifiable core of Galveston and includes the downtown retail area, major financial, religious, and educational organizations, and the primary municipal, county, and federal institutions. Historically, these activities have been located in the area since their beginning, and some continue to function in original or early buildings. Structures from each phase of development have survived in the multiple resource area, and reflect the historical and architectural evolution of the city, and the way it has responded to growth and changing economic pressures. A number of the buildings are of particular architectural importance because of age, type, style, and/or because of their identification with an architect of note.

### Historical Development

Early business and commercial activities in Galveston were oriented toward Galveston Bay, and were concentrated along the Strand and Mechanic. By the mid-1880s, businesses on these streets were primarily commission and wholesale houses, shipping companies, and other interests that reflected Galveston's position as a major financial and shipping center. By the 1970s and 1880s, these businesses were located in substantial multistoried brick buildings.

Retail trades tended to be located to the south, especially along Market and Post-office streets. At first these businesses were housed in frame structures, but historic photographs and maps illustrate that most of these had been replaced with larger brick structures by the late 1880s. The same transformation was occurring to some degree on Church Street. It was during the late nineteenth century that the blocks from Market to Church, and from 20th/21st to 24th/25th streets, became identified as the retail and commercial core of downtown Galveston.

The number of pre-1880 commercial buildings in the multiple resource area are few. One pre-Civil War structure has survived. The Pix Building (no. 15) at 2228 Postoffice (E) was built in 1858–59 by Charles Hodgson Pix, an English merchant and ship broker who exemplifies the entrepreneurs who settled in Galveston in its early years. This building is the oldest commercial structure in the area.

The 1880s was an active period of growth throughout the city, and reflected a jump in population from 13,818 in 1870, to 22,248 in 1880. It was during this decade that the commercial core changed its appearance. Many small frame structures were replaced by two- and three-story brick buildings. Examples of the latter are the Star Drug Store (no. 8) at 510 23rd Street, the Bruning Building at 2024 Postoffice (E), and the

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

buildings at 1921 (no. 20) and 1925-27 (no. 21) Market (D). Typically these structures were built to combine commercial utilization on the first floor with other uses such as professional office, residences, and club activities on the upper stories.

Other pre-1880 commercial buildings which, however, have been altered are the Central Hotel, now Winston's, at 2401 Market (D) and T.E. Thompson Jewelry store at 401 23rd Street (both built in 1870); the M.W. Shaw Building at 2427 Market (D) (built in 1979), and the Schmidt Carriage Factory building at Church and 24th Street (built before 1880).

By the late 1890s, Galveston was well established not only as a major port but as a regional retail center. Substantial department-store projects in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries attest to this position. In 1896-97, E.S. Levy & Co., a men's and boys' clothing store founded in 1888, built a four-story structure at Market and 23rd to include retail space on the street level and 84 offices on the upper floors, and to which a fifth floor was added in 1900. In 1895, Garbade, Eiband & Co. opened a department store in a small building at 22nd and Postoffice, but by 1914 undertook a major expansion program that included adding a fourth floor and renovating three adjoining buildings. This is essentially the same building in which the store operates today (no. 9). In 1905-06, the already established Fellman's Department Store constructed a five-story building on Postoffice Street that was connected to its earlier structure on Market. All three businesses had a major impact on downtown Galveston both economically and visually, although only Eiband's has maintained its historic integrity.

Commercial construction continued in the multiple resource area at a considerable rate during the 1890s. The September 1, 1896, trade edition of the Galveston Daily News noted that building in the city "has not been equalled in any previous 12-month period." Between 1890 and 1900, population grew from 29,084 to 37,788 people, obviously creating a larger retail market.

In 1895-96, the Southwestern Telephone and Telegraph Co. built their headquarters at the corner of 22nd Street and Church (F). It was declared the finest telephone building in the west at the time, and serviced the 500 telephones in the city. The Grand Opera House (listed 1974) and Hotel were built in the 2000 block of Postoffice, in 1894, as a commercial venture. They are now owned by a nonprofit cultural organization, the Galveston County Cultural Arts Council, Inc.

After taking a few years to recover from the 1900 storm, construction resumed in downtown Galveston. At a cost of \$59,000, Fellman's Department Store was among the largest of the projects. The three-story Robinson Building (no. 18), built in 1907 at 2009-11 Postoffice (E) for \$11,000, exemplifies the simpler commercial buildings that were built to accommodate service businesses, in this case Robinson & Witt: contracting plumbers, gas and steam fitters, electricians, and dealers in fixtures. Numerous buildings were identified with businesses and services that would become obsolete, such as the now-altered structures built by J. Levy & Bros. on Church Street in 1906 for their established livery (and undertaking) business.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

The years 1910-1920 were a period of mixed economic activity in Galveston, as witnessed by the annual trade editions of the local newspaper, the Galveston Daily News. Commercial projects and activities naturally were affected by these events. The September 1910, edition reported that the past year had been one of the hardest because of a short cotton crop and general depression in shipping. Merchants who depended on local trade suffered, but retailers were helped by the large number of summer visitors. Completion of the causeway, that would provide a direct railroad and vehicular route between the island and the mainland, was anticipated to help commercial activity throughout the city.

In 1913, the newspaper reported a good year for retailers, who were helped by the recent campaign for electric signs in the downtown district. The same edition stated that the amount of construction was once again unprecedented, and cited among the major projects the \$500,000 American National Building built at 21st Street and Market (demolished in 1972). Also receiving attention was construction of the Model Laundry (no. 3) on the western edge of downtown. It was the only steam laundry in Galveston at the time, and was considered one of the most up-to-date laundry plants in the region.

In 1914, the newspaper stated that one of the most favored districts for business structures was east of 23rd Street and north of Avenue F. In this section the "hammer and saw" were constantly at work. The expansion of Garbade, Eiband & Co. was among the projects mentioned.

In 1916, the annual trade edition referred to the previous building spurt, but commented that things were slowing due to the war and the subsequent shrinkage of the shipping business, the removal of the troops, and a hurricane in August 1915. The coming of the troops had resulted in an unprecedented demand for rental properties, with the city exceeding normal increases in residential and business buildings. Construction, the paper predicted, would be slow until the population caught up. The 1900 hurricane accounted for the drop from 37,788 inhabitants in 1900, to 36,981 in 1910. By 1920 the population had risen to 44,255.

During the 1920s, port activities in Galveston remained important but were wavering. Other business interests were growing, including the expansion of medical and insurance facilities. Major private commercial projects in the multiple resource area that were constructed during this period reflect the shift. Interests of the Moody family completed the City National Bank (no. 12) at 2219 Market (D) in 1920, then proceeded to construct two of the largest buildings in Galveston: the Medical Arts Building (1927-29), and the Jean Lafitte Hotel (1927) (no. 13). The latter provided the downtown with much needed hotel facilities convenient to the business center and competitive with beach hotels. Kempner family interests also contributed to Galveston's position as a financial center with construction of the U.S. National Bank (no. 11) in (1923-25) at the corner of Market and 22nd streets.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

By the 1920s downtown Galveston supported a number of the major chain stores, including Woolsworth's, Kress's, Grant's, Penney's, McCrory's, and Sears as well as locally owned businesses. The area survived as a relatively healthy retail and commercial center through the Depression, but the local newspapers hint that merchants had to work at it. The April 12, 1931, issue of the Daily News reported \$100,000 in improvements on Market Street, including lighting standards and street widening. The value of the improvements was shown by the "recent petition presented to the board of city commissioners by Post-office Street merchants, asking that the thoroughfare from 21st to 23rd be illuminted under the same plan as Market was improved." Street-widening projects already had been completed on parts of Postoffice and Church.

A growth in absentee ownership and multiple heirs also affected the downtown properties. Many heirs chose to make money on cheap rent rather than continue family businesses; and decisions may have been influenced, in part, by the gambling activities in Galveston. It is difficult to document the number of downtown businesses and buildings that were associated with, or controlled by, gambling interests. "Postoffice Street" or the red-light district on the western edge of downtown being one of the most notorious sections.

Although the most definable core of the multiple resource area is the commercial part, many noncommercial uses were also established in the nineteenth century. Originally the major federal, state, county, and municipal offices were situated in a strip between 19th and 21st streets.

The Old Galveston Customs House on 20th Street between E and F was built in 1858-61, and housed Federal functions including the Post Office. The Post Office was moved in 1893-94 to a larger facility at the corner of 25th Street and Church (F). In 1935-37, this building was replaced by the present Post Office which covers an entire city block.

County offices that were located on 20th Street between Ball (H) and Winnie (G) eventually developed into the present two-block complex between 19th and 21st streets. The early structures have been replaced, but the county has retained, in a somewhat altered form, Central Park in the block between 20th and 21st streets. This block has always been a designated public space.

In 1916, Galveston City Hall (no. 2) moved from its location on 20th Street between Mechanic (C) and Market (D), where it had shared facilities with the City Market, to a new and much larger facility on 25th Street, where it remains today.

In addition to the governmental buildings, the most important publicly owned structure in the multiple resource area is the Rosenberg Library (no. 7). It has served as a primary educational and cultural center in Galveston since its construction in 1902-04, and was the first major public library in Texas. Its benefactor, Henry Rosenberg, was a Swiss-born banker and merchant who became Galveston's most generous philanthropist in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His library gift included construction of the building and its endowment.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 4

Rosenberg is responsible for another publicly owned landmark in the multiple resource area: the Texas Heroes Monument at the intersection of 25th Street and Broadway (no. 1). Built in "memory of the heroes of the Texas Revolution of 1836," the monument was dedicated on April 21, 1900. The bronze statue of Victory was created by the noted sculptor Louis Amateis, and has become a symbol of the city that is recognized by Galvestonians and visitors, and is the only monumental sculptural grouping of its type or period in the state.

Several of the earliest religious congregations to be established in Galveston are located within the multiple resource area. Five of the congregations remain on their original sites: the First Presbyterian Church (listed 1979), St. Mary's Cathedral (listed 1973), Trinity Episcopal Church (listed 1979), the First Evangelical Lutheran Church (no. 5), and the First Baptist Church. The first three congregations continue to utilize their restored nineteenth-century structures. The Lutheran church has a new church building, but also maintains a 1915 structure that incorporates two earlier buildings. The First Baptist Church, after adapting a variety of earlier buildings, now operates a new plant. A sixth religious group located in the area, the B'Nai Israel Congregation, sold its nineteenth-century synagogue to the Masonic Temple Association in 1953.

The headquarters for a large percentage of social, quasireligious, and fraternal organizations in Galveston have been located within the multiple resource area since the nineteenth century. In some cases the organizations maintained floors and/or rooms in structures that they owned or rented, but which were used for other purposes as well. There are several examples remaining in the area: 505 20th Street (no. 17) was built in 1899-1900 and adapted in 1910-11 by the I.O.O.F., who continue to meet on the second floor; the second floors of 1921-23 and 1925-27 Market (no. 21) provided meeting space for numerous groups on different days; and 2109-11 Postoffice was built in 1896 as the Harmony Club Building, with club activities on the second and third floors. The last building was owned and financed by Joe Levy, a prominent Galveston businessman who owned extensive real-estate holdings throughout downtown. In other instances, organizations built their own headquarters: the only pre-1930 example that survives is the Scottish Rite Cathedral (no. 14) at Church (F) and 22nd Street, built in 1928-29.

The multiple resource area has always exhibited a variety of uses including residential. Detached residences were interspersed with commercial, governmental, and institutional buildings, even along the retail strips, well into the 1890s. Residential buildings were concentrated on the edges of the commercial core and provided the transition into the surrounding neighborhoods. Few blocks within the multiple resource area, however, were ever solidly residential except south of Ball (H).

There is a wide range of residential structures in the area. This includes Open Gates or the George Sealy House (listed 1969), and Ashton Villa or the J.M. Brown House, which were among the elegant residences built along Broadway by prominent families. Also included are more modest structures and smaller houses built by speculators, such as those with double galleries at 2017, 2021, and 2023 Sealy (I) (no. 16). Records suggest that several of the larger frame structures were built as boarding houses, if

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 5

not, they were adapted to that use soon after completion. After the early twentieth century, the demand for detached housing helped spread such residences westward on the island, and residential properties in the CBD took the form of apartment buildings.

Architectural Development

Architecturally, the multiple resource area contains a group of buildings that represent a wide range of styles, forms, and dates, and it therefore reflects the architectural evolution of the community. There are major architectural statements and representative works of noted architects. At the same time, there are also many vernacular buildings. Heretofore, the post-1910 buildings in the area have received little attention, largely because the city has such a remarkable assemblage of nineteenth-century structures.

Examples of the Greek Revival style are the Old Galveston Custom House and the Pix Building (no. 15), which were constructed at the same time. Hendley Row on the Strand and the Pix Building are the oldest commercial structures in Galveston. There are several examples of Greek Revival residences in the area, such as 2310 Ball and 2102 Sealy. Another pre-Civil War building is the Italianate residence called Ashton Villa, built in 1859 by J.M. Brown.

One of the most important groupings in the area is made up of six religious structures. All represent various forms of the Gothic Revival style with the exception of the Romanesque Revival First Presbyterian Church. St. Mary's Cathedral (1847-48) and Trinity Episcopal Church (1855) are the earliest religious structures, although both have experienced later alterations. In 1870, the B'nai Israel Temple was built, and in 1878-81 Trinity constructed Eaton Memorial Chapel to honor Rev. Benjamin Eaton, one of Galveston's early church leaders. Nicholas J. Clayton, the most important architect to practice in Galveston, was primary architect only for the Eaton Memorial Chapel, but he served as architect for later alterations to the remaining four structures. The sixth edifice, the First Evangelical Lutheran Church (no. 5), represents a later interpretation of the Gothic Revival style. Its 1915 facade and tower encase two earlier structures. The evolution of the building reflects the history of the church, which continued to be used as the main sanctuary until 1957.

The most important vernacular structure that dates before 1880 is the frame Central Hotel Building of 1870, now known as Winston's. The exterior has been covered with asbestos but early photographs document that the form of the building and of the openings has remained intact. It represents a form which was common in Galveston at one time: a two- or three-story frame commercial building with a smaller rear extension and gable on the front elevation.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

6

Residential buildings were built in the vernacular idiom, as exemplified by the houses at 2528 Postoffice (no. 4), 509 19th Street (no. 19), and 2017, 2019, 2021, and 2023 Sealy (no. 16). The house at 509 19th Street evidences classical details and is unusual in Galveston because of its proportions and siting on the lot. It shows a definite European influence and contrasts with the frame, tropical architecture that is otherwise typical of Galveston. It was built in 1886-88 by Mrs. Eliza (Elisabeth) Moser, widow of Peter Moser a real estate agent. Generally masonry construction in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Galveston was reserved for larger buildings.

More typical of Galveston are the four frame, double-gallery dwellings built in the 2000 block of Sealy in the early 1890s, apparently as speculative real estate. The house with double gallery in single and multiple arrangements was common throughout the city, but this almost identical foursome is now unique and an important document, since all four retain their original details. At one time, the southern boundary of the multiple resource area along Broadway was lined with elaborate dwellings. Only two are left, Ashton Villa and Open Gates, which have been mentioned previously.

Architecturally, the commercial buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century now being nominated in the multiple resource area typify late-Victorian styling. They are multistoried brick structures that evidence embellishments such as cornice and opening details. Smaller examples include the Star Drug Store (no. 8), the M.W. Shaw Building (no. 6), the Marschner Building (no. 22), and the structures at 1921 and 1925-27 Market (no. 21).

There is a second grouping of commercial buildings that dates from the same period but is characterized by simpler decoration. This includes the I.O.O.F. Hall (no. 17), the Robinson Building (no. 18), and the 1914 expansion of Eiband's (no. 9).

The most important public building to be constructed between 1900-1910 was the Rosenberg Library (no. 7), which is distinguished by its Beaux Arts style. It was designed by the St. Louis firm of William C. Eames and Thomas C. Young, who were also architects of the San Francisco U.S. Customs House.

The selection of an out-of-town architectural firm for the Rosenberg Library was a portent of the future for Galveston. Dallas architect C.D. Hill designed the Galveston City Hall (no. 2), built in 1915-16. Although the structure exhibits elements of the Neo-Classical and the Second Renaissance Revival styles, function was the primary concern of the city fathers, not design. The building was successful and continues to house the city's administrative offices.

A clear and compact expression of the Neo-Classical Revival in architecture is the City National Bank (no. 12), now the Galveston County Historical Museum. Designed for Moody family interests by the Chicago firm of Weary and Eiford, and built in 1919-20, it is one of the most sophisticated structures in downtown Galveston. The building is virtually unaltered, and preserves the interior lobby with its barrel-shaped ceilings.

In the same block, and providing an interesting contrast to the City National Bank, is the eleven-story U.S. National Bank (no. 11) of 1923-25. It was designed by Alfred



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 7

C. Blossom, a New York-based architect who also designed the Magnolia Building in Dallas. Associate architects were Sanguinet, Staats & Hedrick of Fort Worth. Contemporary descriptions of the building noted that it was in the "Italian Renaissance" style, and was the tallest of Galveston's three skyscrapers.

Two buildings in the multiple resource area were designed by noted Houston architect Alfred C. Finn: the Scottish Rite Cathedral (no. 14) (1928-29), and the U.S. Post Office (1935-37). The former has a slight Mediterranean flavor with its arched arcade, although its primary decorative element (as on the "Federal" style post offices), is the flat, stylized carving characteristic of the "modernistic" style. The interiors of the Cathedral were considered especially notable. Finn was a member of the Scottish Rite order.

Andrew Fraser, who came from Scotland to the United States in 1909 and settled in Galveston in 1926, was one locally based architect who designed several major buildings during this period. Two of his largest projects were for Moody interests: the Jean Lafitte Hotel (no. 13) and the Medical Arts Building. At the time of the opening of the hotel, a local newspaper described it as "carrying out the architectural motifs of the renaissance period with the American colonial style." The main importance of the Jean Lafitte Hotel is historical, not architectural, although it is a commanding structure in downtown Galveston.

During the two decades 1910-30, many smaller functional buildings devoid of decoration were built in the multiple resource area. Included are several apartment buildings as well as commercial structures. The Model Laundry (no. 3) is an example of a building for which function was the primary consideration, although surface variation and interest were achieved through the choice of materials.

Architecturally, the multiple resource area changed little between 1930 and 1955. Larger construction projects such as Sears and Southwestern Bell were located on the edges of downtown, rather than in the commercial core. One exception was the Martini Theatre, built in a modified modernistic style in 1937-38. Once an active movie and vaudeville theatre, it is now vacant and for sale.

Since the nineteenth century, downtown owners and merchants have adapted their buildings to new uses and modernized their features. Unlike their counterparts on the Strand, who did not rely on a predominately local retail market, many CBD owners and merchants felt it necessary that their buildings be kept "up-to-date" in their efforts to attract customers. In response to a dwindling market, there has been a trend towards modernizing many of the structures in recent decades. To compete with outlying shopping centers, a pedestrian mall was created on Postoffice (E) between 22nd and 23rd streets in 1970, and was extended to 21st Street in 1974.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 8

Property values have continued to decrease. Buildings have been demolished to provide parking space and/or because of the limited demand for retail and office space in these dated downtown structures. The construction of the Moody National Bank in the early 1960s, the ANICO Tower in 1968-72, and the First Sealy Hutchings National Bank in 1970-72 offered modern office places.

Presently there is a renewed interest in the Galveston Central Business District. The downtown merchants, the Galveston Historical Foundation, outside and local investors, and the City of Galveston are attempting to coordinate development and revitalization. Designation of the CBD as a "Tax-increment financing zone" is presently under consideration. The success of the Strand serves as a model for the community.

In addition to the historical and architectural significance of the CBD, Galvestonians associate the area with local history, and feel that it is important because of its past. It is the core or the heart of the community and has been since the nineteenth century. The buildings of the area are tangible documents of the city's development, growth, and change as a governmental, cultural, and business center, both on a local and regional level. The buildings and sites that are nominated here to the National Register reflect the range of activities and interests that have been, and continue to be, part of the everyday functioning of the community.

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(see continuation sheet)

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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property see individual site forms

Quadrangle name Galveston, Texas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>3</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>6</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	D	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>
E	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	F	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
G	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	H	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The southern boundary of the Galveston Central Business District Multiple Resource Area is the south side of the median strip of Broadway or Avenue J. The western boundary is the east side of 26th Street to Santa Fe Place where it goes one block east to 25th Street or Rosenberg Avenue. (see cont. sheet)

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
state	<u> </u>	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ellen Beasley

organization Galveston Historical Foundation date April 29, 1983

(Mailing Address for Beasley-

street & number 2016 Strand, P.O. Drawer 539 telephone (409) 765-7834

city or town Galveston state Texas

## 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Barbara J. J. J. J.*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 19 March 1984

For NPS use only

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

*Beck Brown*  
Keeper of the National Register

date 5/3/84

Attest: *See Continuation sheet for listing*  
Chief of Registration

date

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 3/29/84

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 143

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Central Business District Multiple Resource Area  
State Galveston County, TEXAS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Building at 1921--1921-1/2  
Avenue D

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper  
Attest

Melvin Byers 8/14/84

2. Building at 1925--1927 Market  
Street

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper  
Attest

Melvin Byers 8/14/84

Substantive Review

3. City Hall

Keeper  
Attest

Beth Grovum - 8/14/84

4. City National Bank

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper  
Attest

Melvin Byers 8/14/84

5. Eiband's

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper  
Attest

Melvin Byers 8/14/84

6. First Evangelical Lutheran  
Church

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper  
Attest

Melvin Byers 8/14/84

7. House at 2528 Postoffice St.

Substantive Review

Keeper  
Attest

Beth Grovum 8/14/84

8. Houses at 2017--2023 Avenue I

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper  
Attest

Melvin Byers 8/14/84

9. I.O.O.F. Lodge

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper  
Attest

Melvin Byers 8/14/84

10. Jean Lafitte Hotel

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper  
Attest

Melvin Byers 8/14/84

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 3/29/84

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 2 of 3

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Central Business District Multiple Resource Area  
State Galveston County, TEXAS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Marschner Building

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Attest

12. Model Laundry

Contributing Building

Keeper

Attest

13. Moser House

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Attest

14. Pix Building

Contributing Building  
National Register

for Keeper

Attest

15. Robinson Building

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Attest

16. Rosenberg Library

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Attest

17. Scottish Rite Cathedral

Contributing Building

Keeper

Attest

18. Shaw, M. W., Building

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Attest

19. Star Drug Store

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Attest

20. Texas Building

Contributing Building  
National Register

for Keeper

Attest

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 3/29/84

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 3 of 3

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Central Business District Multiple Resource Area

State Galveston County, TEXAS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

21. Texas Heroes Monument

**Substantive Review**

Keeper

Beth Groover 8/14/84

Attest

22. U.S. National Bank

**Entered in the  
National Register**

*for* Keeper

Sharon Byers 8/14/84

Attest

23. Merimax Building

**Substantive Review**

Keeper

Beth Groover 1/24/85

Attest

24.

Keeper

Attest

25.

Keeper

Attest

26.

Keeper

Attest

27.

Keeper

Attest

28.

Keeper

Attest

29.

Keeper

Attest

30.

Keeper

Attest