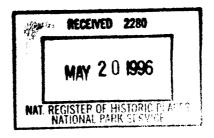
OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property	
historic name <u>Downtown Minden Historic Distri</u>	<u>ct</u>
other names/site number	
2. Location	
,	N <i>L</i> A vicinity
state Louisiana code LA county W	code 119 zip code /1055
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
XX meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recom nationally statewide XX locally. (See continuation sheet Signature of certifying official/fitte Jonathan C. Fricker Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation State of Federal agency and bureau In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the Natio comments.)	for additional comments.) May 13, 1996 Date n and Tourism
Signature of commenting official/Title	Date
State or Federal agency and bureau	
4. National Park Service Certification	<u> </u>
entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. Description determined eligible for the	nature of the Keepe Date of Action G-21/96 ered in the Lonal Register
determined not eligible for the National Register.	
☐ removed from the National Register. ☐ other, (explain:)	

<u>Downtown Minden Histo</u> Name of Property	ric District Gramm		Webster County and	Parish, LA State		
5. Classification	ranett					
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)		Number of Res (Do not include pre	cources within Property viously listed resources in the	count.)	
□ private □ public-local □ public-State □ public-Federal	 □ building(s) ☑ district □ site □ structure □ object 		Contributing 33	Noncontributing 13	buildings sites structures objects	
			33	13	Total	
Name of related multiple pr (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of	operty listing of a multiple property listing.)		in the National	tributing resources pre Register	eviously listed	
N/A			2			
6. Function or Use						
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)			current Functions inter categories from			
Commerce/Trade: depart specialty store, fin		. –	Commerce/Trade: department store, specialty store			
Transportation: road-r	elated	_				
		_			1000-77-	
7. Description			,			
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)			laterials Enter categories from	instructions)		
Italianate		fc	oundationbri	ck, concrete		
Romanesque				ck, stucco		
Classical Revival						
		ro	oof other:	tar and gravel		
		0	ther			
		•				

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The boundaries of the Downtown Minden Historic District encompass forty-eight masonry commercial buildings. Contributing elements range in date from c.1895 to the fifty year cutoff (1946). Despite a 27% non-contributing rate and alterations to contributing elements, the district easily retains its historical significance as a major commercial center within rural Webster Parish.

The inventory below provides a description of each building. In terms of a general analysis, the district is but with one exception one and two story in scale. The exception is the three story Imperial Hotel (#39 below). About half the contributing elements are two stories and they are often grouped together, yielding an impressive scale to certain blocks. Roughly three-fourths of the buildings are along Main Street. As can be seen on the enclosed map, the district on the north side of Main extends to Pine Street while the south side extends only to Union. One might reasonably presume that the two blocks beyond Union on the south side were historically part of a party wall CBD, but have been redeveloped over the years. Such is not the case. The area was historically the location of the courthouse. It now is occupied by a large modern bank and a parking lot, hence its exclusion.

The vast majority of the district's buildings are party wall, although in some cases there is a narrow alley between buildings. Of particular interest in terms of land use is a cottage style gas station located in the heart of the district. It is, in effect, sandwiched in between conventional retail commercial buildings. Also worth noting is that buildings on the south side of Main Street (between Fogle and Union) extend all the way through the block with rear elevations facing onto a major thoroughfare. Because of this high visibility, some rear elevations are styled but not always exactly like the front elevation. Finally, there are two large brick warehouses in the district. They are located off an alley behind buildings on Main.

In terms of styles represented, the Minden CBD is like most other small town downtowns in the state. Most of the buildings do not feature a recognizable style, relying instead upon shaped parapets and decorative brickwork for distinction. Some are very plain indeed. Styled buildings include a few late watered-down versions of the commercial Italianate, the Romanesque Bank of Minden (NR), the neo-classical Bank of Webster (NR), and the previously mentioned cottage style gas station (albeit a low-key version). Several of the buildings are nicely detailed, most notably in the brickwork (see inventory). Adding greatly to downtown's historic character are brick streets begun in 1917 and completed in 1920.

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INVENTORY

Note: Buildings were dated using Sanborn Insurance Company maps where possible. Maps were available for the years 1885, 1892, 1898, 1903, 1909, 1914, 1923 and 1927.

- 1. 503/05 Main. Contributing element. c. 1930 simple brick one story commercial building (frame building appears in this location as late as 1927). Transoms covered.
- 2. 507-09 Main. Contributing element. Although a two story brick building has been in this location as early as the first available Sanborn map, 1885, it appears that the present building dates from between 1914 and 1923. Large two story brick building with shaped parapet, pilasters, and decorative brick panels. Transoms covered, shopfront replaced, windows on second story boarded over.
- 3. 511 Main. Contributing element. The 1898 Sanborn map shows a frame building in this location, and the 1903 map has the notation "foundation for brick store." Two story commercial Italianate brick building with segmental arch windows emphasized by decorative brickwork. Windows continue down the side elevation facing a alley. Building crowned with corbelled cornice. Shopfront replaced and transoms covered. Historic photo shows that building originally had distinctive cast-iron pilasters at the shopfront level.
- 4. 513 Main. Contributing element. 1930s small plain brick commercial building; only decoration is restrained corbeling at the top. Shopfront replaced.
- 5. 515-17 Main. Contributing element. Built sometime between 1923 and '27, per Sanborn maps. Fairly plain two story brick commercial building; shopfront replaced.
- 6. Corner Main and Pearl. Contributing element. This narrow but very deep two story brick building is shown as one story in 1914 with notation "to be bank." By 1923 it is shown as two stories. Historically the First National Bank, the building's shopfront level, per a historic photograph, originally featured a recessed entrance framed by Tuscan columns -- one on each side. The columns have been removed and a shopfront inserted in this space. (Although present shopfront is modern, it appears that the bank had been converted to retail use by 1950, per Sanborn map update.) This large corner building is nicely detailed, featuring numerous decorative brick panels and a corbeled cornice. Roundels and a denticular cornice define the recessed banking entrance. Despite the loss of much of the banking entrance's original character and the boarding over of the windows, the building is otherwise well preserved and has a strong historic character.

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- 7. 105 Pearl. Contributing element. Built between 1914 and 1923. Two story brick building with decoratively shaped parapet shown as multi-use in 1923: a store and telephone office facing Pearl and behind that a wholesale grocery warehouse and at the very rear, a section for hay storage.
- 8. 60l Main. Non-contributing element. Modern one story brick building with mansard roof.
- 9. 605 Main. Contributing element. Bank of Minden (1901), listed individually on National Register. One story Romanesque Revival bank with variegated green glazed bricks, a great round arch entrance, and various intricate terra cotta decorative accents. Retains historic street clock.
- 10. 609-11-13 Main. Contributing element. Drake Building (built sometime between 1892 and 1898). Wide (seven bay), two story brick commercial building with square head windows and diminutive denticular bands. Per an early photo, present decorative bartizan-like elements originally protruded above roofline, and there were originally six segmental arch windows where there are now seven square head, one over one windows. Window changed occurred sometime in early twentieth century. Although shopfront has been replaced, the cast-iron pilasters survive.
- 11. 615-17 Main. Non-contributing element. #s 11 & 12 were historically one very large nicely detailed two story Italianate commercial building; now articulated as two buildings with modern facades.
- 12. Non-contributing element. See above. The building has a modern facade, but its historic character is evident in the long side elevation facing W. Union with its segmental arch windows.
- 13. Contributing element. Located off an alley behind Main Street, this very small plain one story brick building appears to be fifty years old (not on last available 50+ year old Sanborn map 1927).
- 14. West Union Street. Contributing element -- built between 1914 and 1923. This large well preserved warehouse is one story at the front and two at the rear due to the sloping terrain. It features segmentally arched openings emphasized with decorative brickwork,

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decorative brick panels at the front, and what appear to be all of its original doors and windows.

- 15. 114-116 West Union. Contributing element. Fairly plain one story c. 1930 brick commercial building; decorative brick panels on facade; shopfront replaced.
- 16. 110-112 West Union. Contributing element. Same description as #15.
- 17. 701-03-05 Main. Contributing element. J. R. Miller Building; 1920. Very wide corner two story brick commercial building with three-part decoratively shaped parapet and decorative brick panels in herringbone pattern displaying the name of the building in the center and 1920 to each side. Transoms covered and shopfronts replaced, although latter have the basic configuration of historic shopfronts.
- 18. 707 Main. Non-contributing element. Small one story very plain stuccoed commercial building which appears to be less than fifty years old.
- 19. 709 Main. Contributing element. City Drugs. c.1940 one story stuccoed drugstore with historic Rexall neon sign and shopfront clad in black glazed tiles with a cream decorative band.
- 20. 711 Main. Non-contributing element. Narrow one story commercial building with metal front and modern brick shopfront.
- 21. 713 Main. Contributing element. c.1930 plain one story brick commercial building. Shopfront probably replaced, but it has the configuration of a historic shopfront.
- 22. 715 Main. Contributing element. c. 1930 narrow plain one story brick commercial building.
- 23. 717 Main. Contributing element. c. 1940 plain two story brick commercial building. Building appears in photo in 1944 publication. Central window removed (per photo and brickwork); shopfront replaced and modern canopy.
- 24-25. Non-contributing elements. Small brick commercial buildings which are less than fifty years old. Although they are one story, they are about half the height of the adjacent historic one story buildings.

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- 26. 725-27 Main. Contributing element. c.1930 one story commercial building with multicolor bricks laid in a decorative pattern. Transoms covered; shopfront probably replaced, but it has the configuration of a historic shopfront.
- 27. 729 Main. Contributing element. Two story building constructed between 1909 and 1914. Appears on 1914 Sanborn map with notation "brick with stone front." Upper facade is coursed and dressed stone with a rock-faced finish; one over one windows in pairs. Despite a replaced shopfront and a recently installed mansard roof over the shopfront, the building retains sufficient historic character to merit being counted as a contributing element. Because Louisiana very rarely has stone or stone-faced buildings in a small downtown, 729 Main still has a very distinctive character in spite of the alterations.
- 28. 731 Main. Contributing element. 1920s one story brick building with decoratively shaped brick panel and band of brick dentils at the top. Shopfront configuration original, although glass has been replaced.
- 29. 733-35 Main. Non-contributing element. 1920s one story brick building with decoratively shaped parapet. Listed as non-contributing because very little of the original building is visible due to mansard roof awning; also shopfront replaced.
- 30. 737 Main. Non-contributing element. One story brick commercial building. Probably less than fifty years old; modern barrel shaped awning and modern inappropriate shopfront.
- 31. 736-30 Main. Contributing element. Wide one story brick building with decorative brick panels and decorative brick band above. Shopfront replaced; modern canvas awning.
- 32. Non-contributing element. One story stuccoed commercial building with modern shopfront; probably an altered historic building. Extends through the block with plain brick two story section fronting onto Broadway.
- 33. Contributing element. 1920s one story fairly plain stuccoed commercial building; shopfront replaced.

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- 34. Contributing element. Western Auto Store. 1920s one story brick commercial building with brick panel and decoratively shaped parapet; retains original multi-pane transoms and historic Western Auto neon sign. Building extends through the block to Broadway; similar facade on Broadway to that on Main.
- 35. 720-22 Main. Contributing element. Built between 1903 and 1909. Five bay two story brick commercial building distinguished by its decorative brickwork -- zigzag pattern at cornice level with band below formed of brick with corners pointing outward. Also has recessed brick panels. Second floor windows covered over. Shopfront replaced, although original decorative cast-iron pilasters are still visible.
- 36. 716-18 Main. Contributing element. Noted on 1903 Sanborn map as "being built." Shown as a restaurant on the 1909 map and on the 1914 map as a restaurant on the first floor and a lodge hall on the second. Two story brick Italianate commercial building with segmental arch windows on facade and sides; segmental arch emphasized with decorative brickwork. Shopfront replaced, although some of decorative cast-iron pilasters survive. Building extends through the block with another facade on Broadway. Broadway facade features a decoratively shaped parapet, a decorative brick band, and square head windows with a round arch brick band above.
- 37. 712 Main. Contributing element. 1920s one story fairly plain brick commercial building. Extends through the block with another facade on Broadway. Broadway facade marked by piers dividing the bays.
- 38. Contributing element historic gas station (c.1930). A frame gas station appears in this "heart of downtown" location on 1923 and '27 Sanborn maps. Present stuccoed station is of the cottage type popular in the 1920s. Its gabled side elevation faces Main Street; facade features two steeply pitched gables.
- 39. 708 Main. Imperial Hotel. Contributing element. Three story brick building built between 1914 and 1923. Sets of square head double windows on the facade (now covered over) and central round arch opening on second story. Historic photo shows that central round arch opening marked a door opening out onto the roof of an arcaded porch. (Porch does not survive.) Facade capped by cast cement band at cornice level. Second and third story facade openings accented with cream colored cast cement blocks. Each side of the facade is accented with a narrow vertical brick band with a diamond shaped cast cement pattern at the top and bottom. Glass in shopfront openings modern, but

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openings appear to be original given the cast cement blocks accenting the corners. Segmental arch openings on side elevations.

- 40. 704 Main. Contributing element. Bank of Webster (National Register). Two story brick neo-classical bank constructed in 1910. Monumental distyle in antis Ionic facade culminating in a classical shaped parapet with a central bas relief eagle inscribed in a wreath. Originally the facade fenestration was square head but entranceway reworked within the last 10 to 20 years in the form of a Palladian motif. Side elevation, which runs along an alley, has shallow arch openings. In about 1940 the bank received a rear addition which extended the building through to the next street. The rear elevation has been given a post-Modernist treatment.
- 41. 702 Main. Contributing element. Fairly plain two story masonry commercial building. Although shopfront level has been replaced, second story retains its historic appearance.
- 42. 700 Main. Non-contributing element. Considerably altered two story masonry commercial building.
- 43. Broadway (immediately behind #35). Non-contributing element. Although this plain one story brick building looks as if it could be 50 years old, it does not appear on a 1950 Sanborn map update.
- 44. 716 Broadway. Contributing element. Wide 1920s one story brick commercial building with shaped parapet.
- 45 Chevrolet St. (located immediately behind #44). Contributing element. c. 1930 one story well preserved brick automobile garage.
- 46. 722-26 Broadway. Contributing element. Large two story 1930s plain brick commercial building with shaped parapet. Alterations include painting part of the building (at the first story) to distinguish no doubt a particular business. Painted portion has inappropriate, but small, mansard roof awnings.
- 47. 802 Broadway. Non-contributing element. Modern one story brick commercial building.
- 48. 806-808 Broadway. Contributing element. Wide one story brick commercial building built between 1923 and 1927. Appears on 1927 Sanborn map with notation "auto sales

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and garage." Photo in 1944 publication shows it as Webster Parish Library. Building has three-part articulation with central part having a higher parapet. Horizontal panels feature bricks laid in a herringbone pattern. Some shopfront modification, but overall retains its historic configuration; recently installed canvas awning hides transoms.

Contributing Elements:

Contributing elements are defined as 50+ year old resources which retain sufficient integrity to still basically look like historic commercial buildings. As described in the inventory, most of the contributing elements have lost their historic shopfronts, as is very typical, although in this case at least the replacements are not jarringly inappropriate. Also, a few have received mansard roof awnings over the shopfront. Obviously, the decision on contributing or non-contributing was a judgment call made on a case-by-case basis depending upon the severity of the alterations and how much historic fabric remained. For example, #27, despite the mansard awning, was counted as contributing while #29, also with a mansard awning, was counted as non-contributing.

Non-contributing Elements:

As noted previously, the district has a 27% non-contributing rate. This is well within the normally accepted range for Register districts in Louisiana outside New Orleans, which range typically from 25 to 35 percent. What is more important than numbers, of course, is the visual impact of non-contributing elements on the district as a whole, as determined by their size and scale and overall appearance. In short, does the district still have a strong historic appearance? The accompanying representative photos indicate that such is the case in downtown Minden. The most compromised block is Main between Pearl and W. Union, which has three non-contributing buildings and two contributing. And while the non-contributing buildings are unattractive, the two contributing have a strong visual presence (see photos). Also, when viewed within the context of the street as a whole their presence is mitigated to some extent by the massive Miller Building (1920), located on the corner of the next block.

In terms of scale, ten of the thirteen non-contributing elements are small one story buildings that have a minimal visual presence. The remaining three are two story altered historic buildings.

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Assessment of Integrity:

Even with a 27% non-contributing rate and alterations to historic elements, downtown Minden easily retains its identity as a historic commercial sector (see photos) and hence its National Register eligibility.

8. S	tatement of Significance		
(Mark	licable National Register Criteria "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property ational Register listing.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) COMMerce	
XX A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.		
□В	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.		
□ C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.	Period of Significance c.1895 - 1946	
□ D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.		
Crite (Mark	ria Considerations n/a "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	Significant Dates n/a	
Prop	erty is:		
□ A	owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.		
□В	removed from its original location.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) n/a	
□ C	a birthplace or grave.		
□ D	a cemetery.	Cultural Affiliationn/a	
	a reconstructed building, object, or structure.		
□ F	a commemorative property.		
□ G	less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.	Architect/Builder n/a	
(Expla	ative Statement of Significance ain the significance of the property on one or more continuation shee	ts.)	
	lajor Bibliographical References		
	iography the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on	one or more continuation sheets.)	
Prev	ious documentation on file (NPS): n/a	Primary location of additional data:	
	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	 ⚠ State Historic Preservation Office □ Other State agency □ Federal agency □ Local government □ University □ Other Name of repository: 	
	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #		

Webster	Pari	sh,	LA
County and State	;		

10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property @ 10 acres	
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	
1 1 5 4 7 2 9 8 0 3 6 0 8 6 0 0 Zone Easting Northing 2 1 5 4 7 3 3 8 0 3 6 0 8 6 8 0	3 1 5 4 7 3 3 6 0 8 4 6 0 Zone Easting Northing 4 1 5 4 7 2 9 6 0 3 6 0 8 3 2 0 See continuation sheet
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)	
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)	
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title National Register Staff	
organization Division of Historic Preservation	date February 1996
street & number P. 0. Box 44247	telephone504-342-8160
city or townBaton Rouge	state LA zip code 70804
Additional Documentation	`
Submit the following items with the completed form:	
Continuation Sheets	
Maps	
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the prop	perty's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having I	arge acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs	
Representative black and white photographs of the prop	erty.
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)	
Property Owner	
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)	
namemultiple	
street & number	telephone
city or town	state zip code
Parameter Daduction Act Chalamant. This information is being collected for an	elications to the National Designates of Historic Disease to service

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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The Downtown Minden Historic District is locally significant in the area of commerce because of its important role as **the** center of commerce for southern Webster Parish. Downtown Minden continued to be a major provider of goods and services into the modern era when downtowns were supplanted by strip development. The period of significance spans from c.1895, the date of the oldest commercial building, to 1946, the fifty year cutoff.

Minden is among North Louisiana's oldest towns, having been founded in 1836. The town was incorporated in 1850 and a government organized. When Webster Parish was created in 1871, Minden was designated the parish seat. As was true of towns across the state, the coming of the railroad in the late-nineteenth century ushered in a period of growth and prosperity. The north-south Louisiana and Northwest Railroad (soon to be the Louisiana and Arkansas) arrived in Minden in 1898, and the population of the town doubled by 1905 to 3,000. By the late 1920s the population was around 7,000. The economy during the district's period of significance was based on various industrial concerns, including lumber mills, a cotton oil company, a cotton compress, and by the 1920s, a Coca-Cola Bottling plant and oil-related businesses. The Louisiana and Arkansas Railroad was also a major employer, with its large repair shop complex located south of downtown.

Minden quite naturally emerged as a commercial center for not only its citizens but those living in nearby hamlets and on farms. Webster Parish was and is a decidedly rural parish, with the parish seat of Minden being the largest town. In fact, it is the only town of any size in the southern half of the parish. The smaller town of Springfield, located near the Arkansas border some 30-40 miles away, was the principal commercial center for northern Webster Parish.

Sanborn maps document that the bustling parish seat of Minden offered a myriad of goods and services, in fact, about anything a person could need. The buildings surviving today represent a good cross-section of commerce in the town. The ubiquitous general mercantile store, as found in various extant buildings, carried everything from clothing, to furniture, to patent medicines, to buggy harnesses. Other surviving buildings housed drugstores, hardware stores, a restaurant, a hotel, a cobbler, a barber, banks, a wholesale grocery warehouse, a hardware warehouse, and automobile-related services such as a car dealership, a garage, an auto supply, and a gas station. The latter are particularly important because seldom does an old downtown in Louisiana retain this number of early automobile age resources. One is fortunate to find one auto related building in an old downtown, much less four, including a cottage style gas station.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps, Minden, 1885, 1892, 1898, 1903, 1909, 1914, 1923, 1927.
- Historic photos of various downtown buildings, copies in National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.
- Webster Parish, Louisiana: The Homeseeker's Paradise! The Eden of the New South!! The Promised Land of Peace and Plenty!!!!! This 1905 promotional tract contained useful photos.
- Webster Parish Planning Board, Webster Parish Resources and Facilities, 1944, also useful for photo purposes.

Webster Parish Centennial, 1871 - 1971, no publisher, useful for historic photos.

Boundary Description: See attached sketch map.

Justification: Boundaries were chosen to encompass but not exceed the concentration of historic commercial buildings in downtown Minden. The district is surrounded by less than fifty year old buildings. The very few (less than 5) historic commercial buildings outside the boundaries are in areas dominated by non-contributing buildings.

