



185

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name:
other names/site number: Hernando Courthouse Square District

2. Location

street & number: roughly bounded by Caffey, West Commerce, Losher & Hwy. 51 not for publication N/A
city or town: Hernando vicinity N/A
state: Mississippi code MS county Desoto code 033 zip code: 39632

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Kenneth H. P. Paul JAN. 23, 1998
Signature of certifying official Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register,
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the
National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined not eligible for the
National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain):

Edson H. Beall 3-5-98
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private
Public-local

Number of Resources within Property:
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Category of Property: District

Contributing	Noncontributing	
13	5	buildings
1		sites
1		structures
		objects
15	5	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: COMMERCE/Business
COMMERCE/Specialty Store
COMMERCE/Warehouse
GOVERNMENT/Post Office
GOVERNMENT/Courthouse
RECREATION AND CULTURE/Theater
LANDSCAPE/Plaza
TRANSPORTATION/Road-related

Current Functions: COMMERCE/Business
COMERCE/Professional
COMMERCE/Financial Institution
COMMERCE/Specialty Store
COMMERCE/Warehouse
GOVERNMENT/Courthouse
LANDSCAPE/Plaza
TRANSPORTATION/Road-related
WORK IN PROGRESS
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification(s): LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS
OTHER

Materials:
foundation: brick
roof: asphalt, tin, wood shingles
walls: brick, stucco
other: steel, plywood, sandstone, concrete, glass

Narrative Description:

See Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1892-1947

Significant Dates

1892

Criteria Considerations:

Property is:

- ___ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ___ B removed from its original location.
- ___ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ___ D a cemetery.
- ___ E 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.

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation(s)

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance:

See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ___ previously listed in the National Register
- ___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ___ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- ___ Other State agency
- ___ Federal agency
- X Local government
- ___ University
- X Other

Name of repository: Hernando Public Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approximately ten acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
	A	16/225960/3857440		C	16/226220/3857180	
	B	16/226220/3857440		D	16/225960/3857200	

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jennifer Opager, Harrison Lea Stamm, Deborah Wise

organization: MDAH

date: July 17, 1997

street & number: PO BOX 571

telephone: (601) 359-6940

city or town: Jackson

state: MS

zip code: 39202

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner(s)

name: Multiple

street & number:

telephone:

city or town:

state:

zip code:

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section: 7 Page: 1 Hernando Courthouse Square District
Hernando, DeSoto County

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The proposed Hernando Courthouse Square District is composed of eighteen buildings and one outbuilding which face the historic courthouse square of Hernando on Highway 51 South, Loshier, Caffey and West Commerce Streets. The district's character is commercial.

The buildings of Hernando's Courthouse Square district were constructed over a period beginning around 1890 and ending in 1940. The most significant building in the district is the DeSoto County Courthouse. A Neoclassical building, it was built in 1940 (Inventory #8). There are other significant commercial buildings, including the buildings at 2564 Highway 51 South (Inventory # 11), 330 West Commerce (Inventory # 7A), and 315 Loshier Street (Inventory # 15). Hernando Courthouse Square is an excellent example of the central courthouse square town plan, which appears in several Mississippi towns.

An inventory of the proposed district follows. Thirteen of the buildings and one outbuilding contained within the district contribute to its architectural and historical character; their contributing character is identified with the notation C. Also contributing to the district are the landscape features and the courthouse square plan itself. Five of the buildings in the district do not contribute to its architectural or historic character. These non-contributing buildings are denoted NC. Buildings are arranged in alphanumeric order by street name and address.

Inventory

**01 NC 2519 Caffey Street
ca. 1971**

One-story, three-bay building that features an attached, pedimented, entrance porch with fluted Ionic columns and is slightly recessed from the main block. A four-light window is flanked by all-glass doors with transoms featuring aluminum frames. Concrete quoins are present on the corners.

**02 C 2521 Caffey Street
ca. 1945**

One-story, brick storefront characterized by its centrally placed six-panel door with half-light sidelights and two-light transom. The entrance is flanked with plate-glass windows in wooden frames. A pent metal awning runs across the building, and a circa 1950 signboard reads "Taylor Realty." The building is topped with a parapet roof with concrete cap.

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**03 C 2525-2529 Caffey Street
ca. 1927**

One-story, double-lot commercial building that features two identical storefronts. Each storefront features an all-glass door with sidelights and transoms flanked by two plate-glass windows with two-light transoms all set into wooden frames. The building is topped with a flat wooden awning and parapet roof. The upper level of 2529 Caffey Street features a slightly recessed stucco nameplate reading "Brewer."

**04 C 300 West Commerce Street
ca. 1915**

Two-story, three-bay, brick building that rests on a brick foundation. The first story features a centrally placed, paired, glass-and-panel replacement door with cast-iron columns and flanked with plate-glass showcase windows set into their historic frames and retaining their wooden bulkheads. Topping the three bays are two-light transoms divided with cast-iron decorative columns and brackets. The second story features two recessed nameplates with segmental-arched vent grills and is topped with a cornice of brick dentils.

**05 NC 316 West Commerce Street
ca. 1980**

Two-story, four-bay stucco building that is topped with a false shed roof and metal cresting. The first story features a centrally placed set of paired glass-and-panel doors flanked with round-arched, fixed-glass windows with stained-glass keystone accents. The second story features a centrally located grouping of round-arched, fixed-glass windows with stained-glass keystones and beveled-glass decorative fanlights. All are set into a false rectangular frame. These two windows are flanked by paired, one-light doors with wooden frames featuring decorative surrounds with false entablatures. The facade has a two-story metal porch.

**06 NC 324 West Commerce Street
ca. 1915, alterations ca.**

Two-story, four-bay brick commercial building that rests on a brick foundation. The storefront has been re-bricked but retains its historic composition of a recessed set of paired, one-light-and-panel doors flanked with plate-glass showcase windows. The building's integrity has been altered with the addition of a steeply pitched wooden shingled roof that divides the first and second stories. The second story features four segmental-arched windows that have been covered with plywood; however, they retain their sandstone sills. The building is topped with a cornice of brick dentils.

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**07 A C 330 West Commerce Street
ca. 1925**

Double-lot, brick commercial building featuring two identical, historic storefronts. Each storefront features a set of recessed, paired, one-light-and-panel doors flanked with plate-glass showcase windows that have upper level, painted glass signboards. Two groupings of five-light, four-light, and five-light transoms run across the door and showcase windows, all retaining their historic wooden frames. The building has a nameplate with flower shaped tie rods and is topped with a stepped parapet roof and cap.

**B C 330 West Commerce Street
Outbuilding
ca. 1925**

One story, metal, gabled-roof outbuilding.

**08 C DeSoto County Courthouse
d. 1940-1941**

The courthouse is a Neo-classical brick building with sprawling floor plan. The original part of the building was built in 1940 with additions in 1983 and 1985. The original plan was originally a T-shape with the additional wings added on the northwest and southwest corners. The courthouse has a concrete base. The center of the east facade consists of six sandstone columns supporting a pediment with oversized dentils and an elliptical window. The cupola with multi-paned windows sits at the apex of the roof of the central portion of the building. The entry is a double light-and-panel-door. The interior space of the building radiates from a central rotunda, with the cupola above. On the walls of the second floor balcony are murals depicting the explorations of Hernando DeSoto. These murals were painted in 1903 by Newton Alonzo Wells and were originally in the Old Gayoso Hotel in Memphis. The courthouse is individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

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Hernando Courthouse Square District
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**09 C 2540 Highway 51
d. 1940**

Two-story, brick, nine-by-nine bay building with a two-story, one-bay chamfered entrance. The first story has two bays of replacement multi-light windows with brick surrounds. The second bay has an attached pent door followed by a side entrance with a six-panel door topped with transom. A decorative concrete stringcourse divides the first and second stories along with an attached metal awning. The nine bays of the second story windows are replacement one-over-one double-hung sashes set into brick surrounds. The second story is topped with another concrete stringcourse, then a row of corner-blocks with organic motifs and recessed brick patternwork. A plain entablature tops the building. The chamfered entrance is the most ornate portion of the building and features the main entrance of a six-panel replacement door with five-light sidelights and one-light transom. The second-story bay features a one-over-one double-hung sash window with reed column surrounds and topped with a brick inlay medallion with broken arch decorations and the inscription "1940."

**10 C 2550-2560 Highway 51
ca. 1926**

This is a one-story, double-lot, brick building with two separate storefronts. The first storefront (2550) is characterized by its centrally located recessed storefront. The storefront consists of paired one-light doors with transoms and flanked with plate-glass showcase windows all retaining their historic wood frames, wood panels, and cast-iron columns. The second storefront (2560) features a two-light-and-panel door with enclosed transom. This door is attached to a set of paired one-light-and-panel door, with transom. All are set into their historic wood frames. A row of transoms runs across the entire building but has been covered with a tar shingled awning. The building's upper level has three decorative, recessed nameplates each with a central vent with cast-iron grill. A row of brick dentils tops the building.

**11 C 2564 Highway 51
ca. 1892, ca. 1909 addition, renovation ca. 1970**

Two-story, two-bay gable-front commercial building that rests on a brick foundation and features a common bond. In circa 1909 a one-story, one-room side elevation was added to the building. The first-story storefront currently features a multi-light fixed sash window flanked by six-panel doors with one-light sidelights. Decorative wood panels run across the storefront. The second story features two four-over-four double-hung sash windows set into brick segmental-arched hood molds. A circular vent is symmetrically placed on the building's facade. The one-story side addition features a slightly recessed one-light-and-panel door in a wooden surround and flanked with decorative shutters.

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**12 C 291 Losher Street
ca. 1920**

This is a one-story, three-bay brick commercial building that rests on a brick foundation. The storefront features a centrally located two-light-and-two-panel replacement door topped with enclosed transom. Flanking the entrance are twelve-over-four double-hung sash windows with wooden frames and flanked with decorative shutters. The building is topped with a recessed nameplate with two rectangular grills and crowned by a row of brick dentils and plain entablature.

**13 C 295 Losher Street
ca. 1915**

One-story, three-bay brick commercial building that rests on a brick foundation. The storefront features recessed paired one-light-and-panel doors flanked by plate-glass showcase windows. A continuous row of six-light transoms tops the storefront. A modern tar shingle awning has been added but does not distract from the building. The upper level features two slightly recessed brick nameplates with decorative segmental-arched grills and topped with a row of dentils.

**14 C 301 Losher Street
ca. 1909**

One-story, three-bay brick commercial building that rests on a brick foundation. The storefront features paired recessed two-light-and-panel doors topped with a circular stained-glass window with clock. The sides of the showcase windows mirror the stained-glass windows in a smaller version. The entrance is flanked by four-light showcase windows with a double row of two-light transoms. The bays are divided with cast-iron columns. The upper story of the building has a brick nameplate.

**15 C 315 Losher Street
ca. 1915**

Two-story, two-bay brick commercial building with a slightly hipped tar shingled roof. The first story features a centrally placed plate-glass replacement door with sidelights and transoms all placed in aluminum frames inside the existing historic wooden frames. This door is flanked by plate-glass showcase windows with aluminum frames. The first and second stories are divided with an awning that runs from 315, 321, and 325 Losher Street. The second story features two fixed sash replacement windows set into brick frames and topped with a decorative segmental-arched brick lintel. A brick wall has been added to the western side of the building enclosing a historic alley and currently connects 315 and 321 Losher Street with a plate-glass door and single sidelight set into an aluminum frame.

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**16 C 321-325 Losher Street
ca. 1915, renovated ca. 1940**

A double-lot, one-story commercial building with two identical storefronts. Each storefront is characterized by three bays highlighted with a centrally placed plate-glass door with transom flanked by plate-glass windows all set into historic steel frames. The upper level of the building features a wooden awning and six centrally placed grill vents.

**17 NC 331 Losher Street
ca. 1920, re-bricked ca. 1970, renovated d. 1997**

This building is currently under construction. It is a brick, one-story commercial building that rests on a brick foundation. The building is unadorned and seems to feature two bays that are currently undergoing remodeling.

**18 NC 333 Losher Street
ca. 1940, re-bricked ca. 1970, renovated d. 1997**

This building is currently under construction. This is a double-lot, one-story commercial building with two storefronts currently undergoing renovations. The eastern storefront is characterized by a centrally placed entrance flanked with window openings. An entrance awning is currently being constructed. The upper level of this storefront retains its historic brickwork and features a row of decorative vertical bricks. The western storefront has been re-bricked and the current construction seems to be creating two plate-glass window openings.

**19 C Courthouse Square Landscape
ca. 1870**

This is a designed central courthouse square using the four-block square plan. Symmetrical on all four sides, this square's focus is the courthouse. Commercial buildings are concentrated on the outlying sides of the square. The square itself is laid out with sidewalks, plantings, and oak trees creating a park-like setting for the community.

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Hernando Courthouse Square District
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The area around the Courthouse in Hernando, located in DeSoto County, is locally significant under Criterion C for its architecture and Criterion A in the area of community planning and development because it represents the early twentieth-century development of the town of Hernando. It has been the seat of government of DeSoto County since 1836 and is a good representation of the "central courthouse square" town plan which is also seen in several other Mississippi County seats. Hernando is locally notable as the best concentration of early twentieth-century commercial architecture in the county. While the town of Hernando was founded in 1836, the period of significance for this district is 1892-1947 because many of the original commercial buildings were frame structures which burned over the years.

DeSoto County was formed in 1836 from land ceded by the Chickasaw. The town of Hernando, originally named Jefferson, was also founded in 1836. There is some speculation that the town may have originated as an Indian trading post, and therefore predates the forming of the county.¹ However, there is record of the donation, by Edward Orne, of 40 acres to be used as the county seat. In 1836, this land was laid out with 172 lots surrounding a public square.²

Transportation in Hernando developed steadily. In 1839, the United States established a mail route from Holly Springs to Hernando. In 1852, the state chartered a company to build a plank road from Panola to Memphis, going through Hernando. While this was originally called the Panola DeSoto Plank Road, it was later changed to the Memphis and Hernando Plank Road. In 1856, the first train ran through Hernando, on the Mississippi & Tennessee Railroad, which linked Memphis to Grenada, Mississippi. There was even a steamboat route developing in nearby Helena, Arkansas. All of this progress would come to a grinding halt with the start of the Civil War.³

¹ DeSoto County, "Formation," WPA Records.

² Mildred Scott, "19th Century Hernando," Genealogical Society of DeSoto County.

³ Ibid.

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In 1863, Hernando was occupied by the Union troops. Many of the town's original buildings were destroyed in this time period. Hernando would be overrun many times by the Union troops before the war was over. But by 1867, Hernando was rebuilding.⁴

The commercial center of town was originally located off the courthouse square, along East Center Street. The first street to develop as a commercial entity was Westbrook Street. Then the north and south sides of the courthouse square seemed to develop simultaneously. By 1903, all four streets around the courthouse had commercial buildings on them.⁵ The original intent of the courthouse square design had finally been fulfilled.

Hernando was primarily an agriculturally based town. The major crops grown in the surrounding area were cotton, corn, wheat, tobacco and cattle. Because of this fact, and the fact that the transportation boom never picked up in Hernando again, the town did not have a big building boom. No real industry that developed in Hernando. Rather, most residents became truck farmers because of the proximity of Memphis.⁶

It might be this fact that has allowed Hernando to save much of the early twentieth-century historic resources of its downtown. The courthouse square is still laid out almost the same as it would have been in 1836. Hernando has managed to overcome the hardships of occupation, county division, and the loss of many of its citizens to yellow fever, in order to become an enduring small town. The architecture of its downtown exemplifies this attitude.

The most prominent building in the Courthouse Square District is the DeSoto County Courthouse built in 1940. This building, designated as a Mississippi Landmark in 1985, is a good example of the continuation of Classical Revival taste in public buildings into the 1940's, but it does reflect the shift away from the Neo-classical to the eclectic "Colonial" interpretation of Classicism that was widespread in Mississippi in the 1930's. The DeSoto County Courthouse is the most notable public building and the main architectural landmark of Hernando. There are several notable commercial

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Sanborn maps, 1892, 1903, 1909, 1915, 1925

⁶ DeSoto County, "Agriculture," WPA Records.

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buildings, including the two-story building at 2564 Highway 51 South, the oldest structure in the district.

Slow but steady growth as a commercial center continued into the early years of the twentieth-century, resulting in the gradual replacement of commercial buildings. The oldest surviving commercial buildings in the community, located around the Courthouse Square, dates to the 1890's. There was never a particular boom period in the town's growth, until after World War II, so the commercial area remained small, centered around the Courthouse Square.

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Major Bibliographical References

DeSoto County, Mississippi. "Agriculture," WPA Records. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson.

DeSoto County, Mississippi. "Formation," WPA Records. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson.

Sanborn maps, 1892, 1903, 1909, 1915, 1925

Scott, Mildred M. "19th Century Hernando." Genealogical Society of Hernando.

GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Hernando Courthouse Square District is an irregularly shaped district with boundaries as delineated on the accompanying DeSoto County Tax Maps 386-1300.4 and 386-1300.1 (scale 1"=100').

Boundary Description:

The district includes a group of contiguous commercial and public buildings that represent the historical and architectural development of Hernando during the period of significance, 1892-1940.

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1. Hernando Courthouse Square District
2. Hernando, DeSoto County, MS
3. Deborah G. Wise
4. July 1997
5. Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Photo 1	View of 2521 Caffey Street
Photo 2	View of 2525-2529 Caffey Street
Photo 3	View of 300 West Commerce Street
Photo 4	View of 330 West Commerce Street
Photo 5	View of 330 West Commerce Street outbuilding
Photo 6	View of DeSoto County Courthouse
Photo 7	DeSoto County Courthouse interior
Photo 8	View of 2540 Highway 51 South
Photo 9	View of 2550-2560 Highway 51 South
Photo 10	View of 2564 Highway 51 South
Photo 11	View of 291 Losher Street
Photo 12	View of 295 Losher Street
Photo 13	View of 301 Losher Street
Photo 14	View of 315 Losher Street
Photo 15	View of 321-325 Losher Street

HERNANDO COURTHOUSE SQUARE DISTRICT LEGEND

- NON-CONTRIBUTING
- CONTRIBUTING
- DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

