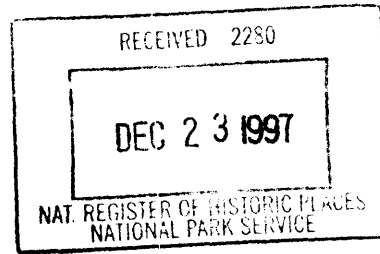


1661

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: St. Helena Historic Commercial District

other name/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number: Main Street and adjacent streets between Adams and Spring Streets

not for publication: N/A

city/town: St. Helena

vicinity: N/A

state: CA county: Napa

code: 055

zip code: 94574

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: district

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>34</u>	<u>13</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>35</u>	<u>13</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 2

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. See continuation sheet.

 Signature of certifying official Date 12/12/97

 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.

 Signature of commenting or other official Date

 State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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 1/23/98

 Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: COMMERCE
COMMERCE
COMMERCE

Sub: specialty store
general store
business

Current: COMMERCE
COMMERCE
COMMERCE

Sub: specialty store
restaurant
business

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late Victorian: Italianate
No Style

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation concrete roof tin
walls stone other
stucco

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: at the local level.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1870-1947

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Schopfer, A.
Corlett, William H.
Turton, Luther M.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other - Specify Repository: City Hall

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: approximately 8.3 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing			Zone Easting Northing		
A	<u>10</u>	<u>546380</u>	<u>4261740</u>	B	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.

The boundary is shown as the gray line on the boundary map included in the additional documentation below.

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes the historic resources and their immediate setting.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Donald S. Napoli

Organization: _____ Date: October 10, 1997

Street & Number: 1614 26th Street Telephone: (916) 455-4541

City or Town: Sacramento State: CA ZIP: 95816

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #1
Napa Co., CA

DESCRIPTION

The St. Helena Historic Commercial District gives a strong sense of the city's downtown just after the end of World War II. The district is especially notable for its collection of native stone commercial buildings, although it contains examples of other construction materials as well. The district's 48 elements, all but one of which are buildings, were constructed during the past 130 years. They are arrayed along Main Street and adjacent streets in downtown St. Helena. Nearly all are in retail use, though some have auxiliary uses as well. The district includes 35 elements that contribute to its historic character and 13 that do not contribute. The integrity of the district is high due to the concentration of resources, the size and importance of the contributors, and the inconspicuousness of non-contributors.

The district centers on Main Street, which extends northwest and southeast for two blocks. All but eight of the district's buildings front the street. Except for one on the alley behind Main, the remaining buildings face either a parallel street, Railroad Avenue, on the east or one of three crossing streets. The buildings are not set back but open onto concrete sidewalks that line the streets. The terrain of the district is flat. The southwest side of Main appears as one expanse of commercial buildings because a narrow walkway rather than an intersection separates the blocks. Trees line the street. They share the sidewalk with a set of three-globed cast-iron street lamps that reputedly came from the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915. The district has a few modern light standards as well. Signage is subdued, with nearly all signs resting against walls rather than projecting from them. All interiors have been remodeled somewhat over the years. The date, type, and extent of these changes varies from building to building.

Similarity of function helps to define the visual character of the district. Retailing provides the main use of nearly all the buildings in the district. About four-fifths are used exclusively to provide goods and services to retail customers. A few have only office space, and the rest mix retail use on the ground floor with offices, apartments, or other uses above. The design of the buildings attracts customers on foot. Except for a gas station and the alley building, all extend to their lot lines on each side and front the sidewalk directly with no intervening setbacks. Some buildings share common walls. Most

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #2
Napa Co., CA

have only one story, and none reaches above two. Generally, roof lines are not conspicuous, because roofs are flat or hidden by parapets. Most of the storefronts contain recessed entrances and flanking display windows. Two of the buildings along Railroad Avenue originally had industrial uses and were later converted to offices.

Within the overall uniformity of the district, the individual buildings vary in several respects. Many types of walls and wall finishes are visible: stone, brick, stucco, terra cotta, corrugated metal, and board. Stucco is probably the most popular, especially on non-contributors. Detailing on contributing buildings varies from profuse to minimal. The most common motifs have classical inspiration and include bracketed cornices, dentil and belt courses, and pilasters. Parapets run from plain and rectangular to stepped and ornamented.

The district provides few examples of architectural styles. Some of the buildings with classical ornamentation allow categorization as Italianate, Colonial Revival, and Second Renaissance Revival. The gas station exemplifies the Streamline Moderne on a very small scale. Most buildings are without stylistic aspirations. They represent their periods of construction or remodeling through detailing, especially window treatment.

Stone construction characterizes many of the district's buildings. Fifteen use cut native trachytic tuff for some or all of their walls. With rare exceptions the stones making up a wall have different sizes and shapes. They seldom form regular courses and often are not aligned at all. The stones are usually pitch-faced rather than smooth. Some buildings combine masonry techniques, using standard bricks for the walls on the street elevations and stone for the other walls. Stone is not used as a veneer.

The district changed its appearance between 1870 and 1947. Small and flimsily constructed commercial buildings gave way to larger and more substantial replacements. By 1947 about two-thirds of the buildings present in 1870 had been replaced. In its early days the district also contained houses. They had largely disappeared by 1880, although a few remained into the twentieth century, usually with small commercial buildings in the front yards. The only alteration to the street pattern came in the late 1880s when Adams

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #3
Napa Co., CA

Street was extended from Main Street to Railroad Avenue. The streets were originally dirt and lined by wooden plank sidewalks interspersed with hitching posts. Road paving and concrete sidewalks arrived around 1910. The introduction of electricity at about the same time led to the installation of electric street lamps. It had its main impact, however, in commercial signage, which in the 1920s and 1930s turned to displays of bulbs and neon tubing. The district had no landscaping to obscure the signs. Another change involved the construction and replacement of ancillary buildings. Storage sheds and small dwellings behind the buildings on Main Street came and went over the years. About a half-dozen remained in 1947.

The district has also changed in the past fifty years, assuming a more regular and somewhat calmer appearance. Ancillary buildings have disappeared, although many buildings have additions in the rear. The removal of storage units behind the buildings on the southwest side of Main Street led to the opening of an alley from Adams to Spring Street. The alley was later paved. Additions to the district included a few high light standards (ca. 1965) and rows of trees along both sides of Main Street (ca. 1980). Commercial signs, which in 1947 sometimes projected from buildings and used neon lights, have been replaced by signs placed on wall surfaces or the fronts of awnings. Formal serif typefaces predominate, indicating that businesses no longer need to shout to attract customers. The signs reflect a changed ambience in the district, for St. Helena has become the major tourist center of the Napa Valley's wine district. Residents still shop there for some items, but most commercial establishments appeal largely to visitors.

Many buildings have undergone alterations over the years. First-story porches, which once covered the sidewalks on Main Street, have disappeared. Many original storefronts have been modernized. Often this change has involved the use of metal framed windows instead of the original wood and the covering or remodeling of clerestory bands. In addition, many parapet walls have received stucco coatings. About 20 percent of the buildings, notably those in the 1200-block of Main Street, have lost all or nearly all of their historic detailing. The installation of canvas awnings, a popular treatment of the past twenty years, is a conspicuous but not destructive alteration that has affected around half the district's buildings.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #4
Napa Co., CA

The district's contributors retain historic materials and design elements above the storefront. Usually these are original, though some represent alterations made before 1948. Contributors are larger and more conspicuous than non-contributors. Of the district's eleven two-story buildings, ten contribute to its historic character. Non-contributors are nearly always old buildings that have suffered severe alterations. Only three structures in the district date from after World War II. By the same token, nearly all the buildings within the district in 1947 remain today. The major losses are a retail building on Main Street and two automobile facilities on Railroad Avenue.

The district has major contributors distributed throughout. At the south edge of the district are the William Tell Hotel and Saloon, listed in the National Register, and the Galleron Building, which features a classical entrance portico with stone columns. Up the block is the Hunt Building, which displays the use of stone for ornamentation as well as walls. Across the street is the Hotel St. Helena, the district's largest wood-frame building. Further north is the Richie Block, the district's most elaborately detailed building, which features a central tower and a second-story balcony that connects a trio of box windows. It faces the carefully composed classical facade of the St. Helena Star Building. To the north is the Italianate Oddfellows' Hall, which like the Richie Block uses brick on the front elevation and stone for the side and rear walls. On the corner of Main and Adams the brick Kettlewell Building with its high stepped parapet marks the edge of the district. Across the street is a rare mid-century resource, a tiny prefabricated gas station. On Railroad Avenue are two large stone buildings that originally had industrial uses.

Areas of distinctly different character bound the district. To the south a scattering of recent commercial buildings continues on Main Street for several blocks. Oak Street on the west has a collection of detached buildings in a variety of uses. Among them is the Carnegie Library, already listed in the National Register. The eastern boundary is clearly marked by Railroad Avenue and the tracks beyond. On the north is another mix of buildings leading to a residential area. The boundaries follow (with one exception) contiguous parcel lines and encompass nearly all of St. Helena's pre-1948 commercial buildings.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #5
Napa Co., CA

The district retains a high degree of integrity. Contributing to the feeling of a traditional downtown are the arrangement of the buildings, which are immediately contiguous and front the sidewalk, the predominance of retail uses, the uniformity of scale, and the retention of original design and fabric, especially above the storefronts. Despite substantial remodeling to several buildings, the district has maintained its historic character.

Detailed descriptions of the elements in the district follow.

1104 -12 Adams Street
Contributing Building 1906

This building has two stories and a flat parapet. It is constructed of randomly coursed trachytic tuff that is mostly pitch-faced. Some expanses on the first story, however, are more carefully dressed. Windows have stone lintels and prominent sills. Doorways are randomly spaced along the street elevations. Most of them have been added as the building took on new functions over the years. Some second story windows have recently been replaced. The building, which first served as a feed mill and warehouse, contributes to the historic character of the district.

1105 Adams Street
Non-contributing Building ca. 1985

This single-story building has a pyramidal roof with shed-roofed extensions on all elevations. Dormers with semi-circular roofs face the street elevations. The building has entries on the east and west and a set of large-paned windows on the north. It was constructed too recently to contribute to the historic character of the district.

1225 -29 Adams Street
Contributing Building ca. 1920

This single-story utilitarian building has a front-facing gable roof. The roof and walls are constructed of corrugated metal sheets. The front elevation has a vehicle opening on the left and a smaller doorway on the right. Each is flanked by a window, which like windows on other elevations, is unglazed and covered with wire screen. The building has

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #6
Napa Co., CA

a concrete floor and foundation. The building appears substantially unaltered and contributes to the historic character of the district.

1200 Main Street

Contributing Building 1903

This Colonial Revival building has one story and a side-facing truncated gable roof, the front eave of which drops to form an awning. Two front-facing hipped dormers extend from the roof. The side walls are of randomly coursed pitch-faced native stone. Quoins mark the edges of the symmetrical front elevation. Pressed steel sides the top half of the elevation. Below are display windows. Centered on the elevation is a portico with a full pediment and four stone columns, two of which are engaged. The building was designed by Luther M. Turton of Napa and long held a furniture and undertaking business. Alterations have occurred to the facade, including the replacement of some display windows, the addition of a second entrance, and the redesign of the awning. The building retains its major architectural features, however. It contributes to the historic character of the district and provides a strong entrance to the district on the southeast.

1201 Main Street

Contributing Building 1890

This single-story building has brick walls on the street elevations (southeast and northeast) and stone walls on the rear and northwest. The front elevation has a stepped parapet, bracketed cornice, clerestory band with round-arched windows, and recessed entry with flanking display windows. Wheel-and-spoke designs appear between the brackets, in panels below the cornice, and on pilasters on each edge of the facade. The elevation is a bit wider than the facade of the building on the right but is otherwise nearly identical to it. The two buildings were constructed at different times in the 1890s and probably attained their current unified appearance around 1910, when a dry goods and clothing business used both buildings. The building has not been substantially changed since then, although it now has fabric awnings. It contributes to the historic character of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #7
Napa Co., CA

1205 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1899

This single-story building has brick walls on the street elevation, stone walls on the rear and northwest, and shares a common stone wall with the building on the southeast. The front elevation has a stepped parapet, bracketed cornice, clerestory band with round-arched windows, and recessed entry with flanking display windows. Wheel-and-spoke designs appear between the brackets, in panels below the cornice, and on pilasters on each edge of the facade. The elevation is a bit narrower than the facade of the building on the left but is otherwise nearly identical to it. The two buildings were constructed at different times in the 1890s and probably attained their current unified appearance around 1910, when a dry goods and clothing business used both buildings. The building appears to have been unaltered since, although a new sign now projects from the facade beneath the cornice. The building contributes to the historic character of the district.

1210 Main Street

Non-contributing Building ca. 1955

This single-story building has one story and cinder block walls. The front elevation is topped by a stepped parapet and finished in stucco. The storefront has doors on each side and display windows between. The building was constructed too recently to contribute to the historic character of the district.

1214 -18 Main Street

Non-contributing Building 1875

This two-story building has a stucco finish and a flat parapet with oversized dentils. Centered below is a panel with the date "1875." Beneath it three tall windows with raised hoods and sills are evenly spaced across the facade. Atop the storefront is a flat guyed awning. Below are two pairs of display windows and a central doorway. The facade treatment dates from around 1955. The building itself is much older, having housed a general store and second-story lodgings as early as 1886. Because the alterations were made so recently, the building does not contribute to the historic character of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #8
Napa Co., CA

1219 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1875 / ca. 1905

This wide, single-story building has a nearly symmetrical front elevation that features a flat parapet and stucco finish. Slightly raised pilasters mark the edges and center of the elevation. Between them are two storefronts, each with a clerestory band, recessed entrance, and display windows of structural glass. The storefront on the left has glass-paneled double doors. The other has two doorways sheltered by a flat-roofed wood marquee. The facade treatment dates from around 1940. It masks the composition of the building, which has two parts. The newer and larger section is on the northwest and made of stone. The other is wood frame. The building has housed a variety of retail businesses. Except for the marquee, it has not substantially changed its appearance in over fifty years and contributes to the historic character of the district.

1222 -26 Main Street

Non-contributing Building ca. 1875

This single-story stuccoed building has two separate units that have been presenting an integrated appearance for at least fifty years. The building has a flat parapet and a plain parapet wall with a circular hole in the middle. The storefronts have adjacent entries, each flanked by a single display window. The present facade may date from around 1965. The building, which housed a variety of retail businesses, no longer displays its historic appearance and does not contribute to the character of the district.

1223 Main Street

Non-contributing Building ca. 1875

This small single-story building has a stepped parapet with a curvilinear center section. Fluted pilasters frame the storefront, which has a fabric awning, centered recessed entry, and two flanking display windows, one of which is angled, on each side. The facade treatment appears to date from the 1980s. The building has housed some sort of retail establishment for over a century. The date of its latest remodeling is too recent to allow the building to contribute to the historic character of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #9
Napa Co., CA

1225 -27 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1875

This building has one story and a flat parapet. As it has for over a century, it contains two storefronts of unequal width. The narrower, on the left, has a display window next to a paneled door topped by transom containing an air-conditioner. The other storefront has a belt course atop a clerestory band. Display windows flank a recessed glass-paneled double door. An embossed fretwork design decorates the metal window frames and suggests a date of origin around 1910. The parapet wall may recently have been refinished, but otherwise the building has not changed much in the last fifty years or more. It contributes to the historic character of the district.

1228 Main Street

Non-contributing Building ca. 1875

This single-story building has a flat parapet, plain parapet wall, and stucco surface. The storefront contains a recessed entrance and flanking display windows. A fabric awning, which extends across the building on the left, tops the storefront. The facade treatment, which links the two buildings, appears to date from the past ten years. It barely hints at the historic appearance of the building, which housed a saloon in the 1880s and 1890s and a number of other businesses since. The building is too altered to contribute to the historic character of the district.

1230 -32 Main Street

Non-contributing Building ca. 1875

This building has two stories and a high hipped roof. The stuccoed front elevation features a parapet with an o-center curved section, beneath which is a pair of narrow windows. A fabric awning stretches across the front elevation and the building on the right. The storefront below has a recessed entrances flanked by display windows. The front wall extends to the left to provide an entrance for a courtyard in the rear. The facade treatment, which joins the building with the one on the right, appears to be quite recent. It obscures the historic appearance of the building, which contained a bakery for over a half-century. Because of the alterations, the building does not contribute to the historic character of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #10
Napa Co., CA

1231 Main Street

Contributing Building 1875

This single-story brick building has a flat parapet with a banded cornice. Centered beneath is a panel stating "1875." A lintel-like hood tops the storefront, which contains a clerestory band, recessed entry, and flanking display windows. An embossed fretwork design decorates the metal window frames, suggesting that they were installed around 1910. The facade received a coating of stucco at some point. The stucco was removed around 1970. The building, an early example of brick construction, was built for C. E. Davis, a dentist, and housed a variety of retail businesses over the years. The building probably appears much as it did in around 1910 and contributes to the historic character of the district.

1234 -40 Main Street

Non-contributing Building ca. 1908

This stuccoed single-story building has a flat parapet that wraps around a few feet on the secondary street elevation. The parapet wall is unadorned. Below it the storefront is symmetrical, with a recessed entrance flanked by pairs of display windows. The facade treatment appears to date from the past decade. The building, which had two storefronts through most of this century, is too altered to contribute to the historic character of the district.

1235 -39 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1880

This Italianate brick building has two stories. It is topped by a flat parapet with bracketed cornice and banded frieze. Three tall round-arched windows are spaced across the second story of the front elevation. All have wood shutters; two retain brick hoods. A wide band tops the first story, which has two entries. The one on the right, which is flanked by display windows, serves the ground-floor retail space, has glass-paneled double doors with transoms above. The one on the left leads to the former lodge hall above. The building has been used by a variety of businesses over the years. The storefront dates from around 1990, but no second-story alterations are apparent. The building contributes to the historic character of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #11
Napa Co., CA

1269 -99 Main Street

Contributing Building 1911

This single-story building is constructed of concrete block on the facade and pitch-faced native stone elsewhere. The front elevation has a flat parapet that is stepped at each end. Beneath it are a bracketed cornice and a band of egg-and-dart molding. Below a modern fabric awning are two storefronts, each with recessed glass-paneled doors and flanking display windows. The awning masks a band of tall clerestory windows, most with small panes of clouded glass. An embossed fretwork design decorates the metal frames of the clerestory windows and suggests an installation date around 1910. The storefront appears to date from about 1990; the concrete block facade is even newer. The northwest wall faces a narrow sidewalk and is visible for its entire length. The building housed a dry goods and clothing store after it was constructed at the turn of the century. Despite changes to the facade, the building retains much original fabric. The stone side wall reinforces its link to the past. The building contributes to the historic character of the district.

1302 -08 Main Street

Contributing Building 1891

This two-story Italianate building is constructed of native pitch-faced trachytic tuff mostly laid in irregular courses. A flat parapet extends about four feet from the top of the building. Beneath it is a dentil course. On the second story of the symmetrical front elevation are two Palladian windows. Beneath each is an awninged storefront with recessed entry and flanking display windows. The storefront on the left has a clerestory band and metal display window frames that are embossed in a fretwork pattern and were probably installed about 1910. The treatment of the right storefront appears to date from around 1960. Unadorned pilasters appear in the center and at each edge of the elevation. The other street elevation on the southeast has a set of one-over-one windows on the second story and a doorway, arched openings, and another storefront on the first. Pilasters extend through the parapet. Except for changes to one storefront on the Main Street elevation, no other post-1947 alterations are apparent. The building was constructed for local banker Daniel O. Hunt by J. C. Mixon and Son with stone work done by Pithie and Bickett. It housed a drugstore for over a half-century. In brass letters on the adjoining sidewalk are "G. A. R.," the initials of an early druggist, and two sets

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #12
Napa Co., CA

of "Wonderful Drug Store," the name of his business. The building strongly contributes to the historic character of the district.

1305 -09 Main Street

Contributing Building 1881

This wide two-story wood frame building exemplifies the Italianate style. It has a stucco finish on the front elevation and horizontal board siding elsewhere. A low, o-center pediment tops the facade. Beneath it are a bracketed cornice and a paneled frieze. On the second story bracketed hoods top irregularly spaced four-over-four windows. Beneath them is a narrow belt course. The storefronts below, which have recessed entries and flanking multi-paned display windows, are replacements from around 1985. The southeast elevation, which is completely visible because of a narrow fronting sidewalk, has a set of unhooded four-over-four windows on the second story. The hotel, put up for Swen Alstrom after his nearby resort burned, was the last large wood building constructed downtown. The stucco, which was applied when the front porch was removed in 1925, is a less serious alteration than the installation of the existing storefronts. In addition, some of the windows are replacements. Despite the changes, the building contributes to the historic character of the district.

1310 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1875

This single-story building has a stepped parapet and a plain parapet wall with a stucco finish. The ground floor has two doorways. The one on the left is recessed and flanked by a set of single-pane windows. The other apparently leads to the second story of the building next door. The parapet, which lines up with the one on the building on the left, is not original. The storefront appears to date from around 1940. The building, which housed a saloon in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, retains enough of its 1947 appearance to contribute to the historic character of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #13
Napa Co., CA

1313 -17 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1875

This single-story building has a flat parapet with classical ornamentation. The cornice is banded and supported by curved brackets. The frieze contains oblong panels. The parapet wall has a stucco finish, which may date to the 1920s. Below it a belt course and fabric awning top the storefronts. The one on the right has two centered glass-paneled doors and flanking display windows. Embossed fretwork decorates the metal window frames. The other, which appears to be a ca. 1970 modification, has an offset doorway and angled display windows. The building contained a third storefront at the turn of the century. Despite some modifications, it contributes to the historic character of the district.

1312 -14 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1920

This single-story building has a stepped parapet and a plain parapet wall with a stucco finish. On the first story are two awninged storefronts. The one on the right has a glass-paneled door and flanking display windows framed in soapstone. The other storefront has a door on the right and soapstone siding and a band of windows on the left. The building's appearance reflects a ca. 1947 remodeling. The building contributes to the historic character of the district.

1316 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1920

This single-story building has a flat parapet and a plain parapet wall with vertical board siding and a small signboard. Below is a fabric awning that extends halfway across the building on the right. The storefront has on the left a recessed glass-paneled door topped by a transom. On the right is a set of narrow wood-sided windows with artificial stone below. The windows appear to date from around 1947. The building contributes to the historic character of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #14
Napa Co., CA

1320 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1915

This two-story building has a stepped parapet and a plain parapet wall with a stucco finish. A small 1940-style sign with "Keller Brothers Meats" extends from the wall. Below is clerestory band with covered windows. A fabric awning tops the storefront, which has a recessed entry on the left and display windows to the right. A pressed tin ceiling in the interior is easily visible from the street. The building, which has been a grocery store for many years, appears unaltered and contributes to the historic character of the district.

1321 Main Street

Non-contributing Building ca. 1920

This single-story building, which originally had a classical design, has been remodeled in a post-modern mode that refers to or perhaps parodies earlier times. The facade has a flat parapet, vertical board siding, and three tall arches with stone voussoirs. Behind the arches is an anodized aluminum storefront. The building does not contribute to the historic character of the district.

1325 Main Street

Non-contributing Building ca. 1925

This narrow single-story building has a pedimented parapet and plain parapet wall. The entrance is centered and topped by a transom. On each side is a display window with several panes and heavy wood architraves. The facade treatment appears to date from after 1980. The building is too altered to contribute to the historic character of the district.

1327 -37 Main Street

Contributing Building 1892

This two-story building has a facade of brick and other walls of uncoursed pitch-faced stone. A classical parapet with banded cornice, curved brackets, and paneled frieze tops the front elevation. From its center rises the mansard roof of a short tower capped by a belvedere. A nameplate with "Richie Block 1892" extends from the roof. On the wall below is the Masonic symbol. Further down is the center of three box windows that are joined by a balcony with bent wood openings, lattice spandrels, and a low balustrade.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #15
Napa Co., CA

Segmentally arched window pairs look out on the balcony. Atop the flanking box windows are hipped roofs and bracketed cornices. The ground floor has three storefronts separated by pilasters. The wide center storefront, which is recessed behind a pair of columns, has a set of anodized aluminum display windows that were installed around 1975. The adjoining storefronts have also been altered. The building has housed a Masonic hall for over a century. Its striking combination of features above the storefronts make it a strong contributor to the historic character of the district.

1328 Main Street

Contributing Building 1900

This two-story building is a small-scale example of the Second Renaissance Revival. It is constructed of irregularly coursed pitch-faced stone. A formal entablature has a banded cornice, dentil course, plain frieze, and banded architrave. Ashlar pilasters frame the symmetrical front elevation. Between them are three openings with semi-circular arches resting on pilasters with raised capitals. The central opening contains a door and one-over-one windows. The other openings have single-paned windows topped by unglazed transoms that are now masked by fabric awnings. The building, which was designed by William H. Corlett of Napa and constructed by R. H. Pithie and S. N. Harrison, has housed the local newspaper, the St. Helena Star, for almost a century. It strongly contributes to the historic character of the district.

1332-42 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1925

This wide single-story building has a plain parapet wall topped by a raised cornice with a dentil course. A narrow belt course caps the storefronts, three of which are covered by fabric awnings. The storefronts contain recessed entries and flanking display windows. The remaining section of the first-floor facade contains only a double door beneath a triangular marquee. The marquee was installed recently. Otherwise, the entire facade treatment may represent a ca. 1947 remodeling that left only the cornice to reflect the original appearance. The building contributes to the historic character of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #16
Napa Co., CA

1339 -41 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1875

This single-story building has a flat parapet with a dentil course and a plain parapet wall. Atop the storefront is a clerestory band of clouded glass. Below are two adjoining recessed glass-paneled doors with transoms above. On each side are display windows atop walls faced in ceramic tile. The building does not appear to have been altered since the installation of the storefront around 1940. It contributes to the historic character of the district.

1343 Main Street

Non-contributing Building ca. 1875

This single-story building has a stucco finish and a plain parapet wall topped by a dentiled cornice. Centered in a signboard below is a clock. Beneath it is a recessed entrance with a glass-paneled double door and transom. The flanking display windows have projecting cornices supported by oversize consoles and columns. The post-modern storefront remodeling (ca. 1990) prevents the building, which has been in retail use for over a century, from contributing to the historic character of the district.

1346 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1875

This single-story building has a gable roof not entirely masked by a flat classically inspired parapet featuring a banded cornice and dentil course. A fabric awning obscures much of the stuccoed parapet wall and all of a clerestory band. The storefront has a centered entry with transom atop the door and flanking display windows. An embossed fretwork design in the metal window frames suggests an installation date around 1910. The clearest recent alteration is a ca. 1960 front door. The building, which housed a saloon through much of its early life, contributes to the historic character of the district.

1347 Main Street

Contributing Building 1890

This single-story building has a stucco finish that covers the original trachytic tuff. It shares a parapet and entablature with the building on its right. The parapet on this half

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #17
Napa Co., CA

has three sections, the center of which has a segmental arch and keystone. The cornice and architrave are plain bands. Four curved brackets, almost evenly distributed across the facade, mark the frieze. Narrow ashlar pilasters appear at each edge of the front elevation. The remainder of the facade, including the stucco coat and arched storefront, reflects the results of a seismic retrofit completed in the past few years. The storefront has a recessed double door and flanking display windows. Because the parapet and architrave remain intact, the building contributes to the historic character of the district.

1350 -54 Main Street

Contributing Building 1885

This two-story Italianate building has a brick facade and side and rear walls of randomly coursed stone. The front elevation is symmetrical. A small centered pediment with a sunburst design interrupts an otherwise flat parapet. Beneath it are a banded cornice supported by curved brackets and an ornamented frieze. Evenly spaced across the facade are seven segmentally arched windows. Below a banded belt course are two storefronts separated by an arched entry. The entry is topped by a balcony supported by consoles and sided by Corinthian columns. The storefronts on each side are not identical, but both have clerestory bands, recessed central entries, a flanking display windows. Pilasters divide the bays. The building, designed by San Francisco architect A. Schopfer, has housed retail businesses and the Oddfellows' hall since its construction over a century ago. The storefronts have not seriously changed since 1947, but the second-story windows may be replacements. In addition, the facade appears to have been sandblasted. Even so, the building strongly contributes to the historic character of the district.

1351 Main Street

Contributing Building 1890

This single-story building shares a parapet and entablature with the building on its left. The parapet on this half has three sections, the center of which has a shallow pediment topped by a finial. The cornice is cut in the center by an extension of the parapet above, which has a plate proclaiming "1890." Four curved brackets, almost evenly distributed across the facade, mark the frieze. Parapet and frieze are constructed of random coursed pitch-faced stone. The storefront below has two tall display windows and an entry on the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #18
Napa Co., CA

right. Despite changes to the storefront, the building contributes to the historic character of the district.

1355 -59 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1940

This single-story building has a flat parapet topped with narrow terra cotta bands. Four terra cotta pilasters with convex grooves divide the front elevation into three bays. Each has a wall of large terra cotta tiles, a terra cotta belt course, clerestory windows (covered on the right), and an awninged storefront with recessed entry, flanking display windows, and a low wall of small terra cotta tiles. Not all the storefront fabric dates from 1947 or before, but the building contributes to the historic character of the district.

1361 Main Street

Non-contributing Building 1973

This single-story building has a flat parapet and a brick facade. Three tall openings lead to a office front that has wood-sided doors and windows with Victorian-style architraves. Above the center opening raised letters proclaim "Beard Building MCMLXXIII." The building was constructed too recently to contribute to the historic character of the district.

1367 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1888

This single-story building has a brick facade topped by a flat, decorated parapet. Below it are a slightly raised cornice and a dentil course with ornamental floral panels between the dentils. Pilasters with similar decoration appear on each edge of the front elevation. Between them above the storefront is a covered clerestory band. Below a flat marquee tops a ca. 1980 storefront with angled display windows and off-center entrance. The building, which housed a general merchandise store for many years, retains enough historic fabric to contribute to the historic character of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #19
Napa Co., CA

1370 Main Street

Non-contributing Building ca. 1925

This long single-story building has a stucco finish and a front-facing gable roof with overhanging eaves supported by exposed purlins. A flat marquee extends across the front elevation. Below it tall display windows flank a recessed central entrance. The storefront (ca. 1955) does not reflect the building's historic use as a garage and automobile showroom. Because of this major alteration, the building does not contribute to the historic character of the district.

1371 -75 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1884

This is a single-story building of native stone that has been dressed and placed in broken courses on the facade. Topping the front elevation is a flat parapet with a banded cornice, dentil course, and a console and finial at each end. The building's two storefronts are similar and appear to date from about 1980. They are divided into narrow vertical panels that contain windows, vents, and plain walls. The building, which has had a variety of retail uses over the years, is unusual in its use of dressed rather than pitch-faced stone. The stonework and elaborate parapet make this otherwise altered building a contributor to the historic character of the district.

1379 -81 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1885

This brick Italianate building has two stories and a stepped parapet. Atop the symmetrical front elevation is an entablature with a banded cornice, a frieze with a course of diamond ornament, and curved brackets at each end. Tall second-story windows appear in segmentally arched openings. A narrow belt course tops the storefront. In its current remodeling, the storefront has a recessed entrance flanked by arched windows of anodized aluminum (ca. 1985). The northwest elevation has second-story windows similar to those on the front and a continuation of the belt course. Toward the front is a tall bricked-in doorway with a semi-circular arch. Joseph Kettlewell had the building constructed to house his hardware business on the first floor and offices above. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #20
Napa Co., CA

building clearly marks the northwest edge of the district and contributes to its historic character.

1380 Main Street

Contributing Building ca. 1937

This small, single-story prefabricated gas station is a modest example of Streamline design. It has a square plan that is truncated in front. The other angles face the parcel lines. A banded parapet tops the building. A banded belt course extends in front to form the fascia for a flat-roofed canopy that covers the doorway and gas pumps. A low curved signboard tops the roof, which is supported by plain poles. On each side are vehicle openings. Rear walls have wide windows below the belt course. The pumps date to about 1975. A free-standing Union 76 sign is around the same age. The building, a rare reminder of California's automobile culture before World War II, remains substantially unaltered and contributes to the historic character of the district.

1310 Oak Avenue

Contributing Building ca. 1905

This single-story building has a shed roof and low parapets on all but the southwest elevation. The construction material is native pitch-faced stone that is randomly coursed or uncoursed. The main entrance is recessed on the right side of the northwest elevation. Another doorway is on the southwest. The building, which is unornamented, originally served as a storage facility. The doors are probably recent. Nevertheless, the building remains essentially unaltered and contributes to the historic character of the district.

1321 -27 Railroad Avenue

Contributing Building ca. 1875

This stuccoed building has two sections that form an L-shaped plan. The section on the southeast has two stories and a front-facing gable roof with overhanging eaves supported by an ornamented collar beam and kingpost. Beneath the front gable are two multi-paned doors leading to small wrought-iron balconies. Windows on the first floor are square-shaped. Those on the south elevation are narrower. The northwestern section has a side-facing gable roof and overhanging eaves. A recessed entry is on the right of the front

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #21
Napa Co., CA

elevation. Windows like those elsewhere on the first story appear to the left. The two-story section has housed a dining establishment for over a century. It may have received its stucco finish and new windows when the lower section was added around 1925. The building has not been substantially altered since then and contributes to the historic character of the district.

1339 -45 Railroad Avenue
Contributing Building 1884

This two-story building is constructed of native irregularly coursed pitch-faced stone. It has a side-facing truncated gable roof and no ornamentation. On the front elevation all window and door openings have semi-circular arches and stone voussoirs. On the second story they form a set of nearly identical casement windows with transoms and prominent sills. Below are three larger but similar windows and three doorways of different sizes. The building's historic uses were industrial, first housing a foundry and later a glove factory. It has not been substantially altered since 1947. The building is individually listed in the National Register as the Taylor, Duckworth and Company Foundry Building. It contributes to the historic character of the district.

1226 -40 Spring Street
Contributing Building ca. 1875

This two-story building has three gable-roofed sections, each masked by a parapet with raised cornice. The parapet on the right has one step. The siding is horizontal board except on the southwestern part of first story, where the wall is composed of native stone. Second story windows are four-over-four. Below them on the front elevation is a shed-roofed wood awning supported by chamfered posts. It shelters three storefronts of differing designs. Two have large two-over-two windows. The building has been altered since its listing in the National Register as the William Tell Saloon and Hotel. As part of a certified rehabilitation, the front awning and one front door were added. The separate parapets and first-story board siding replaced earlier fabric. A large motel-like addition was also placed on the rear. Despite the changes, the building contributes to the historic character of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #22
Napa Co., CA

Main Street

Contributing Object ca. 1915

This resource is a set of thirteen identical cast metal street lights. Each has a classically inspired pedestal with a tall dado and rounded cornice. The column above emulates the Roman Doric, with a short base, tapering fluted shaft, and short capital. Three lamp globes top the column. The largest rests directly above; the other two hang from arms that project from opposite sides. The street lights were installed in 1916, reputedly after being salvaged from the Pan-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. They contribute to the historic character of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #23
Napa Co., CA

SIGNIFICANCE

The St. Helena Historic Commercial District represents the development of commercial architecture in the city from around 1870 to after the end of the Second World War. The district is important in the development of commercial architecture in Napa County because it illustrates building design from throughout the period. It accomplishes this largely through the presentation of architectural details on individual buildings and the relationship of the buildings to one another and to potential customers. The district is also important because it includes a large group of buildings constructed of native trachytic tuff, a building material that was widely used in the county. Although the district has changed its appearance somewhat since 1947, it retains a high degree of architectural integrity and maintains its associations to the historic period.

Commercial construction proceeded in four phases. The earliest coincided with the settling of the town in the 1850s. J. H. Still, who owned much of what became downtown St. Helena, put up the first store in 1853. To promote the new town he offered free lots to other merchants. As white settlement moved up the Napa Valley, a small but growing group of businessmen saw that St. Helena had excellent long-term prospects as a commercial center. They took Still up on his offer and began constructing buildings for retail goods and services. The first may have been John Kilter, who put up two stores at the corner of Main and Spring Streets in 1855. The town's first hotel opened the same year. By 1860 St. Helena had two general stores, a saddlery, a blacksmith shop, and a shoe repair business. The early commercial buildings were not built to last, however. With milled lumber rare and expensive and expert builders unavailable, merchants could only put up buildings that were crudely constructed of rough redwood. None of these buildings remains today.

In the next twenty years the district expanded along Main Street. It also took on a neater and more prosperous appearance as skillfully constructed buildings replaced earlier structures. This phase of commercial construction marked the arrival of one- and two-story buildings framed and sided with milled redwood. They usually had gable roofs, flat parapets, and porches that covered the sidewalks in front. Storefronts featured clerestory

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #24
Napa Co., CA

bands, recessed entrances, and flanking display windows. The expansion and improvement of the district reflected the growth of local agriculture, which was spurred by the arrival of the railroad from Napa in 1868. Local ranches, whether they specialized in grain, orchard crops, or dairying, used St. Helena as a shipping point and shopping center. By 1880 the town had a wide array of retail businesses and had established itself as the county's second most important commercial center after Napa.

Despite its prosperity the downtown district offered little of architectural distinction. It was developing a coherence of appearance, however, which was to last to the present day. Local builders followed patterns used throughout California for small scale commercial structures. Buildings reflected the dominant architectural style of the period, the Italianate, in classical details like dentiled cornices and window hoods rather than in the overall designs. Whether replacements or fill-ins, the new buildings fit into the district by maintaining a consistent block face of commercial buildings. Like existing structures, they opened directly on the sidewalk and abutted neighboring buildings on each side. New buildings from later years maintained this characteristic. Over a dozen buildings from this period remain in the district, although all have undergone stuccoing, storefront changes, or other modifications. The William Tell Hotel and Saloon, which is already listed in the National Register, mostly clearly illustrates the type of buildings constructed in this period.

The use of native trachytic tuff defined the third phase of commercial construction, which lasted from the mid-1880s to after the turn of the century. Tuff is a porous rock formed by consolidation of volcanic ash, dust, and other matter. Trachytic tuff has an internal structure in which hairlike feldspar crystals appear in nearly parallel rows. Buildings primarily constructed of stones from this rock seldom appeared outside Napa and Sonoma Counties. There it was used by the growing viticultural industry to build insulated facilities for the storage of wine. Trachytic tuff was more readily available than any other suitable building material. Continuing demand led to the opening of quarries throughout the Napa Valley. The stone maintained popularity not only because it was more fire-resistant and visually imposing than wood but because it became less expensive as well.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #25
Napa Co., CA

The appearance of stones of trachytic tuff within the district coincided with the development of local viticulture and the establishment of major wineries near St. Helena. Wine-making made the community more prosperous, the business district more profitable, and local developers more likely to invest in larger and more substantial buildings. Builders used the stone not only in St. Helena but throughout the Napa Valley. They constructed wineries of this material and also used it for schools, churches, houses, and other sort of buildings. Napa, in particular, had important downtown commercial buildings of this stone.

Starting around 1884, stonemasons in St. Helena transferred their skills from wineries to the commercial district. They used stones from a half-dozen local quarries, where the rock was embedded, appeared as outcrops, or occurred in boulders. Drilling rather than blasting was probably the typical process of extraction. To keep costs low the quarries usually made no attempt to square the sides of the stones or smoothly dress their surfaces. For the same reason masons seldom laid them in straight courses. The trachytic tuff did not have a uniform appearance but varied from quarry to quarry. The Hunt Building, for example, used stone from the Davis Quarry two miles north of town. This quarry featured tuff with a hard surface, reddish color, and conspicuous flow structure. Pithie and Burkett appear to have been the most active stonemasons in the district. Their firm constructed the Hunt Building, the Richie Block, and probably other buildings.

Buildings from the period varied widely in design. Some, for example the two stone buildings on Railroad Avenue (1884 and 1906), were purely functional and without ornament. Others, for example the small buildings at 1347 and 1351 Main (1890), sported period details, usually of classical derivation, in cornice or window treatment. Since St. Helena had no resident architects, unpretentious structures of this sort were probably designed by their builders. A few buildings in the district were designed by architects and showed clear stylistic references. The Oddfellows' Hall (1885) of A. Schopfer of San Francisco was a straightforward (if late) example of the Italianate style which employed the standard array of classical details. A similar Italianate across the street, the Kettlewell Building (ca. 1885), may also have been architect-designed, though the name of the designer is unknown. The Richie Block (1892), designed by the Corlett Brothers of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #26
Napa Co., CA

Napa, displayed a more up-to-date concoction of Victorian elements derived from Italianate, Second Empire, and Stick styles. Although the side and rear walls were stone, the front elevation used standard brick, presumably to give it a more refined look. When William H. Corlett took on the St. Helena Star Building in 1900, he used stonework to enhance the authenticity of classical references. The building exemplifies on a small scale the Second Renaissance Revival, which was popular throughout the country at the time. The district's remaining architect-designed building, 1200 Main Street (1903) by Luther M. Turton of Napa, was an example of the Colonial Revival, another typical style of the period.

Although the new stone buildings were usually larger than wood structures nearby, they did not change the pedestrian orientation of the district. Like their predecessors, the new buildings featured recessed entries, sometimes more than one per building, and flanking display windows. Main Street continued to be characterized by an uninterrupted expanse of adjacent storefronts.

Two trends marked the final phase of construction in the district, which extended from around 1910 to 1947. One was the continued replacement of earlier buildings with more modern structures. About a dozen new buildings appeared in the district. The design was not much different from that of earlier buildings. Standard features included parapets, clerestory bands, recessed entries, and display windows. With one exception standard bricks were used in construction; the use of native stone disappeared. The new buildings, all of one story, lacked architectural pretension. The functional designs typified small-scale commercial construction found all across the country during the period. They fit seamlessly into the district. The small prefabricated gas station at Main and Adams (ca. 1937) provided an exception in two ways: It exemplified a style from the period, the Streamline Moderne, and it was set back from the street. The second trend was facade modernization. The most typical changes involved the removal of front porches, the stuccoing of parapets, and the replacement of storefront windows. An early (ca. 1910) alteration to several storefronts was the installation of metal window frames embossed with a fretwork design. The comparative lack of construction in this period reflected the stagnancy of the local economy, hit first by prohibition and then the Great Depression.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #27
Napa Co., CA

The district's period of significance includes the time during which the developments discussed above occurred and from which resources remain. The opening date of 1870, an approximation, represents the construction of the district's earliest remaining buildings. The closing date, fifty years ago in 1947, indicates that architectural developments of the historic period, especially storefront remodeling, have continued to the present time but have no exceptional significance. The district reflects the period through a large collection of contributing buildings that retain their architectural integrity and were constructed between 1870 and 1947.

The district retains historic and architectural cohesiveness in several ways. First, it contains a high proportion of contributing buildings, with nearly two-thirds of the total falling in this category. Second, as a group, contributors are larger and more conspicuous than non-contributors. Only one two-story building falls in the latter category, for example. Further, the contributors on Main Street, although constructed over 75 or 80 years, share two important characteristics. They extend to the parcel lines in the front and on the sides, and they have storefronts with recessed entrances and flanking display windows. None has more than two stories. In addition, because many non-contributors share these attributes, the district retains an overall coherence that is greater than might be expected through an analysis of its components. Although the southern border has eroded somewhat, district boundaries are much as they were in 1947, especially in the sense that the historic commercial area is clearly bordered by newer buildings and other uses. Also, the street pattern has remained unchanged since around 1890, although the alley west of Main was straightened after 1947. The street lamps from Pan-Pacific Exposition of 1915 add a pleasing touch.

Some aspects of the district intrude upon its historic character. A number of buildings, although they still fit downtown, have lost so much of their original detailing that they no longer convey their historic associations. In addition, several contributors have undergone storefront modifications out of keeping with their original designs. The ambience has also changed somewhat since 1947 with the arrival of trendier businesses (restaurants, upscale shops, antique stores) that appeal to "wine country" visitors. Despite the changes, the district has retained the feeling of a pedestrian-oriented retail center.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #28
Napa Co., CA

The architectural importance of the district rests on the orientation of the buildings to one another and to the street, the visual associations to the entire period of significance, and the use of a popular native stone, trachytic tuff. Other commercial areas do not display these characteristics. Much of the county's retail business takes place in malls and strip developments. These places have no historic associations. The downtown area of Napa, which is larger and older than St. Helena's, has lost much of its historic character in the past fifty years. New construction and parking lots have disrupted the original layout of the district. A few stone buildings remain, but they are not as numerous or concentrated as those in St. Helena. The commercial area of Calistoga, while dating from the nineteenth century, has weaker associations to the period of significance because it has fewer buildings and fewer clear stylistic examples. It also contains fewer stone buildings. Thus when compared to other properties of the same type, the St. Helena Historic Commercial District emerges as significant in the context of the development of commercial architecture in Napa County. The district maintains its association with the period of significance and retains its essential appearance from 50 years ago.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #29
Napa Co., CA

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Additional Documentation
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #30
Napa Co., CA

PHOTOGRAPHS

Views of the photographs are shown on the attached photo key map.

Photographer: Donald S. Napoli

Date of Photographs: March 1997

Location of original negatives: City Hall, 1480 Main Street, St. Helena, CA 94574

Photo No. 1

Main Street, northeast side of 1300-block, from south

Photo No. 2

Main Street, southwest side of 1300-block, from east

Photo No. 3

Main Street, northeast side of 1300-block, from west

Photo No. 4

Main Street, southwest side of 1300-block, from north

Photo No. 5

Railroad Avenue, west side of 1300-block, from southeast

Photo No. 6

1339-45 Railroad Avenue, from northeast

Photo No. 7

1201 and 1205 Main Street, from east

Photo No. 8

1200 Main Street, from west

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Additional Documentation
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #31
Napa Co., CA

Photo No. 9
1214-18 Main Street, from south

Photo No. 10
1305-09 Main Street, from east

Photo No. 11
1327 Main Street and adjacent buildings, from east

Photo No. 12
1328 Main Street, from south

Photo No. 13
1332-42 Main Street, from south

Photo No. 14
1355-59 and 1361 Main Street, from east

Photo No. 15
1380 Main Street, from south

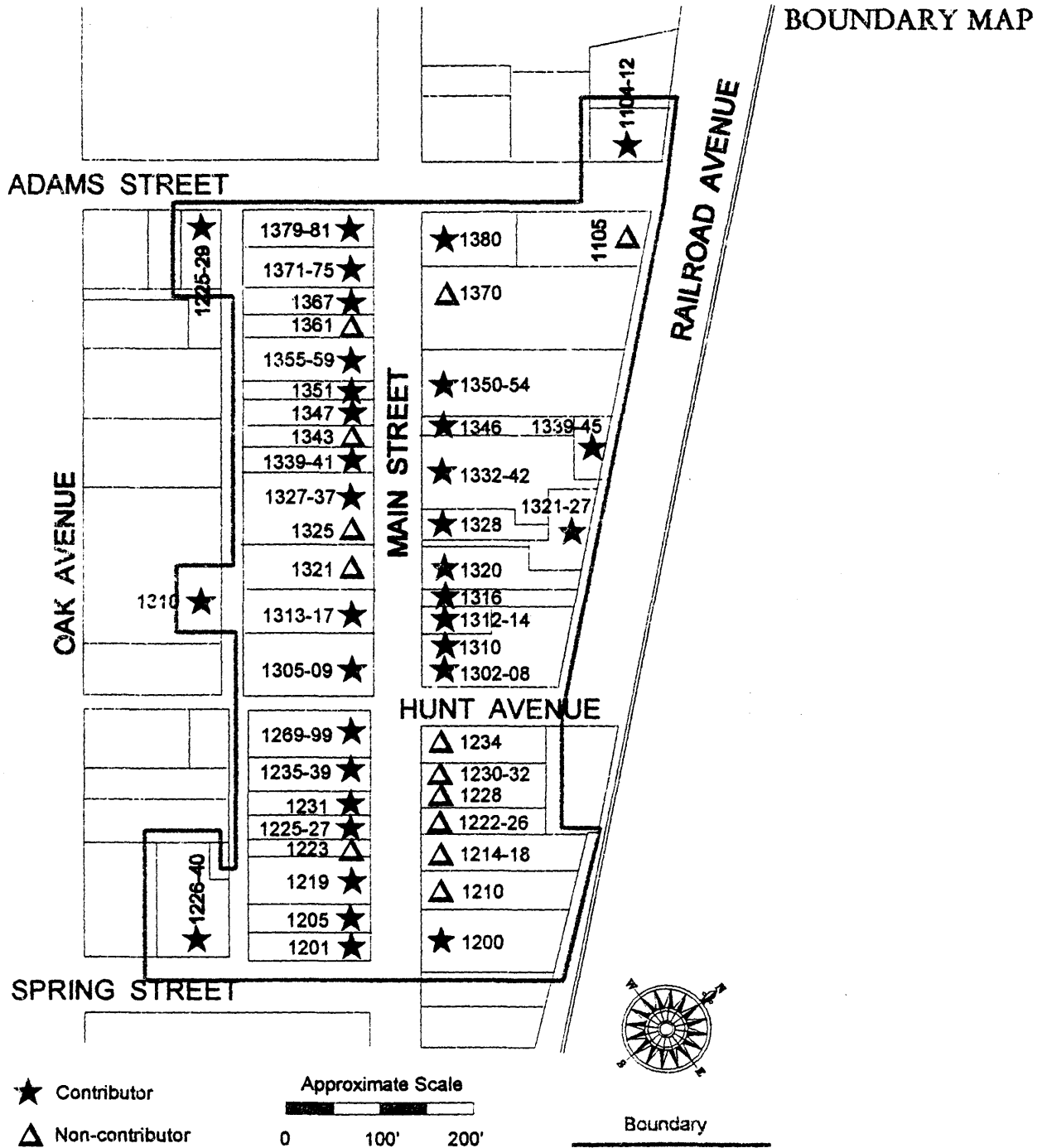
Photo No. 16
1379-81 Main Street, from north

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Additional Documentation
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #32
Napa Co., CA



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Additional Documentation
St. Helena Historic Commercial District

Page #33
Napa Co., CA

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