

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Aberdeen Commercial Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1-523 S. Main Street N/A not for publication
city, town Aberdeen N/A vicinity
state South Dakota code SD county Brown code 013 zip code 57401

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>49</u>	<u>33</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>49</u>	<u>33</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 3

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] _____ Date 4/12/88
Signature of certifying official
South Dakota SHPO
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. Beth Boland 5/23/88

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Social/ Meeting Hall

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Social/ Meeting Hall

Domestic/ Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century

American Movements (Commercial Style)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

(Classical Revival)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete block

walls brick

roof asphalt

other concrete, limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

General Characteristics. The Aberdeen Commercial Historic District extends six full blocks on either side of the predominant commercial street in town, Main Street. All eighty-two buildings were built for commercial use, with the exception of the recent brick Sherman Apartments and the 1899 Masonic Temple. As befits a railroad town, the linear district emanates from the source of Aberdeen's establishment, the Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad tracks, then continues south to Sixth Avenue (Highway 12). Commercial use in Aberdeen is, and always has been, centered on this stretch of Main Street. (Lower concentrations exist along parallel commercial streets.) Aberdeen, the third largest city in South Dakota, began in the 1880s and remains the regional commercial center for the northeast part of the state. The six-block section of Main Street comprising the Aberdeen Commercial Historic District is the heart of this regional hub. Its buildings are a cohesive grouping of one- to three-story brick stores (with some important exceptions) having a uniform facade line. Brick in shades of tan and brown, decorative geometric patterns, and similar scale and use all combine to present a distinct commercial district on Main Street.

Unifying Features. Construction dates range from 1884, just three years after Aberdeen's establishment, to 1983. Forty of the eighty-two buildings were built between 1908 and 1929, and many of these examples display similar features and materials.

Among the most unifying features is the use of brick, generally in shades of tan and brown. Twenty-six of the forty 1908-29 buildings are in these shades, as are half (forty-nine) of all the buildings. Brick colors range from white glazed brick (#207)¹ through the tans and browns to reddish browns and red. Even recent examples (#402, #401) continue the use of tan brick. In addition, buildings faced with smooth stone or stucco total ten and act as a foil to the many brick facades. Stucco is generally not original. The two stone-faced buildings are the

¹Address, site and map number for a Main Street building.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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A majority of the owners have consented to listing of the Aberdeen Commercial Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. The following owners, however, have returned notarized objection forms to the SHPO:

Richard E. Jensen
Aberdeen C.L.U
Box 1157
Aberdeen, SD 57402-1157

Mary A. Brown
1403 S. Dakota St.
Aberdeen, SD 57401

Daniel D. Jones
115-1151/2 S. Main St.
Aberdeen, SD 57401

The original objection forms accompany the nomination documents.

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First National Bank Building (#201) and the Dakota Farmer/Elks Building (#517) (photo #6).

Much of the Main Street detail is simplified geometric ornamentation typical of the early twentieth century modern commercial styles. The detail is effectively executed in brick or contrasting lighter colored materials. Important examples (McDiarmid & Slater Building, #422-424, Combs Chocolate Shop, #305-307) combine two brick colors to good effect to highlight geometric patterns (photos #2, #7). Patterns such as diapering (including the cornice of the six-story Alonzo Ward Hotel, #104), bricks laid upright and at an angle, corbelling (#422-424, #502-506), diamond shapes, squares, and rectangles in combination adorn the simple smooth facades of the storefronts (photos #2, #7, #11). Other contrasting trim less often used consists of rough pink granite, terra cotta (photo #1) (some in Sullivan-esque plant motifs), and glazed green brick.

Although geometric patterns are the dominant design feature of the Main Street storefronts, there are also notable examples featuring Classical Revival detail, including the J.B. Moore Furniture Company (#6), Kresge Block (#302) (photo #3), Citizens Bank Building (#202-204) (photo #4), Champlin Block (#315 & 317), and Dakota Farmer/Elks Building (#517) (photo #6). The Building & Loan Association Block (#206) (shown in photo #4) is an unusual commercial example of the Italian Villa Style. First National Bank (#201) (photo #11) is executed in the Neoclassical Style. Other stylistic influences include the Romanesque Revival (Northwestern National Bank, #21-23) (photo #9) and the Georgian Revival (Montgomery Wards Building, #314). Moorish Revival motifs are found on both the five-story Capitol Building (#413-417) (photo #10) and the Masonic Temple (#503).

At least fourteen examples exhibit corbelling at the cornice or between stories, making it a prominent feature on Main Street. Notable two-story examples (#422-424, 502-506) (photo #2) feature a prominent curving corbelled cornice (possibly the work of local architect John K. Van Ess) that is particularly attractive. Other recurring design features include continuous stone sills and windows recessed between simple squared pilasters. Window treatment is varied but there are good examples of Chicago School windows, brick eared window surrounds, Romanesque round arches,

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and small arcades. Coping in contrasting concrete or stone is another unifying element.

Upper facades are relatively flat, lacking protruding lintels or bays, with the exception of one oriel (W. Henry Wilson, Undertaker, #508) (photo #1) and a third story balcony (Building & Loan Association Block, #206) (photo #4). Nearly all buildings present a smooth continuous facade line, and the impression is one of block upon block of commercial enterprise. Only the Masonic Temple (#503) and the recent Sherman Apartments (#223) (photo #8) are set back from the street.

Most (eighty percent) of the eighty-two buildings are one- or two-story. Forty (evenly divided on both sides of the street) are two-story, and there are scattered three-, five-, and six-story examples. Most of the one- to three-story buildings have horizontal tops or (less often) stepped parapets. However, the Band Box (#205) has a curved parapet and the Building & Loan Association Building (#206) has a hipped roof. A number of the taller buildings (Citizens Bank Building, #202-204, Alonzo Ward Hotel, #104, Western Farm Mortgage Building, #124, Commercial Hotel, #1, Northwestern National Bank Building, #21-23, Olwin-Angell Store, #321-323) are located at corners and thus serve to anchor visually the intersections without impeding the generally smaller scale flow of the streetscape (photos #3, #10, #11).

General Condition. Forty-nine buildings--nine of them especially significant--are rated as contributing to the architectural significance of the Aberdeen Commercial Historic District. Thirty-three of the eighty-two buildings are considered noncontributing because of the amount of alteration or recent construction date. Few ground floor storefronts have escaped some type of alteration, but the degree of change has more often than not been moderate and expected for buildings on a still-thriving commercial street. A number of buildings are united by slender canopies. Perhaps the most intrusive buildings are the Farmers & Merchants Bank & Trust Company (#308) (photo #3) whose bulging white curves (reminiscent of small grain elevators) are unlike other Main Street facade treatments and the six-story brown brick Sherman Apartments (#223) (photo #8) built in 1980-81.

Recent street furniture and landscaping is suitably small-scale (photos #3, #10). Use of the color brown (wood benches, metal

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lights, and pebbly concrete) helps these modern improvements to blend with the buildings. Diagonal parking, such as was the norm in the early twentieth century, contributes to the historic appearance of the district.

Building List. Beginning with 2 and extending to 520-522, even numbered addresses are on the west side of Main Street. East side addresses begin with 1 and extend to 523. The street address is used as the identifying number in the text and also on the map. Dates of construction are primarily based upon a particularly complete set of Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps (1884-1929), Aberdeen city directories (1889-1930), and quite complete City Assessor's records. Unless noted otherwise, it is assumed that the storefront has received some sort of alteration. Especially significant buildings are termed "KEY contributing."

West Side Main Street

- 2 restaurant; 1967; fires 1952, 1966; 1-story? with wood shingle mansard; **noncontributing**
- 6 J.B. Moore Furniture Company; 1907; Moore Furniture this site since 1887; building has always been furniture store; 2-story light tan brick, raised parapet with fine Palladian window (console keystone and Corinthian pilasters); egg-and-dart and dentils adorn facade; modern storefront detracts: **contributing**
- 10 Cragin & Shepard Saloon/Colonial Theatre; 1909; saloon and/or pool hall 1909-1912, then moving picture house until at least 1924; 1-story white painted brick (light tan), diapering and other brick patterns like adjacent; **contributing**
- 12 St. James Cafe/Princess Theatre; 1910; movie house 1912-1930; 1-story off-whitish brick, diapering and other brick patterns like adjacent; **contributing**
- 14 Amdur & Premack Clothing Store; after 1917 and by 1923; 1-story brown brick with contrasting golden brick blind arcade; **contributing**
- 22-24 Hatz Block; 1904, rebuilt 1929 after fire; Golden Rule Department Store, 1904-c. 1909; 2-story painted brick (light-grey-tan) with original (1929) Chicago School windows; storefront alterations intrusive, especially since on corner: **noncontributing**
- 104 Alonzo Ward Hotel; 1928; built as and remains a hotel; replaced 1894 version that burned 1926; 6-story with tan

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- brick, diapered cornice in darker brown, simple shaft with original 6/6 windows, fine limestone detail and brick quoins at base; intact including lobby and two marquees; architect, Ellerbe & Co., on National Register; **KEY contributing** (photo #5)
- 108 commercial building; 1937; replaced c. 1895 building after fire; blends well with earlier examples: 1-story and light tan brick; note shallow angled roof; **contributing**
- 112 Strauss Clothing House; 1916; men's clothing store (est. 1887) at this site 1916-1934; 2-story medium tan brick, concrete coping; **contributing**
- 114 Voedisch Building; by 1908 (or 1899?) with facade and story apparently added after 1929; A.W. Voedisch jewelry, 1899-1915; shown as 2-story as late as 1929 Sanborn but matches adjacent in form although brick not exact match; 3-story mottled brown brick, corbelling between 2nd and 3rd stories, Chicago style windows with patterns in transom; **contributing**
- 116 Van Slyke Block; c. 1916; attorney L. T. Van Slyke offices, also office of first woman attorney in Aberdeen, Dorothy Rehfeld, L.W. Danielson's ladies' clothing or department store at least 1916-1924; matches #114: 3-story brown brick, continuous stone sills, corbelling; **contributing**
- 120 commercial building; 1958; 2-story stucco over brick; too recent and altered: **noncontributing**
- 122 commercial building; 1938; 2-story stucco over brick; recent and altered: **noncontributing**
- 124 Western Farm Mortgage Company Building (1889-1905)/Dakota Central Telephone Company (in 1905-1917)/Dakota National Bank (1917-1920s); after 1887 and by 1889; J.L.W. Zietlow pioneered telephone service in South Dakota beginning in 1886; by 1890s Aberdeen had more phones/capita than anywhere; company among largest independent (non-Bell) phone companies; 3-story stucco over brick; many alterations: stucco, arcaded windows enclosed, attractive Sullivanesque cornice probably dates from bank conversion, side full-height bay gone; **noncontributing**
- 202-204 Citizens Bank Building; 1910; reportedly first steel and concrete building in area and largest such building in state except for Capitol; dates from boom years; Citizens Trust & Savings Bank operated until 1929; prominent 6-story with corner location; unusual speckled brown and light brown brick, rusticated base and capital, original windows, classical detail at entrances (volutes, moulded pediment, egg-

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- and-dart-like motif); cornice removed; **KEY contributing** (photo #4)
- 206 Building & Loan Association Block (late 1880s-1903)/First State Savings Bank (c.1903-1930); after 1887 and by 1892; long associated with city's financial institutions; 3-story brick and stone; most distinctive early example on Main Street, unusual commercial interpretation of Italian Villa (note stone balcony with carved detail and consoles, arcade, hipped roof; marred by redwood storefront that replaced stone with stained glass and groups of small columns--lowers rating; **contributing** (photo #4)
- 208 New York Clothing House; c. 1884; hardware, photographer and tailor in 1884, then series clothing stores; by 1908 and through 1930 jewelry store; despite early 20th century facade has stone foundation, 2-story brown brick with stepped parapet and brick patterns across top; **contributing**
- 210 Kinney Shoe Store; 1962; replaced c. 1890 clothing store; 1-story with tan metal panels and deeply recessed entrance; **noncontributing**
- 212 Wolter Shoe Company (Plymouth Building in 1930); c. 1889; shoe store 1889-1910; 2-story red brick (similar to #206); stone foundation, stone coping with tiny dentils, corbelled cornice, brick patterns around bay (removed) location, nearly matches adjacent #214; altered: **noncontributing**
- 214 (First) Aberdeen National Bank Building; 1885 with 1914 alterations; first bank in town (moved operations 1912), Woodward's Pharmacy in 1930; 2-story red-tan mottled brick, smooth coping, windows grouped in brick eared surround and with continuous stone sill; **contributing**
- 216 D C McPherson & Company/Lyric Theatre; 1908? with 1915 remodeling; 1908 clothing store appears replace 1880s building; housed Odd Fellow's Hall in 1900s, 365-seat Lyric Theatre 1915--at least 1930; 2-story light tan brick, concrete coping with raised sections, stone? detail in rope pattern visible above modern wood panels which connect with adjacent; once had triangular marquee, 3 round-arch windows; altered: **noncontributing**
- 218 commercial building; 1916?; location of Nordahl Hoilien saloon (1908-c.1914), Steve G. Pappas' Aberdeen Candy Kitchen (1919-1930); contradictory information shows 2-story building as late as 1930, yet 1960 Assessor's photo shows early 20th century 1-story brick facade with coping; now covered with

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- modern wood panels which connect with adjacent; altered:
noncontributing
- 220-222 (Second) Aberdeen National Bank Building; 1912; second location of this bank until moving in 1965; once a showpiece: 2-story solid brick with complete terra cotta or stone facade, now covered with metal panels and arcaded cornice; altered: **noncontributing**
- 224 Appel Block; c.1904 and by 1907; always a clothing store, including I. Appel Company 1907-1922; 2-story light tan brick with darker tan at inset panels and bands along top, original double-hung windows; some bays have squared pilasters with distinctive capitals; some new windows, others enclosed, storefront altered; **contributing**
- 302 Kresge Block; after 1924 and by 1929; S.S. Kresge store replaced drug store and jewelry store; among most attractive examples; 2-story light tan brick with fine stone detail: flat small pilasters have urn shape on capitals, moulded cornice and lintels; herringbone brick pattern; storefront windows (1987) well handled; **KEY contributing** (photo #3)
- 306 (Early) Strauss Clothing House/Granger Business School; c.1907; pioneer retailer David Strauss here by 1907 and until 1916; business school through 1910; 2-story creamy brick with rough pink granite coping and continuous sill, fine moulded brick outlines windows and for cornice; distinctive; **KEY contributing** (photo #3)
- 308 Farmers & Merchants Bank & Trust Company; formerly 3 stores, c. 1898; various commercial uses, including Blue Front Grocery, Daily News offices; bank established 1955; by 1960 at this address in north 50'; 2-story?; 8 grain-elevator-like curves installed and expanded 25' to south 1962; altered: **noncontributing**
- 314 Montgomery Wards; 1938; replaced 50' of c. 1898 Excelsior Block; continues Main Street commercial development--arrival of national chain stores; 3-story red brick with reinforced concrete beams and columns; Georgian Revival details unlike any others on street; multiple panes, shallow slanted roof with gabled dormers; unaltered ground floor; **contributing**
- 318 commercial building; 1938?; replaced 25' of c. 1898 Excelsior Block; various commercial uses; 1-story with metal? vertical brown paneling and brown glazed tile; 1960 photo shows facade like #320; altered: **noncontributing**
- 320 commercial building; 1908?; shares party wall with #318;

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- various commercial uses; 1-story brownish brick with stone parapet; **contributing**
- 322-324 Osco Drug; 1966; interesting but late unaltered example of commercial building; continues Main Street development--presence of national chain stores; 1-story brick with 2 colors green metal squares; note neon signs, canvas awnings; intact; recent and green is rather intrusive: **noncontributing**
- 402 Bostwicks; 1967; replaced c. 1887 3-story Jewett Wholesale Grocery; 1-story tan brick; checkerboard tan and white pattern; colors blend with older examples; recent: **noncontributing**
- 408 Artz Camera Supply Company; 1957; 1-story medium tan brick, metal cornice; recent: **noncontributing**
- 410-414 New Beard Block; 1908; built by realtor Henry C. Beard, 3 shops on ground floor with offices or hotel above; 2-story tan brick; note slightly curved cornice, corbelled effect repeated to delineate 3 bays, round-arched entry to upper floor; **contributing**
- 416-418 Appleford Sisters Bakery; after 1912 and by 1915; bakery 1915-1922; 1-story brown brick, concrete coping, corbelled effect in panels with rough brick infill (former window space?); **contributing**
- 420 Jesse Gayer Meat Market; after 1912 and by 1915; briefly meat market, then part of adjacent McDiarmid & Slater grocery; 2-story brownish brick, concrete coping; completely rebuilt 1959, including another story; **noncontributing**
- 422-424 McDiarmid & Slater Building; 1911; grocery, restaurant and bakery, also offices, Eagles Hall 1915--at least 1930; pivotal corner site; distinctive important motifs; 2-story tan brick with red-brown brick for trim: corbelled cornice, geometric patterns enliven surface; alterations at rear; **KEY contributing** (photo #2)
- 502-506 Boyd Automobile Company; 1919; site of Aberdeen Grain Palace that burned 1902; car dealership and automotive supplies 1919--at least 1930; 25' to S built separately but matches; 2-story brownish brick; corbelled (16 rows) cornice is distinctive, concrete coping, simple pilasters separate Chicago School windows; **contributing**
- 508 W. Henry Wilson, Undertaker; 1910; funeral parlor 1910-1924; 2-story light tan brick with terra cotta trim; oriel, raised parapet; 1960 photo shows round-arched terra cotta? entry, now changed; **contributing** (photo #1)

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- 510 Grocery Store; c. 1929; 1-story tan brick, stepped parapet with coping, 2 diamond shapes flank simple rectangular outline; **contributing**
- 512 Martin C. Fiene Grocery Store; c. 1929; 1-story mottled brown brick, decorative stone band with rosettes; **contributing**
- 514-516 commercial building; 1910; originally space for 3 shops, including grocery, millinery, and tire store; 1-story with modern vertical siding in 2 colors; 1960 photo shows brick with corbelling; altered: **noncontributing**
- 518 commercial building; after 1923 and by 1929; on site of 1912 showroom and marble yard attached to dwelling; 1-story light-colored brick now covered; altered: **noncontributing**
- 520-522 commercial building; after 1923 and by 1929; on site of 1912 showroom and marble yard attached to dwelling; 1-story reddish brick, concrete coping, geometric brick pattern; **contributing**

East Side Main Street

- 1 Commercial Hotel; c. 1905; hotel site since 1898; A.L. Larson probably built present hotel 1903-05 (plaque has "1905" but Sanborns show in 1904 and city directory shows 1903); may be rebuilding, including added story, of 1884 grocery; 3-story red-brown mottled brick in street facade section, red brick to rear, built in 3 sections running length of block; corbelling used throughout, semi-circular arched windows, metal beam with rosettes above storefront window; **contributing**
- 5 Spur Lounge; 1983; 1-story tan rough concrete block replaced 1955 building (after fire destroy 1888 3-story hotel); recent: **noncontributing**
- 9-11 Schaeffer Hotel; 1916; hotel 1916-at least 1930, also various commercial (Palace of Sweets, Northwestern Shippers Protective Assoc., Union Clothing); 3-story at ends (2-story in center) dark brown brick with coping, subtle brick eared window surrounds, smooth contrasting concrete for sills and courses; another business fronts on 2nd Street, has metal Corinthian columns; **contributing**
- 21-23 Northwestern National Bank/Western Union Building; 1888-90; now a museum, has had various commercial uses; 3-story red brick with cut stone; corbelling, fine Romanesque Revival arches have patterned brick and rest on rough cut stone; on National Register; **KEY contributing** (photo #9)

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- 101-103 Lacey Drug Company Building; after 1929, 1937?; drug store in corner shop at least 1884-1930; space for 3 stores, including barber, cigars, tailor; rebuilt sometime after 1929 with shared facade; 1-story reddish brown brick has simple brick patterns, concrete coping; **contributing**
- 105 Stowell & Yeoman Meat Market; by 1884; meat market (and sometime sausage factory) 1884-at least 1924; probably combination 5' and 20' buildings; 1-story with vertical wood siding for "Western" look: porch with balustrade added; stone foundation; altered: **noncontributing**
- 107 Robert H. Woods Saloon, Restaurant; by 1884; originally clothing store, including Appel & Company, but Woods saloon by 1898 and until 1921; 2-story stucco (painted dark brown) on wood frame, smaller window replaces original size; altered: **noncontributing**
- 109 commercial building; after 1917 and by 1923; 2-story reddish brick with geometric designs and brick patterns; altered: **noncontributing**
- 111 Witte Hardware Store; c. 1898; hardware store c.1898-1967; 2-story stucco over brick; concrete and stone foundation; altered: **noncontributing**
- 113 commercial building; after 1923 and by 1929; 1-story red brick with coping, corbelled bands; **contributing**
- 115 commercial building; c. 1937; 1-story mottled tan brick, concrete coping, 3 bands of projecting brick stretchers; **contributing**
- 117 The Burg Company; 1926; variety store; 2-story dark brown brick with fine terra cotta: floral detail and geometric patterns on panel, for sills and around storefront windows; **contributing**
- 119 commercial building; 1936; 1-story stucco over brick, now covered with signs; altered: **noncontributing**
- 121-123 Wells Block; after 1892 and before 1898; Wells & McCaughey or Aberdeen Hardware Company 1899-at least 1910; prominent corner location; 2-story brick painted red, corbelling, long narrow windows with semi-circular arches; **contributing**
- 201 First National Bank; 1906; replaced earlier bank on site which established 1883; bank use 1906-1958; 2-story tan-painted stone ("Minnesota soft sandstone"); prominent corner location and distinctive design; 2-story Neoclassical design: simple cornice with mutules and dentils, Corinthian capitals

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- on pilasters separate large window spaces and have high moulded bases; **KEY contributing** (photo #11, #12)
- 205 The Band Box; after 1908 and by 1912; millinery at least 1917-1930; 2-story dark red brick; rare on Main Street: curved parapet; geometric brick patterns, some with contrasting tan brick; architect: George Fossum; **contributing** (photo #11)
- 207 Olander Building; 1912; Olander's men's clothing 1912-at least 1930; 2-story white glazed brick unique on Main Street; geometric patterns, including green diamonds at corners, brick dentilled cornice; **contributing** (photo #11)
- 209-211 Firey Building; 1912; commercial uses include J H Firey real estate and Woodward's Pharmacy; 2-story dark reddish brick with contrasting concrete for coping, at corners and windows--attractive geometric detail; **contributing** (photo #11)
- 213 Radison Cafe; after 1908 and by 1912; cafe 1909-1924; 1-story with concrete block at top and metal canopy; 1st and 2nd stories removed 1969; altered: **noncontributing**
- 223 Sherman Apartments; 1980-81; 51 units; site of 1908 Sherman Hotel; 6-story brownish brick with dark brown panels, some chamfered corners, set back from street; recent: **noncontributing** (photo #8)
- 301 Early J.C. Penney Store; 1925; replaced Old Beard Block of 1880s; example of presence of national chain store on Main Street; 2-story reddish brown brick, parapet with coping, cornice with moulding and broad plain entablature, brick patterns, especially for sills and lintels; **contributing**
- 303 commercial building; after 1923 and by 1929; 1-story building now covered with vertical grey paneling; 1960 photo shows brick with terra cotta? detail; altered: **noncontributing**
- 305-307 Combs Chocolate Shop; c. 1926; site of Greek confectionery 1905-at least 1930; building extensively rebuilt or new in 1920s; 3-story dark red brown and lighter mottled (alternating rows of lighter headers and darker stretchers) brick forms handsome texture; very thick concrete coping and contrasting detail at windows; **contributing** (photo #7)
- 309 Sheehan & Halverson Grocery Store; by 1887; grocery 1887-1910; 2-story brick painted white, brick patterns above arcade of now enclosed windows; new smaller windows added; altered: **noncontributing**
- 311 Cone & Tracy Saloon; after 1884 and by 1887; various com-

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- mercial uses; 2-story stucco (light green) over brick, stone foundation, windows simply framed; altered: **noncontributing**
- 313 Griffis Drug Company; 1909; drug store 1909—at least 1930, including Goodale's Pharmacy; 2-story tan brick with rough pink granite trim (coping, lintels, sills), attractive corbelled band; **contributing**
- 315 & 317 Champlin Block; after 1904 and before 1907; originally housed C.A. McArthur Hardware Company and McDiarmid & Slater's Red Front Grocery with Elks Club on second floor; various commercial uses; distinctive 2-story brown brick, moulded, dentilled, pedimented metal cornice, bands of corbelling at windows, note Corinthian pilasters and fine semi-circular arched window; glass block now in windows; **contributing**
- 319 commercial building; after 1898 and by 1904; various commercial uses, including meat market (originally), Webb-Robertson and Webb-Carter Shoe Company; 2-story pinkish stucco over brick, stone foundation; 1940 photo shows brick with corbelling; altered: **noncontributing**
- 321-323 Olwin-Angell Store; 1903 with another floor in 1914; Aberdeen's most successful department store, 1903-1969; A.H. Olwin dry goods career begin 1887; 3-story brown brick (two shades), stucco added at cornice and between stories; rounded colonettes (with capitals having egg-and-dart motif) in 3's between 2nd story windows, cut stone continuous sills; large windows enclosed; **contributing**
- 401 J.C. Penney Store; 1951; on site of 1904 U.S. Courthouse and Post Office; 2-story light tan brick with stone coping and bands uniting windows; recent: **noncontributing**
- 413-417 Capitol Building; 1926; offices, shops and Capitol Theatre with prominent and elaborate neon sign (remarkable at night); 5-story brownish brick shaft with dark grey granite base and flat tan stone trim, especially at capital; stone frames and unites upper windows; Gothic or Moorish flavor; architect, Beuchner & Orth; **KEY contributing** (photo #10)
- 419 commercial building; after 1908 and by 1912; various commercial uses; 2-story mottled brown brick with subtle brick patterns, including Art Deco arrows (like 423); **contributing**
- 423 R.O. Harms Block; 1919; various commercial uses, including furrier, with apartments above; 2-story red-brown brick, front now covered with rustic wood paneling, but original at side; band of corbelling, Art Deco arrows (like #419); **noncontributing**

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- 503 Masonic Temple; 1899; reportedly first temple west of Mississippi built solely for that purpose; 3-story stucco over brick; Mediterranean, Moorish, and Romanesque Revival influences; hipped tile roof, stucco, side arcade effect, and 2-story enclosed porch added after 1907 to original flat-roofed brick building; on National Register; **contributing**
- 511 Brownell Supply Company; 1923; briefly quarters for wholesale automobile supply business, in 1930 Red Owl grocery and National Apartments; 2-story tan brick with coping and corbelling; **contributing**
- 515 Taylor Music; 1952; various commercial uses, including hardware store; 1-story cream-colored brick, tile coping; recent: **noncontributing**
- 517 The Dakota Farmer/Elks Building; c. 1904 with c. 1912 rear addition; important regional farm journal, The Dakota Farmer, built it and used until around 1911, then B.P.O.E. clubhouse until at least 1930; main facade is 2-story smooth limestone over brick; simple parapet and small cornice, attractive classical detail, noteworthy squared pilasters separate 3 large round-arched openings; windows altered; rear addition light tan brick; among few stone examples; **KEY contributing** (photo #6)
- 523 Aberdeen TV and Appliance; 1964; 1-story light tan brick; recent: **noncontributing**

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1884-1938

Significant Dates
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Fossum, George
Ellerbe & Company

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

From its establishment in 1881, Aberdeen has been and continues to reign as the dominant regional commercial center for northeast South Dakota. The Aberdeen Commercial Historic District was and is the commercial core of this regional hub, the third largest city in the state. The Aberdeen Commercial Historic District on Main Street is significant under Criterion C. It is a homogeneous collection of brick buildings, the most concentrated assemblage in Aberdeen of commercial building types. The range of dates represented--from 1884 to 1938, with special emphasis on the 1908-29 period--reinforces Main Street's continuous important mercantile position. Through scale (many one-and two-story buildings), materials (brick in tans and browns, concrete trim), setting (compact six-block strip), and the presence of many 1908-29-era buildings, the district conveys a strong feeling of architectural cohesiveness. Design elements such as corbelling and geometric brick and concrete patterns are distinguishing features that reinforce the feeling of time and place. The commercial development of Main Street has been continuous. The present high representation of 1908-29-era buildings accurately reflects the key development period of the district, while the 1884-1938 buildings represent a continuum of commercial enterprise. Under the South Dakota Historic Preservation Plan, the district relates to the following contexts: IV.D. Urban Development (commercial structures 1858-1893), V.A. Changing Urban Patterns (rebuilding of commercial centers in larger towns 1893-1929), and VI. Great Depression.

Construction dates range from 1884 to 1938. Eleven buildings date from the early settlement years (1884-1892¹), fifty-three

¹Dates of construction for extant buildings in district, not date of the historical period.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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1912, 1917, 1923, 1929.
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1915, 1917, 1919, 1922, 1924, 1930.
State Historical Preservation Center. "South Dakota Historic
Contexts." Contexts: IV.D. Urban Development (commercial
structures 1858-1893), V.A. Changing Urban Patterns (rebuild-
ing of commercial centers in larger towns 1893-1929), VI.
Great Depression
Brown County Museum and Historical Society. Brown County His

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:

South Dakota Historical Preservation Center

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 11.5

UTM References

A

1	4	5	4	0	0	0	0	5	0	3	4	5	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

1	4	5	4	0	1	1	0	5	0	3	3	8	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

1	4	5	4	0	1	1	0	5	0	3	4	5	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

1	4	5	4	0	0	0	0	5	0	3	3	8	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

Quad: Aberdeen East, Scale: 1:24000.

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The contiguous district runs south from the south end of Rail-
road Avenue to the north end of Sixth Avenue. It includes all
buildings on either side of Main Street (generally to the rear
alley) in this 6-block commercial strip. See map with scale.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The south boundary is a state highway and marks the south
border of concentrated commercial development on Main Street.
The north boundary, the street by the railroad tracks, similarly
marks the end of important commercial representation. In addition,

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara Beving Long, architectural historian

organization Midwest Research date December 1987

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city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50317

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from the important developmental period (1898-1929), and only seven from the Depression era (1936-1938). No Main Street buildings date from the 1940s, and the next date of construction is not until 1951. Eleven date from 1951-1983.

The break in construction between 1938 and 1951 offers a distinct end to the period of significance, 1884 to 1938. The lengthy, four-decades-long period provides a significant continuum that illustrates the initial and unbroken economic vitality of Main Street. Within this fifty-four-year period of significance is a notable cluster of construction dates. Fully forty of the eighty-two buildings were built between 1908 and 1929, reflecting the boom years of Aberdeen's (and South Dakota's) commercial development. That half of the district's buildings date from a twenty-one year period provides a cohesive appearance as well as relating to a pivotal period in the city's commercial development.

Permanent Urban Pioneer Settlement. 1881-1892. Aberdeen was born of railroad construction and the related Dakota land boom of the 1880s. The selection of a site for Aberdeen reflected the economic motives behind its creation. Representatives of the Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad (the Milwaukee Road) were responsible for the town's founding and based their selection on the best chance for maximum economic return. They chose the site at the expense of an existing settlement, Columbia, that reportedly hoped to extract payment for the right-of-way and a drawbridge over the James River. And they also chose not to locate their rail stop where a handful of settlers had already congregated, opting for a site two miles distant. Instead, Milwaukee Road officials chose their own intersection point with the North Western Railroad, fully recognizing the economic dividends of a location at two intersecting rail lines.

The site of Aberdeen--which the townsiters may not have even visited before selecting--was very flat and low. Sloughs and marshes greeted the actual surveyors in the fall of 1880. A town plat for Aberdeen, named for the home town of Milwaukee Road president Alexander Mitchell, was filed on January 3, 1881, and the first lot buyers arrived that spring.² The first train

²According to T. Clarkson Gage, a pioneer merchant, the first building was a sod hotel built the summer of 1880.

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stopped at the station at the north end of Main Street on July 6, 1881, and from then on "building after building was erected in rapid succession," according to contemporary reports by pioneer merchant T. Clarkson Gage. By that fall there were reportedly 250 residents.

Lots on Main Street sold for \$125 for a 25-foot frontage, \$150 for corner sites.³ On parallel Lincoln Street, the next street east, 50-foot lots were pegged at only \$80. New residents schemed to make that street and its cheaper lots the main street by proposing to build twelve feet back to gain a wider thoroughfare. But the railroad's land agent stopped the plan by having the Lincoln Street lots temporarily taken off the market.

While the Lincoln Street merchants no doubt favored spending less for their lots, the poor drainage that characterized Main Street, especially on its west side, was another reason to consider an alternate principal commercial street. Henry J. Lockington, an 1885 arrival, recalled that "a swail bisected the heart of Main Street." He often shot ducks just back of the Van Slyke Building (#116). Longtime hardwareman August Witte noted that there was a permanent pond west of Main Street and low ground that required that the streets be built up. As late as 1905 there was a substantial slough west of the Milwaukee depot (located just northwest of Main Street) and a branch cut southeastward across Main near Second Avenue. But regardless of the wisdom of the decision, the wishes of the Milwaukee Road prevailed for Main Street.

The lowland retarded development along the west side of Main Street. An 1882 map showed the first two blocks filled with commercial buildings, except for half of block two on the west. An 1884 Sanborn map showed nearly all of the first three blocks on the east side filled with commercial buildings, but development was scattered on the other side. Many of these early buildings were small, hastily constructed wood frame stores with boomtown fronts.

With the highly advantageous position at the crossing of two rail lines and the resulting converging travelers, merchandise, and

³Main Street is the only street to retain its 25-foot frontages and one of the few to have been platted that way.

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commodities, Aberdeen was immediately a locus for commercial enterprise in Brown County. The county grew from just 353 people in 1880 (the year following its establishment) to 12,241 five years later, approximately 2,000 of them in Aberdeen.

By 1886 the eminence of Aberdeen was assured. Now three railroads served the community, giving the city the sobriquet, the Hub City. The U.S. Land Office opened an office there, and all manner of commercial enterprise served the growing hinterland. An 1889 city directory, for example, lists no less than eleven farm implement dealers, six banks and eight mortgage companies, seven dry goods stores, twenty hotels and boarding houses, six newspapers, and ten saloons. By the late 1880s the Northwestern National Bank⁴ (#21-23) and the Building & Loan Association (#206) had opened their doors. Stowell & Yeoman's meat market and sausage factory (#105) was around as early as 1884 as was the New York Clothing House (#208). And J.B. Moore sold furniture in the 1880s, replacing an earlier structure in 1907 with a grander model featuring a fine Palladian window (#6).

Depression and Rebuilding. 1890s-1929. The late 1880s also brought the end of the initial and speedy prosperity of the heady settlement era. Crop failures, then a nationwide financial depression in the 1890s ended the construction boom and stilled commercial development in Aberdeen. None of the extant buildings along Main Street apparently were built between 1893 and 1898.

At the turn of the century came another cycle of plenty which continued unabated into the 1920s. Again, a land boom triggered speculation; rising crop prices brought a return to prosperity. Farmers found their land was suddenly worth more, enabling them to borrow more and buy more. Also, Aberdeen had permanently gained the county seat designation in 1890, another source of economic security. Aberdeen grew at a tremendous pace. Population mushroomed from 4,087 in 1900 to 10,150 a decade later, a 160 percent increase.

Commercial infill--creation of a complete six-block commercial district--matured along Main Street during this period. By 1908 the east side lots in all six blocks (except three at the end of block five) contained buildings. West side construction, un-

⁴Now the Dacotah Prairie Museum.

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doubtedly lagging due to the poor drainage, continued at a slower pace. By 1908 all but three lots of the west side's first three blocks were filled, and block four was completely given over to commercial use. Block five was half full, but block six was residential. Not until 1923 was the east side infill virtually complete (one dwelling, converted to commercial use, remained). It should be noted that blocks four through six, both east and west, have always been commercial (except the west side of block six which had as its initial buildings three dwellings beginning in 1904).

The further development of Main Street reflected the newfound abundance in Aberdeen, both in its expansion and in the quality of construction. Larger and more permanent and costly brick-veneered replacements dotted Main Street; every decade brought a spate of new buildings. First National Bank (#201) was among the first to replace an earlier building, with a more elaborate stone-faced bank in 1906. With construction in 1910 of the Citizens Bank Building (#202-204), a veritable "skyscraper" of six stories, Aberdonians gained the largest steel and concrete building in the state, except for the contemporary State Capitol. Built the following year, the McDiarmid & Slater Building (#422-424) occupied a pivotal corner site on the south end of block five, west side. Its distinctive tan brick with contrasting red-brown brick, corbelled cornice and lively geometric patterns exemplified Aberdeen commercial buildings from the early twentieth century.

Construction continued in the 1920s, despite the post-World War I fall in agricultural prices.⁵ In the 1920s the six-story Alonzo Ward Hotel (#104) replaced one destroyed by fire, and the Burg Company (#117) built a variety store that sported fine terra cotta detail. The three-story Combs Chocolate Shop (#305-307) replaced an earlier smaller shop. In 1926 the elaborate five-story Capitol Theatre opened (#413-417), its exotic Moorish and Gothic Revival motifs and immense neon sign a beacon on Saturday nights. Located in block five east side, the theatre exemplified the march south on Main Street.

⁵Aberdeen enjoyed other sources of economic gain. In 1925 there were 358 railroad workers (the largest concentration in the state) and 435 traveling salesmen (the second highest number).

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With multiple examples of the same type of business came concentrations by use along Main Street. Beginning in the 1880s, hotels were clustered at the north end, near the Milwaukee depot. By the 1910s there were four banks at or near the "financial corner" of Second Avenue. The era also brought new types of commercial ventures to Main Street. The 1922 city directory listed five movie theatres, including the Colonial Theatre (#10). Automobile-related business were to be found in block six, east side, notably the Boyd Automobile Company (#502-506).

The 1920s marked the arrival of national chain stores in Aberdeen. Kresge (#302) and J.C. Penney Company (#301) stared at one another across the intersection of Third Avenue beginning in the 1920s. It was not until 1938 that Montgomery Wards (#314) built a Georgian Revival store, also in block four.

The Great Depression. 1929-41. Following World War I--and the related slide in farm product prices--agricultural areas such as northeast South Dakota suffered an economic decline. In 1929 the boom period ended in earnest nationally with the dramatic end to high stock market prices.

The Aberdeen economy suffered a significant but less traumatic decline. It was still the largest town on the Milwaukee Road between Minneapolis and Butte, Montana. With its large trading area--extending from Roberts County west to the Missouri River and from the North Dakota border south to Redfield--it still could count on retail and wholesale sales, but at a diminished rate. Retail net sales peaked in 1929 at \$13,846,552. But "as the commercial and social center for a large and highly developed territory, Aberdeen normally teem[ed] with activity,"⁶ even in 1940.

The eminence of Main Street continued unabated (and remains today). Saturdays were especially popular. During the day farm families came to town. "Tides of bargainhunters ebb and flow along the five blocks between First and Sixth Avenues south on Main Street," according to the 1940 WPA account. By late afternoon traffic had reached such a pitch that policemen put out

⁶South Dakota Writers' Project, Aberdeen. A Middle Border City (n.p., 1940), p. 9. Other quotes in this section also from this source.

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traffic signals at the three main intersections on Main Street, Second, Third, and Fourth Avenues.

By night Main Street displayed a different scene, and became "a crowded, exciting thoroughfare." "As night falls the neon signs glow red and blue and green...." Main Street was "gaily lighted" with the "brilliant night-smile of the street." Then, as now, the rippling bulbs and glowing neon of the Capitol Theatre were an arresting site. Smaller neon signs, for Aberdeen Crockery and the Hub City Pawn Shop, now add to the atmosphere of commercial enterprise.

Design Sources. Design sources for many of the Main Street buildings are likely the product of presently anonymous practices--contractors, pattern books, local architects. During the rebuilding years of the early twentieth century, it is known that architects flocked to booming Aberdeen. Little has been identified about Aberdeen architects, but the 1910 city directory listed no less than seven architects. In 1924 there were only two listings.

Notable local architects included George Fossum, who designed the City Hall in 1913. Only the Band Box (#205) on Main Street is currently ascribed to him, but it is likely that there are more. John K. Van Ess, also in Aberdeen in the 1910s, is not known to have designed buildings in the Aberdeen Commercial Historic District. However, his Brown Palace Hotel in Mobridge, South Dakota, has the same corbelled cornice that is a feature of many Aberdeen Main Street stores.

Aberdonians also commissioned designs from nonresident architects, generally from St. Paul, Minnesota. This was especially the case for large buildings. Ellerbe & Company designed the 1928 Alonzo Ward Hotel (#104). Kenneth Fullerton was responsible for the 1947 remodeling of the Boyd Automobile Company (#502-06). And the Capitol Theatre Building (#413-417) is a product of the noted firm of Beuchner & Roth. All these architectural firms were from St. Paul. Also, Kinney & Detweiler of Minneapolis designed the 1904 courthouse just off Main Street, and it is possible they received other local commissions as well.

Regardless of the design sources, the result has been the establishment of the pre-eminent commercial district in Aberdeen and northeast South Dakota. Similar design elements and a

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continuity of use over time have created an integrated and identifiable district with its own distinctive personality, the Aberdeen Commercial Historic District.

Architect/Builder, cont.

Beuchner & Roth
Kenneth Fullerton

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- National Register Nominations. Brown Palace Hotel, Mobridge, South Dakota. Alonzo Ward Hotel, Masonic Temple, both in Aberdeen. State Historical Preservation Center, Vermillion. Architect File. State Historical Preservation Center, Vermillion.
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railroad tracks form an obvious (and historic) line of demarcation. Aberdeen's commercial district is concentrated in this 6-block strip of Main Street, and there is a noticeable decrease in commercial use east and west of it. The district's small jogs at Second Avenue and Sixth Avenue are to eliminate buildings that do not front on Main Street.

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88000586

Date Listed: 5/23/88

Aberdeen Commercial District
Property Name

Brown
County

SD
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland

Signature of the Keeper

5/23/88

Date of Action

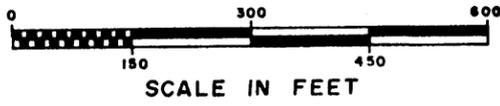
=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Item #3, Classification: The correct count of resources is 48 contributing buildings, and 34 non-contributing buildings. This is consistent with the individual building designation on pages 3 - 12 in Item #7 (Description).

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

ABERDEEN COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT



N = ↑

