NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name Sayre Downtown Historic District

other names/site number _____

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2. Location

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street & number Main and Fourth streets not for publication N/A
city or town Sayre vicinity N/A
state Oklahoma code OK county Beckham code 009
zip code 73662

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Bob Blackburn 7-25-02

Signature of certifying official — Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
____ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
____ determined not eligible for the National Register
____ removed from the National Register

____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper — Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- X private
- X public-local
- ___ public-State
- X public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ___ building(s)
- X district
- ___ site
- ___ structure
- ___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
24	15	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	1	objects
24	16	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
COMMERCE/TRADE	business
COMMERCE/TRADE	professional
COMMERCE/TRADE	financial institution
COMMERCE/TRADE	department store
GOVERNMENT	post office

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
COMMERCE/TRADE	business
COMMERCE/TRADE	professional
COMMERCE/TRADE	financial institution
COMMERCE/TRADE	department store
GOVERNMENT	post office

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style
Other: Contemporary Commercial Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
roof ASPHALT
walls BRICK
other

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

_XX_ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

____ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

_XX_ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

____ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

____ B removed from its original location.

____ C a birthplace or a grave.

____ D a cemetery.

____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

____ F a commemorative property.

____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1903-1952

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

Significant Dates _____
_____
_____

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A
_____
_____

Architect/Builder Rice, W.R., architect/builder
Hohenshelt and Strop, Contractors

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Primary Location of Additional Data
_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Eight acres MOL

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	441860	3905350	3			
2				4			

N/A See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cynthia Savage, Architectural Historian, for Sayre Main Street

organization Savage Consulting date May 2002

street & number Rt. 1, Box 116 telephone 405/459-6200

city or town Pocasset state OK zip code 73079

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

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Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Less than 50 Owners - See Attached List

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state OK zip code _____

SUMMARY

The Sayre Downtown Historic District is a commercial district in Sayre, Beckham County, Oklahoma. Covering almost a three block area in the Original Townsite, the district contains the majority of historic commercial development in Sayre that retains its integrity of feeling and association. The preponderance of buildings, thirty-six of thirty-nine, were constructed between 1903 and 1952, the district's period of significance. Although the downtown pre-dates 1903, the majority of early construction was frame buildings that are no longer extant. Following a small boom in the late 1900s spurred by Oklahoma statehood and the selection of Sayre as the Beckham county seat, construction of substantial brick commercial buildings began to rapidly occur in Sayre. A second smaller building spate occurred after World War I, when the economy and construction activities resumed with a seeming endless optimism. Generally, construction in the downtown was developed by the late 1920s when the economic woes of the Great Depression began to emerge.

A total of thirty-nine buildings and one object are included within the district. The object is a marker located on the northeast corner of East Main Street and North Fourth Street. Erected in 1969, the marker is the only noncontributing object in the district. Of the buildings, twenty-four are considered to be contributing resources, being both present during the district's period of significance and retaining sufficient integrity to convey their historic appearance. The remaining fifteen buildings are designated as noncontributing due to a lack of integrity or insufficient age.

The boundaries of the district are irregular. This is to allow for the incorporation of the greatest concentration of historic commercial development that retains its feeling and association. Although the sixty percent contributing rate is not overwhelming, the area included maintains a visual cohesion of function and style. To the north of the district, the area becomes industrial with the railroad tracks reinforcing this feeling. Historic commercial development begins to dissipate south of the alley south of Main Street. Although historic commercial development also occurred on both the east and west sides of the district, these areas have not retained their historic identity as well. Modernized storefronts, particularly in the block immediately west of the Beckham County Courthouse (NR 1984), demolition and infill construction has devastated the continuity of historic business development in these fringe areas. Thus notably, the district boundaries do not include the Beckham County Courthouse.

DESCRIPTION

Like many towns in Oklahoma, the original townsite of Sayre was platted using the standard grid pattern with streets running parallel and perpendicular to one another. For the most part, the roads running north-south were numbered and the west-east roads were named. The most pertinent exception being Broadway Street which is a north-south road located between Third and Fourth streets. Following the usual pattern, the downtown was constructed near the railroad tracks, the dominate transportation means in the early twentieth century. In the narrow strip between the downtown and railroad tracks, an industrial area developed with the construction of several warehouses, lumber yards and grain elevators. The preponderance of historic residential development in Sayre occurred north of the tracks on either side of Fourth Street. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Main Street was nearly fully developed in the core area. Following the end of World War I, as the economy began to normalize, commercial construction along Fourth Street began to tie the historic downtown with the industrial and residential area to the north.

Downtown Sayre benefitted from the designation of United States Highway 66 and 283 along Fourth Street and State Highway 41(now 152) on Main Street. The famed "Mother Road" was designated in 1926 and continued to be a major east-west transcontinental highway until its by-pass by the four-lane interstate highway in the 1960s. Entering Sayre from the north along Fourth Street, Route 66 originally turned west on Main Street in Sayre to 8th Street where it curved mid-block to head south on 9th Street to utilize a bridge to cross the Red River. About a mile south of the river, the Mother Road swung to the west before dropping south into the town of Erick. After the mid-1950s, a new bridge was built over the Red River along Fourth Street, at which time both federal highways were realigned to traverse Sayre straight on Fourth Street. US Highway 283 traverses Oklahoma from Kansas to Texas, although it apparently was not a major federal thoroughfare like 66. Joining with Route 66 on the north side of Sayre, Highway 283 followed the established federal alignment along Fourth, Main and Ninth street through Sayre before splitting with 66 about a mile south of the Red River. Highway 283 then continued south, although swinging to the east to go through Mangum and Altus, two of the other more sizeable cities in Western Oklahoma. Although Route 66 was by-passed in the 1960s by Interstate Highway 40, which closely follows much of the historic highway, Highway 283 continues to be a federal highway.

Not possessing the acclaim of a federal highway, State Highway 41 was an important local link between the small hamlets and towns of Western Oklahoma. Coming southwest out of Oklahoma City to the north side of Minco, 41 then extended nearly straight west to Sayre. Entering Sayre from the east on Madden Avenue which becomes Main Street after swinging around the Beckham County Courthouse on the east side of the downtown, Highway 41 traversed Main all the way through town. Looking east on 41 towards the Beckham County Courthouse is the famous depiction of an Oklahoma courthouse used in the late 1930s movie "The Grapes of Wrath." West of Sayre, 41 headed north before turning westward again through Texas. In the late 1950s or early 1960s, State Highway 41 was renumbered to State Highway 152, which it remains as today.

The Sayre Downtown Historic District comprises the historic commercial area of the central business district that maintains its integrity and visual cohesion. Although the historic downtown covered a wider area than the district boundaries, modernization of storefronts, demolition of historic buildings and construction of new commercial establishments has resulted in a lack of continuity. Main Street retains the concentration of historic construction with typically larger, more detailed buildings. Fourth Street maintains smaller buildings commonly found on a side street. Fourth Street also contains a number of historic automobile-related businesses, such as garages. Outside of the district boundaries, West Main also had several filling stations which are isolated from the district by new construction and demolition. Constructed primarily in the early 1920s, these buildings heralded the life-changing shift in fundamental American transportation means from trains to automobiles.

The district is composed of nearly all commercial buildings. There are no residential or religious construction included within the boundaries. In addition to the commercial establishments, the historic United States Post Office is included within the district. In addition to providing a vital service, the Post Office is a symbol of the federal government in the local community. Constructed as a New Deal-era project, the Post Office also represents the efforts of the government to stimulate the economy during the trying times of the Great Depression. Except for the Post Office which is classified as Classical Revival, the buildings in the district are Commercial Style buildings. Typical of the style, the buildings are generally brick with flat roofs. Although the building material is the same, the color and texture of the brick varies from building to building. The buildings are all one- to two-stories in height. The degree of ornamentation ranges from the opulent to the plain.

The dates of construction for the buildings were arrived at using the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Sayre. The town was mapped in 1904, 1909, 1916, 1924 and 1931. In 1937, the 1931 map was updated. There are no historic cris-cross directories available for Sayre. Thus the maps were the only available reliable source of dates of construction besides inscriptions on the buildings themselves.

ALTERATIONS

The Sayre Downtown Historic District retains a moderate degree of integrity with twenty-four of the thirty-nine buildings considered as contributing. Critically, the district has retained much of its overall historic character with few modern intrusions. Only three buildings have been constructed in the district since the end of the period of significance. All of these are compatible in building material to the historic buildings.

Within the compact district area, demolition of historic buildings has left only one vacant lot. This void is on the north side of East Main between 109 and 117. Although the loss of any historic buildings leave a visual void, the open lot is not considered a countable resource since it does not constitute a significant property. On the northwest corner of East Main Street and North Broadway Avenue, there is a shell of building with only the roof, exterior rear and side walls still standing. As the majority of the exterior walls remain in place but the architectural character of the building has been lost, the building is considered a noncontributing resource.

Over the passage of time, modifications have been made to many of the buildings. Although each building is assessed for its overall individual retention of historic integrity, there are several common alterations which affects the categorization of the property as contributing or noncontributing.

The most frequent alteration is the replacement of the historic wood storefront with aluminum-and-glass storefronts. Multiple story buildings with replacement storefronts are usually counted as contributing as long as the upper floor retains its integrity. Because of the commonality of the alteration, single story buildings are also generally classified as contributing as long as the majority of the facade is not obscured. The retention of historic architectural details along the upper wall is a significant factor in determining the status of one-story buildings. Several of the buildings in Sayre have striking structural glass storefronts which were likely later modifications of the 1920s, 1930s or 1940s. As these storefronts have attained

their own significance, buildings with them are considered contributing unless there are other major integrity issues.

Buildings that have been altered by the application of a false facade are automatically designated as noncontributing. Generally, these facades are metal, wood and brick and were applied after the period of significance. The false facade obscures virtually all of the historic detail of the buildings and can extend for multiple stories. As such, the false facade adversely impacts the building's integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The removal of the false facade can alter the classification of the building if sufficient original material remains to allow the historic character of the building to be apparent.

Below is a list of the properties within the district. The properties are organized following the dominate pattern of the area. Thus, the descriptions begin with the east-west Main Street, followed by the north-south Fourth Street. The properties are numerically arranged from the east along one side of the street beginning with the south side of Main, then the north side. Contributing status is indicated by the address being in **Bold**. There are no properties individually listed on the National Register within the district boundaries.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS

Main Street

1. 128 East Main Street. Ca. 1980. Contemporary Commercial Style. Great Plains National Bank. This one-story, brick, flat-roofed building has an attached drive-through. The building is spread over several lots and does not maintain the rectangular form that dominates the district. The recessed entrance features double, metal, glazed, slab doors flanked by full-length metal windows. To the west of the entrance is a glass wall. The building is noncontributing due to insufficient age.

2. **118 East Main Street**. Ca. 1923. Commercial Style. Holmes Building. This two-story, red brick, flat-roofed building has a crenelated coping. Centered below the coping is a name plate which reads "19 HOLMES 23." Below this is a two-row, decorative, brick panel. Under the panel, there are three stone squares on point ornamenting the brick on the ends and center. The second floor features four windows which have been infilled fully with brick. The windows are paired with a continuous, flat, brick header and a continuous

stone sill. The first floor has been modified with a wood shingle awning; new brick which does not match the historic; small, arched, metal, fixed windows; and, a decorative, wood, paneled door.

3. **112 East Main Street.** Ca. 1920. Commercial Style. This one-story, brick, flat-roofed building has a painted facade with two storefronts. The larger storefront has a metal, glazed, slab door topped by a transom. On either side of the door, separated by brick columns, are triple, metal, fixed, display windows. On the west side of the facade, there is a small storefront consisting of a wood, glazed, paneled door with a single, wood, fixed, display window. Above both storefronts is a continuous nonhistoric metal awning. Centered above the awning is a wood sign which reads "The Sayre Record/A Beckham County Democrat/Newspaper & Quality Commercial Printing."

4. 108 East Main Street. Ca. 1965. Commercial Style. This one-story, flat-roofed, brick building has a metal, glazed, slab door on the east side of the storefront. The door is topped with a transom and has a large, metal, fixed, display window to the west side. To the west of the entrance, separated by a brick column, are two short, metal, fixed, display windows with a high brick kickplate. The storefront is sheltered by a striped cloth awning. Centered above the storefront is a wood sign which reads "The Hobby Horse/Custom Framing & Gifts." The building is topped with a brick coping laid in a solider course. The building is noncontributing due to insufficient age.

5. 106 East Main Street. Ca. 1907. Commercial Style. Only the west half of this one-story, red brick, flat-roofed building remains. The nonoriginal storefront has a recessed entry with a wood, glazed, paneled door. On either side of the entry and flush with the front of the building are single, metal, fixed, display windows with brick kickplates. Above the storefront is a burgundy cloth awning. Some decorative brickwork remains above the awning, including a painted rectangular panel outlined in yellow and part of another design over what would have been the center of the building. Above this is a row of dentils with a flat metal ledge immediately above topped by several rows of brick. The building is noncontributing due to a loss of integrity.

6. **102-104 East Main Street.** Ca. 1907. Commercial style. Whitehurst Building. Builder: Hohenshelt & Strop, Contractors. This two-story, brick, flat-roofed building is one of the larger, distinguished buildings in the district. Located on one of the prominent corners of the downtown, the building features a distinctive brick tower topped by a metal semicircular dome on the northwest corner and decorative brick parapets on the facade and

northernmost bay of the west elevation. The first floor of the building has been altered with new storefronts. On the facade, the east half now consists of a permastone storefront. The east storefront has two metal, glazed, slab entries, one on the far east side and one on the far west side. Both entries have transoms and the far east entry has a metal sidelight. Between the two doors are unequal, fixed, metal windows. The west storefront is brick with the entry located on the west elevation. On the facade, the west storefront has three, fixed, metal, display windows. The two east windows are paired. On the west elevation, the storefront has a single, metal, glazed, slab door with a small, metal, fixed window to the south. Farther south is another of the larger display windows like on the facade. Both the east and west storefronts are covered with a large, wood, shingle awning. The awning terminates at the end of the west storefront on the west elevation. South of this on the west elevation is another storefront composed of newer brick. This storefront has an off-center, metal, glazed, slab door with a small transom. There is a long, rectangular, metal window to the north of the door and a smaller similar window immediately south of the door. South of this is another storefront which includes only a single, wood, glazed, paneled door with an elaborate, nonhistoric, wood surround. Continuing south, there is a single, medium size, wood, fixed, display window with a wood kickplate. South of this is a wood paneled door which historically likely allowed access to the second floor. South of this are two more storefronts. These storefronts are similar with a single, metal, glazed, slab door and double, metal, fixed, display windows with brick kickplates. The far south storefront does not have an awning, although framework for one is in place. The north storefront has a striped cloth awning.

Immediately above the wood awning on the facade are seven second floor windows, all of which have been boarded. Above the windows on the facade and one bay of the west elevation are ornamented with tall, decorative, brick parapets. These parapets are triangular shaped with brick columns marking the edges. Decorative brickwork found in the parapets include corbeled designs, incised bands and dentils. On the west elevation, not all of the second floor windows are boarded. Of the eighteen windows, three wood, one-over-one, hung windows remain unboarded. Below the windows, where not covered by the wood awning, is a row of dentils. The northernmost bay of the west elevation has a tall, decorative, brick parapet. To the south of this, the building has a flat brick parapet simply ornamented with some corbelling and dentils.

7. 129 East Main Street. Ca. 1928. No Style. The interior of this one-story, flat-roofed, stone building has been severely gutted. The pressed metal

ceiling remains but not much else. The facade of the building has been covered with stucco and painted. The storefront openings remain empty except for some wood lattice. The building is noncontributing due to a lack of integrity.

8. **125-127 East Main Street.** Ca. 1928. Commercial Style. This one-story, flat-roofed brick building has two striking, cream and burgundy, structural glass storefronts. Each storefront retains its historic configuration with a center, recessed, metal, glazed, slab entry topped by a transom. Flanking each door are large, metal, fixed, display windows with structural glass kickplates. The storefronts are sheltered by a continuous metal awning. Under the awning is a large expanse of structural glass. Above the awning, the upper portion of the wall has been covered with metal.

9. **121-123 East Main Street.** Ca. 1907. Commercial Style. This one-story, flat-roofed, brick building has a green structural glass storefront, a later addition which probably occurred within the period of significance. The center entry is recessed with two metal, glazed, slab doors. In front of the doors, flush with the rest of the storefront is a single column. On either side of the doors are three fixed, metal, display windows which extend diagonally to connect with the two flush, fixed, metal, display windows. Above the storefront is a flat metal awning. The upper wall is covered with metal.

10. 119 East Main Street. Ca. 1928. Commercial Style. This one-story, red brick, flat-roofed building has a totally new facade. The upper portion of the facade is covered with a metal awning. The lower portion is covered with nonhistoric white and brown brick. The entry is recessed and consists of nonoriginal, double, wood, paneled doors. To the west of the door is a single, metal, fixed window. The building is noncontributing due to loss of integrity.

11. **117 East Main Street.** Ca. 1920. Commercial Style. This two-story, red brick, flat-roofed building has a painted storefront. The storefront openings have been partially infilled with wood. The off-center door is metal, glazed, slab and is flanked by two metal, fixed, display windows. On the far west side of the storefront is another metal, glazed, slab door. The storefront is topped by a wood awning. The second floor has four single windows, all of which have been boarded. The windows have an arched brick header. Along the upper wall, there are several yellow brick ornaments with an alternating row of red and yellow brick above this.

12. **109 East Main Street.** Ca. 1909. Commercial Style. This two-story, painted brick, flat-roofed building has a center, metal, glazed, slab entry.

To the west of the entry are three metal, fixed, display windows. To the east are four metal, fixed, display windows. The brick around the storefront is not original. Above the storefront is a wide asphalt shingle awning. The second floor features seven nonhistoric, metal, one-over-one, hung windows. The windows have painted sills and headers. The upper wall is ornamented with dentils and a small amount of corbelling.

13. **103 East Main Street.** Ca. 1907. Commercial Style. This two-story, red brick, flat-roofed building has two storefronts. The narrow east storefront consists of a single, metal, glazed, slab door with a transom and large sidelight. To the east of this is a wood slab door which probably gives access to the second floor. The west storefront features a single, metal, glazed slab door with a transom. Adjacent to the door is a large, fixed, metal, display window. The stone on both storefronts is not historic. Above the storefronts is a flat awning. The transom area above the awning is filled with wood and a large air conditioner on the west side. The four second floor windows have been boarded. The windows have arched brick headers. Above the windows is a faded painted sign reading "Furniture." Above this are three brick panels with a small amount of brick corbelling along the upper wall.

14. 101 East Main Street. Ca. 1920. No Style. This one-story, red brick, flat-roofed building has an off-center entry consisting of double, metal, glazed, slab doors with a single transom. To the east of the entry are three narrow, fixed, metal, display windows with one narrow, fixed, metal, display window to the west. There is a flat metal awning above the storefront and the upper wall has been covered with matching metal. The brick columns and kickplates on the storefront are nonhistoric. There are two storefronts located on the west elevation towards the north end of the building. The northernmost storefront consists of three windows and a single door, each sheltered by metal awning. The remainder of the storefront has been filled with brick. The storefront immediately to the south has only a single door with the remainder of the storefront filled with brick. The building is noncontributing due to a loss of integrity.

Fourth Street Intersects

15. **102 West Main Street.** Ca. 1905. Commercial Style. First National Bank/after 1909 part of the Thurmond Block. Architect/Builder: W.M. Rice. This two-story, painted brick, flat-roofed building now serves as the Sayre City Hall. Built in 1905, the building's design was incorporated with the adjacent building in 1909 by the original architect/builder. Constructed for

use as a bank, the building features a canted entrance, a hallmark of a banking establishment. The first floor has been clad with painted stucco with a marble wainscoting. The entry consists of double, metal, glazed, slab doors with a large, multi-pane, glass transom. Above the entry is a stone pediment which is similar but not identical to the historic pediment. To the west of the door are two nonoriginal, fifteen-light, metal, display windows with a nonhistoric Classical Style stone surround and marble kickplate. On the east elevation, there are two similar surrounds around matching windows. On the second floor, there is one window in the canted corner, two on the north elevation and six on the east elevation. The nonhistoric metal windows are sixteen-over-eight. The stone headers and sills have been painted. The windows either had shutters when the building was painted or shutters with a slight pediment have been painted around the windows. Above the window is a length of decorative brickwork on both street elevations which includes a prominent arcaded corbel table, in addition to other raised brick designs. Above this is a metal string course with a brick parapet above. Centered above the entry is a projected brick parapet which features a pediment design with a nameplate in the center. The semicircular nameplate reads "First National/1905/Bank."

16. **104-106 West Main Street.** Ca. 1907. Commercial Style. Flournoy Building/After 1909 part of the Thurmond Block. Architect/Builder: W.M. Rice. This two-story, red brick, flat-roofed building was incorporated with the adjacent First National Bank building into the Thurmond Block in about 1909. After 1925, the building became the C.R. Anthony Department Store. The two storefronts are identical with recessed, center, metal, glazed, slab doors with transoms. The doors are separated by metal, fixed, display windows with transoms. On the opposites sides of each door are three fixed, metal, display windows with structural glass kickplates and columns. On the west side of the ground floor is a single wood slab door, topped with a vent, which allows access to the second floor. Above the storefronts, the transom area has been covered with stucco with a centered, multi-color "Bills" sign. All of the second floor windows have been boarded. The windows on the east side of the second floor shared a stone header and sill, although they were not continuous windows. The west side has three separate windows with individual headers and sills. Directly above the eastern windows was a stone plaque which has been removed. The decorative brick arcaded corbel table from the adjacent bank building is continued at this level, including the decorative raised brick designs underneath the table. Above this is a metal string course with a short brick parapet above. Centered above the eastern windows on the roofline was historically a projected brick parapet which has been largely removed, two short brick columns remaining.

17. **110 West Main Street.** Ca. 1928. Commercial Style. This two-story, red brick, flat-roofed building has a single storefront. The storefront includes a slightly off-center, metal, glazed, slab door with a metal, fixed, display window to the east. To the west of the door is a long, rectangular, metal, fixed window. The remainder of the storefront, including the transom area, has been filled with nonhistoric orange brick. The second floor features four windows. The inner two windows have been boarded over. The outside windows have been replaced with smaller, one-over-one, hung, wood windows. The windows have a narrow brick sill and header. The upper wall is ornamented with two rows of dentils and corbelling along the roofline.

18. **112 West Main Street.** Ca. 1907. Commercial Style. H.W. Hugo. Builder: Hohenshelt and Strop, Contractors. This two-story, red brick, flat-roofed building has a recessed, metal, glazed, slab entry flanked by metal, fixed, display windows. On the west side of the storefront is a single, wood, slab door which allows access to the upper floor. The storefront has a narrow, flat, wood awning. The transom area above the storefront has been covered with wood. The second floor features four boarded windows with wide, painted, stone headers and narrow, painted, stone sills. The upper wall is ornamented with two rows of brick dentils and corbelling along the roofline. Centered on the roofline is a semicircular brick nameplate which reads "1907/H.W.Hugo."

19. **114 West Main Street.** Ca. 1907. Commercial Style. The Hullum Hardware Company. Builder: Hohenshelt and Strop, Contractors. This two-story, red brick, flat-roofed building has a center, metal, glazed, slab door with a transom and side light. Flanking the entry on each side are two wood, fixed, display windows with wood kickplates. The transom area above the storefront is covered with wood. The second floor has four windows with wide stone headers and narrow stone sills. Between the dentils ornamenting the upper wall is a faded painted sign. Between the middle second floor windows is another faded painted sign. The roofline is ornamented with brick corbelling with a semicircular brick nameplate in the center. The nameplate reads "The/Hullum/Hardware Co."

20. 101 West Main Street. Ca. 1903. Commercial Style. This two-story, brick, flat-roofed has been covered with painted stucco. The storefront has a centered, metal, glazed, slab door with a transom and sidelights. On either side of the entry are metal, fixed, display windows with another display window on the east elevation. The remainder of the storefront has been clad with new brick. There is a flat metal awning above the storefront. The two second floor windows on the facade have been covered with wood. Above this is a

decorative table which has been covered with stucco. The east elevation has seven single, wood, one-over-one, hung windows, two of which have been boarded. The building is noncontributing due to lack of integrity.

21. **103-105 West Main Street.** Ca. 1907. Commercial Style. This two-story, blond brick, flat-roofed building has two storefronts separated by the single, wood, slab door that provides access to the second floor. The east storefront features a recessed, metal, glazed, slab door flanked by metal, fixed, display windows with a brick kickplate. The west storefront has a center, wood, glazed, paneled door topped by a transom and flanked by single, wood, fixed, display windows. There is a continuous, flat, metal awning above the ground level. The transom area above the storefronts has been covered with metal. The second floor has four, possibly double, window openings which have been boarded. The windows have a flat brick header and stone sill. The upper wall is ornamented with brick tables outlined with stone and separated by stone ornaments. The coping is also stone.

22. 107 West Main Street. Ca. 1912. Commercial Style. This one-story, painted brick, flat-roofed building has a wide cloth awning obscuring part of the upper wall. The upper wall features two brick tables filled with decorative brickwork. The storefront consists of a metal, glazed, slab door with a transom on the far east side and four fixed, metal, display windows filling the remainder of the storefront. The building is noncontributing due to lack of integrity.

23. 109 West Main Street. Ca. 1920. Commercial Style. This one-story, painted brick, flat-roofed building has a matching awning to the 107 West Main. The storefront has been extensively modified. The center entry is metal, glazed, slab with two narrow, metal, fixed windows on each side. The remainder of the storefront has been filled with nonhistoric brick. The building is noncontributing due to a lack of integrity.

24. **115 West Main Street.** Ca. 1928. Commercial Style. J. Hullum. This two-story, brick, flat-roofed building has an off-center, wood, paneled door with a wood transom. To the east of the door are three, narrow, metal, fixed windows. To the west is a single, metal, narrow, fixed window. The remainder of the storefront has been filled with brick. On the west side, metal plaques reading "Ivester & Sons" "Attorneys-At-Law" have been placed between two metal lights. Above the storefront is a cloth awning. The second floor has three boarded windows with stone sills. The windows also have individual cloth awnings and flags underneath. Centered on the upper wall is a stone nameplate which reads

"J.Hullum/1928." Above this is a row of bricks laid in a soldier course. The building has a stone coping.

Fourth Street Descriptions

25. **107-111 South Fourth Street.** Ca. 1907. Commercial Style. This one-story, flat roofed, painted brick building has three storefronts. The nonoriginal storefronts are not identical. The southernmost storefront has an off-center, metal, glazed, slab door with a transom towards the north side. To the south of the door are three metal, fixed, display windows with a kickplate. The opening north of the door has been filled with red brick. The middle storefront has a metal, glazed, slab door on the north side with three short, fixed, metal windows to the south. The two southernmost windows are equal size with the northern window of the middle storefront being smaller. The northernmost storefront has a center door which has been changed to a fixed, metal, display window with a brick surround. Flanking the door are two fixed, metal, display windows with a brick kickplate. The transom area above all three storefronts has been covered with wood. The upper wall of the building features dentils, some brick corbeling and a metal cornice.

26. 105 South Fourth Street. Ca. 1907. Commercial Style. The facade of this two-story, flat roofed building has been incorporated into 102 West Main. The ground floor has been covered with painted stucco matching 102 West Main. The only ground level opening is a single, metal, glazed, slab door topped by a tall, eight-pane, metal transom. The string course from 102 West Main extends across the building, separating the two floors. The second floor has paired, metal, eight-over-four, hung windows. Like 102 West Main, shutters and a small pediment have been painted around the windows. The windows have a flat stone header and narrow stone sill. Above the windows is a metal cornice. The decorative brickwork along the upper wall of 102 West Main is not continued on this building, indicating it is a separate building that has been modified to match the adjoining building. The building is noncontributing due to loss of integrity.

Main Street Intersects

27. **110 North Fourth Street.** Ca. 1928. Commercial Style. This two-story, flat-roofed, red brick building has a center, metal, glazed, slab door with unequal, fixed, metal, display windows on either side. On the far north side of the facade is a single, wood, glazed, paneled door which provides access to the second floor. The remainder of the storefront has been clad with vertical

wood boards, including the south column. The north column has been covered with painted stucco matching the sloped kickplates. The upper floor has two boarded windows. The windows have no headers and narrow brick sills. The upper wall is ornamented with two narrow brick tables decoratively laid.

28. 112 North Fourth Street. Ca. 1965. Contemporary Commercial Style. This one-story, flat-roofed, brick building is shorter than the flanking buildings. The off-center, metal, glazed slab door is located to the north side with a green metal awning. To the south are two metal, fixed, display windows. The windows also have a green metal awning and the area immediately around the windows has been filled with vertical wood boards. Above the windows is a metal sign which reads "Hairquarters/Dave's/112 N. 4th/Barber Shop." The building is noncontributing due to insufficient age.

29. **114-116 North Fourth Street.** Ca. 1928. Commercial Style. This one-story, flat-roofed, dark red brick building has two small, matching storefronts. Each storefront has a just-off-center, single, wood, glazed, panel door with a transom which has been covered. To the outside of the door is a single, wood, fixed, display window with a brick kickplate. The north display window has been boarded. Both storefronts have transoms. The north transom is five-paned and the south transom has been covered with wood. The upper wall is ornamented with brick ornaments on the outside edge and a brick stringcourse. There is a brick table immediately above the stringcourse with a faded painted sign and wood framing, possibly from a later sign. Above the table is a bit of brick corbeling.

30. **118 North Fourth Street.** Ca. 1928. Commercial Style. This one-story, flat-roofed, medium red brick building has a large, wood, overhead, glazed, paneled garage door which fills most of the storefront. The garage door is topped by a narrow six-pane transom. To the north of the garage door is a short, wood, fixed, display window with a brick kickplate which is topped with a wood fixed window slightly larger than the display window. The upper wall is ornamented identical to 114-116 North Fourth Street.

31. **120 North Fourth Street.** Ca. 1920. Commercial Style. This one-story, flat-roofed, light red brick building has two storefronts. The south storefront has an off-center, single, metal, glazed, slab door with a transom. To the south of the door is a recessed, metal, fixed, display window with another metal, glazed, slab door perpendicular to the main wall. Immediately south are two, fixed, metal, display windows with a tall, peach colored, brick kickplate. The north storefront has three, fixed, metal, display windows with

a matching kickplate to the south storefront. There is a flat, metal, continuous awning above the storefronts. The narrow transom areas above both storefronts has been covered with metal. There are long, rectangular, brick tables above each storefront with brick drop ornaments on each corner. Above the tables is some brick corbelling.

32. 105 North Fourth Street. Ca. 1928. Commercial Style. This two-story, flat-roofed building has been clad with stucco, matching 101 W. Main. The storefront consists of a wood, glazed, paneled door with a boarded transom and double, fixed, wood, display windows. The upper story windows have been modified and are now boarded. Towards the north side of the second floor, there is a large window flanked by two smaller windows. On the south side, there is one small window which is part of a nonoriginal group of windows extending from the adjacent building. Along the upper wall is a painted cornice which does not match the neighboring building. The building is noncontributing due to loss of integrity.

33. **109 North Fourth Street.** Ca. 1920. Commercial Style. This two-story, flat roofed, red brick building has a modified storefront consisting of a center, metal, glazed slab with double, fixed, metal, display windows to the north and a single, fixed, metal, display window on the south. Immediately above the door is a wood sign which reads "Frontier Photography." To the north of sign, in the transom area, is a paired, two-over-two, metal, hung window. On the south side of the ground level is a metal slab door which provides access to the second floor. The remainder of the storefront has been filled with vertical wood. On either side of the storefront are two red brick columns which retain their historic stone ornamentation. The second floor has paired windows which have been boarded. The windows have a stone sill. The upper wall is ornamented with a metal cornice and stone decorative detailing, including designs around the windows and along the brick parapet. The building is topped with a stone coping.

34. 111 North Fourth Street. Ca. 1934. Contemporary Commercial Style. This one-story, flat-roofed, brick building has a new storefront. The upper wall is covered with a wood awning. The single, metal, glazed, slab door is located on the south side of the facade with two marble signs to the south of it. To the north of the door and on the north side of the facade are short, double, fixed, metal windows. The remainder of the storefront has been filled with nonoriginal brick. The building is noncontributing due to loss of integrity.

35. **115 North Fourth Street.** Ca. 1934. Commercial Style. This one-story, flat-roofed, brick building has a structural glass storefront. The recessed door is a wood, glazed, panel with a wood sidelight. On either side of the door are fixed, metal, display windows. Peach and green colored structural glass panels fill the remainder of the storefront. There is a metal awning above the door and windows. The upper wall has been covered with painted stucco. A large, rectangular, brick table remains evident, as does some corbeling alone the roofline.

36. 119 North Fourth Street. Ca. 1934. Contemporary Commercial Style. This one-story, flat-roofed, brick building has a single, metal, glazed, slab door on the south side with four, fixed, metal, display windows extending to the north side. There are new brick columns on either side of the storefront and a new flat awning above. The upper wall has been covered with a metal covering. The building is noncontributing due to a lack of integrity.

37. 121 North Fourth Street. Ca. 1928. Contemporary Commercial Style. This one-story, flat-roofed building has a new facade. The upper wall is covered with a black awning. The storefront contains a center, metal, glazed, slab door with sidelights. Symmetrically placed on either side of the door are small, single, rectangular, fixed, metal windows. The remainder of the storefront has been clad with nonhistoric brick.

38. **123-125 North Fourth Street.** Ca. 1920. Commercial Style. This two-story, flat roofed, red brick building has two unequal storefronts. The smaller south storefront has a wood, glazed, panel door on the south side with a single, fixed, metal, display window on the north side. The remainder of the south storefront has been filled with brick and the transom area has been covered with metal. The larger north storefront has a single, metal, glazed, slab door and transom on the south side with triple, fixed, metal, display windows to the north. There are four more fixed, metal, display windows on the north elevation. The transom area above the storefront has been covered with metal identical to the south storefront. The two storefronts are separated by a brick column with concrete base which matches the columns flanking the storefronts. The first and second floor are separated by a stringcourse. The second floor has four sets of windows which have been boarded. The outside windows are single and the inside windows are paired. All have a narrow, painted, flat header and wider painted sill. Above the windows is a wider stone stringcourse with a slightly stepped stone coping on the roofline.

39. **201 North Fourth Street.** Ca. 1938. Classical Revival. United States Post Office. Architect/Builder: Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect. DOE 1983. The Post Office is a one-story, flat-roofed, light colored brick building constructed by the Treasury Department in 1938. The symmetrical facade has an above-grade, center, double, metal, glazed, slab door with a large transom ornamented with a metal design. On either side of the door are two sets of tall, narrow, metal windows with screens. Below each window is a stone panel. In the far south window panel of the facade is the cornerstone which reads "Henry Morgenthau Jr./Secretary of the Treasury/James A. Farley/Postmaster General/Louis A. Simon/Supervising Architect/Neal A. Melick/Supervising Engineer/1938". Above the windows is a large stone cornice which wraps around the building. In the center of the facade is inscribed in the cornice "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE/Sayre, Oklahoma". The other elevations on the nearly square building are similar to the facade. There is a modern, concrete handicap ramp on the north side. Inside in the Post Office lobby is a mural painted by Vance Kirkland in 1940. The mural depicts a horse race, possibly one of the land runs famous for opening the various segments of Oklahoma to non-Native American settlement. In 1983, the Post Office was determined individually eligible for the National Register by the Keeper of the Register.

Intersection of Main and Fourth

40. Marker. Ca. 1969. No Style. In 1969, Sayre was awarded a First Place Award for Division Two in the Community Achievement Contest. A concrete marker was located on the northeast corner of Main and Fourth commemorating this achievement. The marker is about four feet tall in a simple rectangular shape with a sloped north side featuring a metal plaque. The metal plaque reads "FIRST PLACE AWARD/DIVISION TWO/SAYRE OKLAHOMA/1969/COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENT CONTEXT/SPONSORED BY/OKLAHOMA STATE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE/AND/OKLAHOMA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT/AND PARK DEPARTMENT." The marker is noncontributing due to insufficient age.

SUMMARY

The Sayre Downtown Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with commerce in Sayre, Beckham County, Oklahoma. As the core of the central business district, the area has been the center of commercial development from the town's founding. Because there are no extant buildings constructed prior to 1903, the district's period of significance begins in 1903 and extends to 1952, the current National Register fifty-year mark. The district is also eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance. The district represents the enclave of historic commercial architecture in the town. The buildings vary in detail but generally share a common architectural style, building material and decorative features.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

On 19 April 1892, the Cheyenne and Arapaho surplus lands, situated in what is now western Oklahoma, opened to non-Native American settlement. The run for the 3.5 million surplus acres of Cheyenne-Arapaho country did not garner the attention of other land runs. Only approximately 25,000 settlers staked claim to about 1.5 million acres (as compared to the 1889 opening of the Unassigned Lands in which 50,000 homeseekers competed for 2 million acres of land or the 1893 land run in the Cherokee Outlet in which over 100,000 settlers raced for six million acres). The remaining two million acres of Cheyenne-Arapaho land, mostly in the western portion, were not immediately claimed as they were deemed unsuited for farming. However, homesteaders did eventually lay claim to the western part of Cheyenne-Arapaho land.[1]

As with many Oklahoma towns, the town of Sayre came into existence due to the railroad. In 1901, the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railway began extending a line through western Oklahoma Territory. As the same time, the Choctaw Townsite and Improvement Company began surveying the area for possible townsites. In July 1901, the firm of McCabe and Steen Contractors began grading a road between Weatherford and Texola. During this time, the townsite company paid a total of $8,000 to J.W. Danner, J.M. Danner, James N. Lennox,

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[1]Arrell Morgan Gibson, Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries Second Edition (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 178-180.

G.W. Roles and William M. Hutton for land to establish the town of Sayre. All of the men, except for J.W. Danner, had homesteaded their claims. In 1900, J.W. Danner bought a quarter section of land which adjoined his son J.M. Danner's claim from a man named Caldwell. The town of Sayre came into being on 14 September 1901 when the Choctaw Townsite and Improvement Company held their town lot sale. The railroad opened for business before 26 September 1901.[2]

Sayre was named for Robert H. Sayre. Sayre was a railroad man from South Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He was both a chief engineer and a stockholder in the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railway.[3]

At about the same time that the railroad completed its line through Sayre, the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway Company (Rock Island) leased the line from the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railway and named Sayre a division town. The Rock Island subsequently completed the line through to Amarillo, Texas, and eventually to Tucumcari, New Mexico. Locally in 1901, the rail line erected a commodious depot, engine house, coal chute, turntable, section house, bunk house and tool house in Sayre. The following year, the rail company constructed a Harvey Eating House with a round house and boiler house following six years later. A chemical house and hose house were erected in 1909. In 1911, a track scale was added, followed by stock pens two years later. By 1915, the railroad also built a cinder pit, 24X28 water tank, sand house and motor house on-site. In the late 1920s, the railroad revamped the freight yard and constructed a new depot on the north side of the tracks, near the downtown. Thus, from its beginning, Sayre enjoyed a major economic foundation and was located on a significant transportation route.[4]

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[2]Myrtle Danner, Sayre of Red River Valley: A Collection of Historical Data Concerning the Origin and Growth of the City of Sayre, (Elk City, Oklahoma: McDonald's Printing, 1976), n.pg. See also "Shortgrass Country Museum Brochure," on file in the Sayre Rock Island Depot File, Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory, State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and The Daily Oklahoman, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma) 26 September 1901.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid. See also Cynthia Savage, National Register Nomination for the"Sayre Rock Island Depot," (On file at the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, December

The town of Sayre was originally located in Roger Mills County, Oklahoma Territory. In 1907, with the advent of Oklahoma statehood, a new county was formed from the southern portion of Roger Mills County, including Sayre, and the northern part of Greer County. The new county, Beckham County, was named after John Creeps Wickliffe Beckham, thirty-fourth governor of Kentucky. Due to its central location in the new county, Sayre was named the Beckham County seat.[5]

In addition to the railroad with its extensive freight yard, Sayre relied on the rich, surrounding farming district for much of its economic well-being. By the 1920s, diversified agriculture helped make Sayre one of the most prosperous towns in the state. In addition to fruit, truck and staple crops, area farmers also boosted their revenues with poultry raising and dairying. Additionally, nearby gas and oil fields boosted the local economy, as well as furnished cheap fuel for manufacturing. By 1936, a meat packing plant, chemical plant, large medical laboratory and a carbon plant all operated in or near Sayre.[6]

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

By 1903, downtown Sayre was well established with numerous frame buildings. The population of the community stood at about 800. Within the year, the first brick building in the downtown had been constructed on the northwest corner of Main and Fourth streets. Other brick buildings shortly followed. Covering roughly a two-and-a-half block area in 1904, the downtown extended along Main from Third Street to Fifth Street. Although there were several gaps, Main Street had a nearly solid line of commercial establishments, primarily frame, between Broadway and the alley west of Fourth Street. Further west on Main, around Sixth Street, there were several houses with additional commercial enterprises west of this. All of the buildings in this area were frame. Although there was a scattering of buildings along Fourth Street, most development on this street occurred near the railroad tracks with a lumber yard

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1999), 19-24.

[5]Ibid.

[6]V.A. Dale, "Sayre," (n.p., on file in the "Sayre" Vertical File of Oklahoma Historical Society Research Library, 15 April 1936). See also The Sayre (Oklahoma) Headlight, 17 January 1929.

occupying the block now held by the Post Office and a sizeable gin across the street to the south.[7]

Within five years, Sayre's central business district had developed largely a new look, although many of the same businesses remained in operation. During this period, Oklahoma had been granted statehood and, more importantly on the local level, Sayre was named the county seat of Beckham County. Between statehood in 1907 and 1910, the town population expanded from 1,119 to 1,881.[8] The evolution within the downtown is attributable both to the designation as county seat and the natural progression from semi-permanent frame to permanent brick buildings common to all communities in the first part of the twentieth century.

By January 1909, brick buildings had almost totally replaced the frame buildings in the core area along Main. The new buildings were nearly evenly divided between one- and two-story. Some of the notable buildings which are still extant that were constructed during this building boom include the First National Bank Building at 102 West Main; the Whitehurst Building at 102-104 East Main; the H.W. Hugo Building at 112 West Main; and, the Hullum Hardware Company Building at 114 West Main. Between 1904 and 1909, the commercial buildings on the west side of town remained frame with a block-and-a-half separating this area from the core downtown. Fourth Street remained largely occupied by frame buildings as well, both to the north and south of Main. In addition to several small shops, such as printing, feed and general repair, along Fourth Street, there was a auditorium theater south of Main. Interestingly, directly across the alley to the east, there was a frame skating rink.[9]

Around 1911, downtown Sayre was dramatically altered by the construction of the new Beckham County Courthouse (NR 1984) on the east side of Main Street. Previously the courthouse had been located on the second floor at 103-105 West Main. In addition to being a striking, multi-story, blond brick, Classical

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[7]Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, December 1904.

[8]Robert Goins et al, "Sayre, Oklahoma: Master Plan Study," (Norman, Oklahoma: Oklahoma Center of Urban and Regional Studies of the University of Oklahoma Research Institute, February 1966), 13.

[9]Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, January 1909.

Revival style building with a dome, the placement of the courthouse ensured its prominence within the community. Following standard practice, Sayre's Original Townsite was laid out in the government-sponsored grid pattern. As such, all of the streets were wide and straight following the directional pattern of a compass. On paper, the townsite had equal-sized blocks with standard alleys providing an even rhythm to the map. On site, the railroad tracks, which were incorporated into the original blocks of the plat, formed a visual barrier which disrupted the continuity of development. After 1909, the far southeastern segment of the original townsite was replatted to create a courthouse plaza on the east side of the central business district. In order to do this, all of blocks 78-80, 84-85, 96-97 and part of Blocks 77, 86, 83, 95 and 98 of the Original Townsite were re-surveyed. In the Re-survey of the Original Town plat, Block 4 was centered directly upon Main Street so that the primary thoroughfare split and became Madden Avenue on the north side and Walnut Avenue on the south side. The remainder of the re-survey area was divided into nine different sized blocks. Most of the blocks were slightly smaller than the remaining blocks in the Original Townsite with the exception of about two blocks which were larger.[10]

As intended, the courthouse thus occupied a dominant site within the community, particularly the downtown. In the late 1930s, it was the commanding view of the Beckham County Courthouse from the west that was used in John Ford's award-winning film version of John Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning The Grapes of Wrath, a story of "Okie" displacement during the early trying years of the Great Depression. Although the location was suppose to be in eastern Oklahoma, clear across the state from Sayre, the majestic sight of the Beckham County Courthouse dominating the flanking one- and two-story, brick, Commercial Style buildings of downtown Sayre was used to depict the ubiquitous Dust Bowl-era Oklahoma town.

Besides the monumental changes on the east side of downtown Sayre wrought by the construction of the county courthouse, the central business district continued to mature through 1916 despite a slight loss of population through the decade. By 1920, Sayre's community had shrunk by almost two hundred, going from 1,881 citizens in 1910 to 1,703 in 1920. Nonetheless by mid-decade, Main Street, particularly between the courthouse and Fourth Street, was nearly full of brick buildings with only a handful of frame buildings remaining. The majority of establishments were typical of the day, including drug, grocery,

[10]Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, January 1909 and January 1916.

hardware and variety stores, restaurants and banks. On the northeast corner of Main and Fourth, an "Air Dome Picture Theater" was erected with a stage on the north side and no roof. Away from Main, Fourth Street remained much as it was seven years earlier with small frame buildings dominating.[11]

Following World War I with surging agricultural prices and the seemingly endless prosperity of the Roaring Twenties, Sayre underwent a small boom. The community's population jumped almost 1,500 people from 1,703 in 1920 to 3,157 by 1930.[12] With this population surge, came a small building boom in downtown Sayre. The majority of construction activity centered on Fourth Street, although some new buildings were erected on West Main Street. Many of the new buildings were for automobile-related businesses, such as garages and filling stations. These new businesses heralded a coming trend in Sayre to cater to those with automobiles, both locals and the traveling public. According to a promotional article for the town in Harlow's Weekly, by the early 1920s, the "Oklahoma city that was once a grass platte (sic) has become the Mecca of tourists and homebuilders."[13] In early 1922, a contract was let to pave Main Street west from the courthouse to the "...alley just west of the Dunbar Broom Factory," including the two blocks of Fourth Street north from Main to the Hedgbeth Hotel. The previous year, Fourth Street north of the Hedgbeth Hotel was paved.[14]

By January 1924, West Main Street had been nearly fully developed past Fifth Street. In addition to a movie theater in 103-105 West Main, there were two garages, one auto repair shop and two filling stations in what is now the 100 and 200 blocks of West Main. The buildings along Fourth Street began to take on more of a permanent commercial appearance. The frame livery that occupied

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[11]Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, January 1916.

[12]Goins, "Master Plan," 13.

[13]F. Woerner Jones, "Sayre Takes Her Rightful Place Among State's Municipalities," Harlow's Weekly, Vol. 21, #31 (4 August 1922), 7.

[14]The Sayre Headlight, 20 October 1921; May 1921 - February 1922.

the southwest corner of Maple Avenue and Fourth Street was now occupied by a large, two-story, brick garage and filling station.[15]

Within two years, the automobile-related buildings along Fourth and Main streets gained in prominence as part of Fourth, Main and Ninth streets in Sayre were incorporated into the new federal transcontinental highway system. United States Highway 66 was designated in 1926, the first transcontinental highway within the state of Oklahoma. Nationally, the highway ran from Chicago, Illinois, to Los Angeles, California via Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. In the southwest part of Oklahoma, Route 66 followed the path of the existing State Highway 3 between Oklahoma City and Texola, through Sayre. Route 66 quickly gained an unprecedented fame which continues to this day. It was this route many Oklahomans, particularly during the trying times of the 1930s, identified with in their crusade for the quintessential American dream.

The significance of Route 66 in Oklahoma has been established in the Multiple Property Document (MPD) "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma." According to this document,

> **United States Highway 66,..., is significant to the history of Oklahoma as the first east-west transcontinental highway in the state. Also significant are the many Oklahoma businesses on the highway that owed their livelihood to and served the needs of the traveling public in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.[16]**

Although the significance of automobile-related buildings are addressed within the document, the significance of pre-existing commercial buildings along the route is lacking, except for a brief discussion concerning the adaption of commercial buildings for automobile dealerships. For the most part, the Sayre Downtown Historic District is dominated by pre-existing, non-automobile-related, commercial buildings. Within the district, there are several buildings along North Fourth Street which, although pre-dating the designation of the route, are automobile-related. However, these buildings are relatively

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[15]Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, January 1924.

[16]Maryjo Meacham, etal. "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma," (On file at the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. 1994), E-1.

minor within the district as a whole. As such, the proper context to evaluate the Sayre Historic District remains local commerce rather than "Commerce on Route 66."

Although the commercial significance of the Sayre Historic District is much broader than the Route 66-related commercial significance detailed in the Route 66 MPD, undoubtedly the road played a role in the continued vitality of downtown Sayre. As stated in the Route 66 context, "As Route 66 improved so did the commerce along the route."[17] Overall, Route 66 had to have had a significant economic impact on downtown Sayre through the latter half of the period of significance. With the high volume of traffic along the route, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, the local businesses certainly would have aimed a certain amount of product and services at the traveling public. To this day, tourists along the memorable highway are an important element in the economic well-being of downtown merchants. In a variety of ways, the businesses in downtown Sayre provided merchandise and memories of the road to Route 66 traveler.

As Route 66 began its rise to prominence in the late 1920s and early 1930s, spurred in part by the growing economic crisis which forced many to take to the road in search of a better life, the core of the central business district in Sayre was fairly complete. Holding fairly steady through the trying decade, the population in Sayre dropped by only 120 residents, going from 3,157 in 1930 to 3,037 in 1940.[18] Between 1931 and 1937, the most dramatic change along Fourth Street was the erection of a large garage on the southeast corner of Maple Avenue and Fourth Street. Interestingly, a one-story, frame, dwelling was constructed adjacent to the garage after 1924. By 1937, the dwelling was gone but much else in the downtown area remained the same. During the late 1920s and 1930s, Main Street continued to experience some infill construction on the west side as activity along the new federal highway expanded.[19]

Although construction activity in the downtown was limited during the 1930s, a significant building was constructed on the north side of the core central business district. Located on North Fourth Street immediately south of the railroad tracks, on a half-block previously occupied for years by the Western

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[17]Ibid., E-8.

[18]Goins, "Master Plan," 13.

[19]Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, January 1931 and April 1937.

Lumber and Hardware Company, Sayre's first federally-designed Post Office building was constructed in about 1938. The Classically-inspired one-story building was typical of the Post Offices constructed by the Treasury Department in the late 1930s, including the mural on the interior of the building.

The Sayre Downtown Historic District represents the development and maturation of commerce in Sayre from 1903 to 1952. Although new construction activity in the downtown was virtually null during the 1940s and early 1950s, the area maintained its position as the central commercial center. Overall, the decade of the 1940s was a boost for Sayre as it reached a high of 3,362 residents in 1950. A slow decline began in the 1950s with the population falling to 2,903 by 1960.[20]

As with any community, commerce is vital to the continued existence of the town. Although the area was serving the commercial needs of the community prior to 1903, no buildings remain from this early period. As the century progressed, the downtown area was redeveloped from its early frame, single story buildings to substantial, brick, multiple story buildings. Various types of establishments were located in the downtown buildings, with the upper floors frequently used for offices or lodging. By the late 1920s, the core downtown area had taken its extant shape with limited construction activity subsequently occurring.

Although not experiencing substantial growth, downtown Sayre continued to thrive as the commercial center of the town through the early 1950s. As mentioned above, undoubtedly the presence of Route 66 through Sayre aided in the retention of commerce in the central business district through the 1950s, as did the continued designation of the town as county seat. Following the abandonment of Route 66 in favor of Interstate Highway 40 in the 1960s which by-passed downtown Sayre, the area lost some vitality. Further depleting the downtown was the subsequent development of a modern commercial strip on the north side of town near the interstate with even more recent commercial activity occurring on the south side of town, also adjacent to the interstate. Both of these areas cater to the traveling public, making it unnecessary for travelers to venture to the historic center of town. As a result, many of the automobile-related enterprises in the downtown area have found a new function or simply shut down. Nonetheless, the Sayre Historic District continues to be the major commercial center in the town with a variety of services and goods aimed at the locals and tourists.

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[20]Goins, "Master Plan," 13.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Sayre Downtown Historic District is architecturally significant as the collective representation of historic commercial buildings in Sayre. The district includes the majority of commercial buildings which retain their integrity and visual cohesion in the central business district. Although the buildings are not identical, the majority share a common style, design, building material and architectural features. The buildings form a collective unit which provides the texture and identity of the community.

Early twentieth-century commercial architecture is distinct within a community. The buildings differ not only in function from other types of buildings, such as residential or industrial, but also form. Generally, commercial buildings are rectangular blocks with a prominent storefront consisting of an entry with flanking windows sufficient in size to allow for the showing of goods and services. Although one-story buildings are common, as the century and building technology progressed, multi-story buildings became more popular. Although the upper floors were frequently used for living purposes, the exterior appearance rarely reflected this. In addition to lodging, the upper stories of commercial buildings also provided office space and social/community rooms.

The practicality of commercial buildings extended to their location. As commercial enterprises expanded within a community, a central business district developed. In the early part of the twentieth century, these districts were typically located near the major transportation means, the railroad. As automobiles began to displace the train as the dominant form of transportation, the streets of the central business district were often designated as highways, commonly state highways but, if the town was lucky, incorporated into the federal highway system. Thus the critical link between commerce and transportation continued. Although the individual buildings would experience change and even demolition, generally the original downtown area remained distinctly commercial in character.

The central business district is of especial significance to American communities because "As private enterprise was the principal generator of the nation's development, so commercial architecture played a central role in defining the character of its settlements." Although individual buildings may stand out, it was the overall collection of downtown buildings that was

"...instrumental in giving a town its identity...(and)...provided a focus for its activities."[21]

The Sayre Downtown Historic District comprises the core of the historic central business district. Although the downtown was historically larger than the district boundaries, redevelopment in the outer lying areas has resulted in visual interruptions which serve to separate the areas. Despite the erosion of the perimeter, the Sayre Downtown Historic District remains the identifying element for the city.

There is no single identified builder or architect for the district. The majority of buildings were probably designed and constructed by local firms. For example, W. M. Rice was an architect, contractor and builder working in Sayre in the late 1900s. Headquartered in Amarillo, Texas, Rice "erected" the First National Bank Building at 102 West Main in 1905 and the adjoining Flournoy building at 104-106 West Main in 1907. In 1909, Rice also designed the incorporation of those two buildings into the Thurmond Block. Rice had some competition in Sayre from the firm of Hohenshelt and Strop, Contractors. Working during the same time frame, this firm constructed the Whitehurst Building at 102-104 East Main, the Hugo Building at 112 West Main and the Hullum Hardware Company Building at 114 West Main.[22] Within the district boundaries, there are no identified buildings designed by a known "master" architect.

As the collection of commercial buildings representing Sayre, Oklahoma, the Sayre Downtown Historic District is distinctive. Although the individual buildings are not all landmark construction with varying degrees of integrity, collectively they provide Sayre's architectural identity. In addition, the district represents the commercial development and maturation of Sayre without which the town would have ceased to exist.

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[21]Richard Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture, (Walnut Creek, California: Altamira Press, 2000), 12-13.

[22]The Sayre Headlight, 29 April 1909.

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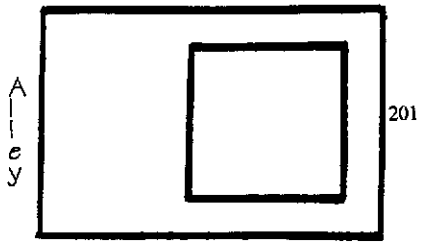
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the intersection of East Main Street and South Broadway Avenue, proceed south on South Broadway Avenue to the alley south of East Main Street, then west along the alley to the alley west of South Fourth Street, then north along the alley to the south side of the railroad tracks, then east along the railroad tracks to North Fourth Street, then south along North Fourth Street to Maple Avenue, then east along Maple Avenue to the alley east of North Fourth Street, then south along the alley to the alley north of East Main Street, then east along the alley to North Broadway Avenue, then south along North Broadway Avenue to the point of beginning. The boundaries include Lots 1-6 of Block 48, Lots 13-24 of Block 49, Lots 13-16 of Block 50, Lots 1-18 of Block 60 and Lots 1-12 of Block 61. All of the blocks are located in the Original Townsite of Sayre, Beckham County, Oklahoma.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries include the area historically associated with the central business district that retains its visual continuity. The boundaries exclude those areas that are void of historic resources or that have been significantly altered.

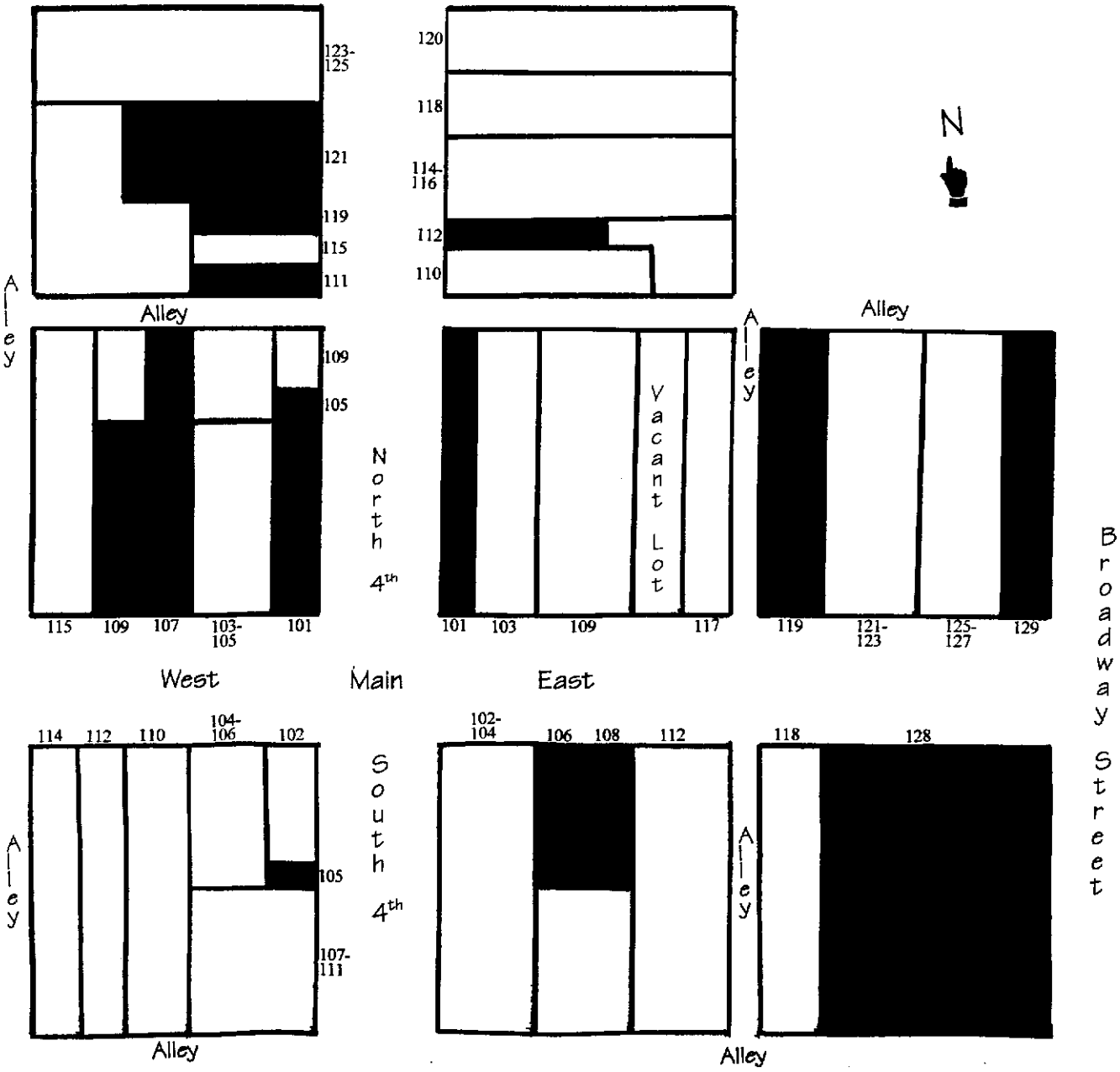
Railroad Tracks



Sayre Downtown Historic District
Sayre, Beckham County, Oklahoma
– Contributing
– Noncontributing

Not to Scale

Maple Avenue



Sayre Downtown Historic District

Sayre Downtown Historic District
Sayre, Beckham County, Oklahoma
14-441860-3905350