

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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

1. Name of property

historic name Canton Main Street Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

Bounded roughly by Park Street on the north; Main Street on the south; Bridge Street on street & number the east; and Adams Street on the west not for publication N/A  
city or town Canton vicinity N/A  
state North Carolina code NC county Haywood code 087 zip code 28716

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  
X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  
nationally statewide X locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Crow SHPO 7/18/05  
Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
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:

<u>entered in the National Register</u> <u>See continuation sheet.</u>	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<u>determined eligible for the National Register</u> <u>See continuation sheet.</u>	_____	_____
<u>determined not eligible for the National Register</u>	_____	_____
<u>removed from the National Register</u>	_____	_____
<u>other (explain):</u>	_____	_____

Canton Main Street Historic District  
Name of Property

Haywood, North Carolina  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>34</u>	<u>9</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>35</u>	<u>10</u>	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
1

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: specialty store  
Commerce/Trade department store  
Commerce/Trade professional  
Commerce/Trade financial institution  
Commerce/Trade restaurant  
Government post office  
Recreation/Culture theater  
Domestic hotel

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: specialty store  
Commerce/Trade professional  
Commerce/Trade financial institution  
Commerce/Trade restaurant  
Recreation/Culture theater  
Religion religious facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

- Commercial Style
- Colonial Revival
- Classical Revival

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick  
roof asphalt  
walls brick  
stucco  
other wood

**Narrative Description**

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

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Name of Property

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County and State

**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)

**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.

**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.

Architecture

Commerce

**Period of Significance**

ca. 1885 - 1954

**Significant Dates**

1908

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Benton & Benton, architect

Lord, William H., architect

Simon, Louis, architect

Wray, Joseph M., builder

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(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**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Western Office, Archives and History

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Canton Main Street Historic District  
Haywood County, North Carolina

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SUMMARY

The Canton Main Street Historic District in Canton, North Carolina, is located in the center of town, just south of and bordering the Blue Ridge Paper Products mill. The historic district is bounded roughly by Park Street on the north, Main Street on the south, Adams Street on the west, and Bridge Street on the east. The district, which encompasses approximately fourteen acres, incorporates within its boundaries those concentrations of one to three-story brick buildings lining both sides of Main and Park Streets, which run east-west, picking up additional contributing properties on adjacent side streets running north and south. The district forms an intact configuration representative of Canton's primary development time from the mid-1880s through the 1920s. Outside the district boundaries to the north is the paper mill (formerly Champion Fibre Company, now Blue Ridge Paper Products), to the south and east are historic residential areas, and to the west is commercial development dating from the 1960s through the 1990s. The downtown has retained its historic integrity despite the loss of some buildings and some minor architectural changes to individual buildings.

The topography of the district is varied, with the lowest area being around the railroad right-of-way, Park Street, the northern end of Main Street, and the paper mill. This area is within the flood plain of the Pigeon River, which runs south to north just outside the district to the southwest. Depot Street is located north of Park Street, parallel to the railroad tracks and the paper mill. A new depot is situated north of the street. The topography rises gently south of Park Street, to Main Street, and then rises sharply to Bridge and Church Streets. Residential neighborhoods are set within the hillsides east and southeast of the district.

The nominated district consists of thirty-four contributing buildings, one contributing structure, nine non-contributing buildings, and one non-contributing structure. The majority of non-contributing buildings are historic and have reversible architectural changes such as covering of brick facades with wood or metal, or, in the case of the Imperial Hotel, changing a portion of the siding from wood to new replacement brick. A handful of others have more permanent changes such as stuccoed exteriors or major structural changes to storefront configurations. Four vacant lots are included within the district boundary, one of which, at the corner of Academy and Main Streets is a historically vacant lot.

The majority of the buildings in the district are designed in the Commercial Style. Examples include the **Commercial Building at 135-137 Main Street** (#22, 1921); the **P L & S Building** (#10, 1932); and **Martin's Drug Store** (#2, 1949), notable for its Carrara glass façade, the only one in the historic district. Particularly notable buildings which stand out because they are not the typical Commercial Style are the **Imperial Hotel** (#17, ca. 1885; additions 1916 and 1925), a Queen Anne-style building which pre-dates the existing commercial buildings; the **Champion Fibre Company Office Building** (#32, 1918), built in the Classical Revival style; and the former **Champion Bank and Trust** (#14, ca. 1925), built in the Classical Revival style common to bank architecture of the time. Other notable buildings include the **Colonial Theater** (#3, 1932, NR 2000), a Colonial Revival-style building, an unusual style for theaters

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with most theaters of the time utilizing the Art Deco style; the former **United States Post Office** (#1, 1939), a Colonial Revival style building constructed during the Works Progress Administration program;

It should be noted that while Champion Paper's impact on the development of downtown Canton was significant, the only building included within the district directly associated with the mill is the Champion Fibre Company Office Building (#32, 1918). Extensive field work, examination of documentary photos, and a tour of the current Blue Ridge Paper Products mill revealed that very little historic fabric remains. The original brick sections from 1906 are gone, and only portions of 1920s changes to the mill remain, encased within newer additions. The only visible historic portion of the mill is the 1932 addition at the southeast corner, but it is dwarfed by the enormous complex of the mill which extends to the north and west. The majority of the current mill complex dates from the late 1950s through the 1990s.

### **INVENTORY LIST**

Buildings are listed in the order of east-west streets first, followed by north-south streets. East-west streets are listed with the north side of street first; north-south streets are listed with the east side of street first. Dating of buildings is based upon 1907, 1912, 1921, 1930, and 1945 Sanborn maps, documentary photographs, historic preservation office survey or National Register files, newspaper articles, oral history interviews, and The Architecture of Our Home Town by Camille Wells. These sources, along with other historical information sources such as city phone books are noted with each entry. Unless noted otherwise, all buildings have a flat roof with parapet walls, typical of the Commercial Style. If the original builder or business occupant of the building is known, it is noted. Otherwise, properties are called "Commercial Building."

Contributing properties date from the period of significance and retain their historic integrity. Non-contributing buildings are those which were built after the end of the period of significance or older buildings which no longer retain their historic character. Some non-contributing commercial building facades are covered with modern materials or have been re-constructed with modern materials to recreate the historic appearance of the building.

#### **Park Street, North Side**

**1. 32 Park Street. (former) United States Post Office. Contributing. 1939.**

One-story-plus-basement Classical Revival style side-gable roof building built with Works Progress Administration monies. The building is faced with random ashlar stone, in contrast to the formal ornamentation of the entry. Details of the arched formal entry include a double leaf door with six lights each side; fanlight; fluted columns; dentil blocks; and a raised relief eagle motif over the doorway. Dentil blocks and fully pedimented gable ends with fanlights add to the Classical motifs of the building. The shallow gable roof is capped with an octagonal cupola with dentil blocks and columns, with a weathervane at the peak. Changes made recently include enclosure of the original rear one-story porch,

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completed in the 1990s. Architect for the building was Louis A. Simon, and Neal A. Melick was the supervising engineer. Both were employed by the Works Progress Administration. Native limestone from the nearby Sevier Quarry was used to construct the building. While Wade C. Hill was postmaster, Champion Paper Company donated the land, valued at \$10,000, and the Works Progress Administration granted the town \$70,000 to build the building. While an opening date of 1935 was the goal, the building was not completed until 1939, officially opening on February 2, 1940, and dedicated on April 9, 1949. Hill continued as postmaster until 1953. In 1983, a new post office was built, and this property was bought by Champion International Paper Company for offices. (Sanborn maps; survey files; cornerstone; The Enterprise, May 5, 1993)

**2. 24 Park Street. Martin's Drug Store. Contributing. 1949.**

Two-story, free-standing, Commercial Style building of concrete block with a Carrara glass façade. This building is the only building utilizing this material in the historic district. The building is four bays wide on the second floor, with a single one-over-one window in each bay. The storefront is a single bay with aluminum frame double-leaf door and display windows. The sides and rear of the building are stuccoed over brick. There is a modern, one-story-plus-basement stuccoed addition of unknown date at the rear with metal frame awning style windows, and a wood deck added on the west side. This store is the most recent location for Martin's Drug Store, which has been here since 1949. The original location was in a wood frame building at 107 Main Street, which was later replaced by the Martin Building (#15, ca. 1910s). Samuel Burrus and Joseph Hair built this third location in 1949 and the business has remained in operation until the present day. Joseph Hair, a dentist, used the second story for his offices for many years, but the second story is now unoccupied. (Sanborn maps; survey files; The Enterprise, May 5, 1993)

**Park Street, South Side**

**3. 55-57 Park Street. Colonial Theater. Contributing. 1932. (NR, 2000)**

The Colonial Revival-style Colonial Theater stands out in the landscape as being the only example of this style in the district. It is also the only remaining intact historic theater in Canton. The tall, two and one-half story, solid masonry building has an elongated, tapering form which extends from north to south. It was designed for use as a theater, with the front portion of the building designed to look like a residential building. The remainder of the building is more typically a standard Commercial Style, with plain, unfenestrated walls. The side gable roof at the front of the building and the front-gable dormers are covered in slate. The remainder of the roof is flat. Windows are six-over-six on the upper level with flat arch brick lintels and brick sills. Windows in the dormers are multi-light. The storefront was reconstructed ca. 2001 as closely as possible to the original with a recessed entry framed by projecting bays with multi-light windows. A balustrade delineates the edge of the projecting entry to the building. Modern changes to the exterior of this building which took place during its recent rehabilitation include the joining of 59 Park Street with 55-57 Park Street, and the addition of an elevator tower at the rear northwest corner. The 59 Park Street section of the building, formerly a bus station and most recently offices for the Alcoholic Beverage Commission, is now the annex to the theater and is used for

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community meetings. Multi-light windows and a multi-light door were added to this façade in the renovations. The Colonial Theater opened on June 6, 1932. Benton & Benton, an architectural firm in Wilson, North Carolina, designed the theater and Canton builder Marion C. Sprinkle built the movie house. The Colonial was the first facility in the town of Canton built specifically to house a modern motion picture theater, and it served as a central focus point of the town's social life through the 1960s, when it fell into disrepair. Recent renovations, ca. 2001 to 2002, have made the Colonial once again a focal point of the community. It is a rare example of the use of the Colonial Revival style for a movie theater, a distinction underscored by the name the owners gave the downtown business. Most theaters of the period in western North Carolina and across the state were built in the Art Deco style in the 1930s. (Sanborn maps; National Register nomination)

**4. 5 Park Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1935.**

One-story brick, free-standing, wedge-shape building to fit the site. Original storefront intact with transoms painted. Main entry door is single light-over-panel, with a two-panel door on the east side. The east wall has substantial structural problems and is buckling outward. Single stack brick chimney at rear. This building does not appear on Sanborn maps until 1945, but likely was built in the mid-1930s. (Sanborn maps)

**Main Street, North Side**

**5. 49-51 Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1922.**

Tall one-story painted brick Commercial Style building with two distinct storefront bays. Building steps down the street from east to west, with the westernmost part being slightly lower in elevation than the east. Both storefront bays are very intact, each with two recessed brick panels above. Only visible change to storefront is the boarding up of the transom on the western bay. Entry floors to both bays are the original tile. Original double-leaf doors. There is a large one-story modern concrete block addition to the rear. This building replaces some of the earliest wood frame commercial buildings in downtown. Charles Wells, one of the earliest settlers in Canton and one of the first merchants, built this building, along with several others along Main Street, from the 1910s through the mid-1920s. Rhinehart's Feed Store was located here in the early 1950s, with Eshelman Red Rose Feeds here by 1954. The building is currently in use as Canton Auction. (Sanborn maps; survey files; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**6. 53-55 Main Street. Wells Building. Contributing. ca. 1920.**

This two-story Commercial Style brick building was also built by Charles Wells, replacing his earlier wood frame general merchandise store from the 1880s. The first floor of this building is divided into two bays, with the original storefront configurations intact but with some modern materials. The second story is six bays, with single window openings, but the sash are all boarded over. A small wood deck has been added at the northwest corner, in the rear. Charles Wells' general merchandise business occupied this building for many years, with the building later in use by Wells' sons for additional commercial uses. "W. Wells, General Merchandise" is barely visible, painted on the east wall, along with a faded Dr. Pepper

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sign. A new Coca-Cola sign has been painted on this same wall. Palmer Furniture Company was located here in the early 1950s, with Western Auto occupying the building by 1954. The building is currently in use as a florist shop. (Sanborn maps; survey files; documentary photos; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**7. 59-61 Main Street. Commercial Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1920.**

Two-story brick Commercial Style building, with a corner entry like those located at the intersection of Main and Park Streets further to the east. This building, like the ones farther east, was also likely built by Charles Wells. Unfortunately, recent stucco covering of the entire building makes this a non-contributing structure. Earlier photos note the dovetail brick detailing at the corner which is covered here, but is still visible on 135-137 Main Street (#22). Doors are modern, and windows are one-over-one replacement sash. Storefront area has also been extensively altered. A chimney is located at the rear of the building, also stuccoed. It is now known when the changes were made to the building, but they appear to be modern changes, all done at the same time. In the early 1940s, the building housed Parker's Taxi Stand; Deluxe Tavern; and Harris Grocery Company. The Knights of Pythias had their meeting hall on the second floor. Robinson Grocery was here in the early 1950s. Presently, a clock shop and a Mexican grocery occupy the building. (Sanborn maps; survey files; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**8. 65 Main Street. Commercial Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1925.**

Two-story brick building, severely altered through the application of stucco over the entire exterior. Earlier photos indicated there were multi-light metal frame windows on the second story, and an intact storefront. The current windows are all one-over-one replacement sash, and the storefront area is completely altered. There is a large one-story concrete block addition at the rear. In the early 1940s, this housed Harkins Shoe Repair Shop. (Sanborn maps; survey files)

**9. 67-69 Main Street. Hampton Clothiers. Contributing. ca. 1920.**

One-story Commercial Style tan brick building with two original storefronts, including single-light doors with transoms. Cornice of the building has a repeating pattern of three soldier-course bricks inset within the tan brick. Large one-story modern concrete block addition at the rear. This was built by Charles Hampton, son of prominent local merchant W. J. Hampton, as a clothing store. W. J. Hampton, like Charles Wells, was one of the early merchants in Canton at the turn of the century. In the early 1940s through the early 1950s it was in use as Nantahala Hardware. (Sanborn maps; survey files; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**10. 71-77 Main Street. P L & S Building. Contributing. 1932.**

One-story-plus-basement Commercial Style tan brick building with a multi-level raised parapet wall along the facade. Four distinct storefront bays are intact, with original configurations and materials. Storefront details include tile kick plates, original single-light doors with transoms on the two easternmost bays, and replacement aluminum frame doors on the others. There is a brick chimney at the rear, with original metal frame multi-light windows on the rear (north) elevation. Along with the Colonial Theater,

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also built in 1932, this building represents a level of prosperity in Canton in the early years of the Depression, which most western North Carolina towns did not experience again until the late 1930s to early 1940s. The success of the paper mill and its expansion, also in 1932, no doubt influenced the town's optimistic outlook and continued commercial expansion. It was built by Barney Schulman and brothers-in-law Aaron Pliskin and I. J. Londoner. The western half of the building was occupied for at least ten years by Eagle Department Store, with the eastern portion occupied by Schulman's Department Store. Schulman's was still located in the building in the early 1950s. Davis' Dime Store later occupied the west half of the building. Crest Store's Company 5 & 10 was in the building by 1951. (Sanborn maps; survey files; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**11. 81 Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925.**

Simple one-story-plus-basement tan brick building with storefront configuration intact, but with replacement materials including aluminum framing on display window and entry door, and snap-in muntins on display window. Rear of building has been stuccoed and a modern entry has been added. No windows on the front, but fixed pane sash at the rear. Carl G. Hill General Merchandise was located in the building in the early 1950s. (Sanborn maps; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**12. 83-85 Main Street. Rose's Dime Store Company. Non-contributing. ca. 1930.**

One-story-plus-basement brick building with Art Deco corner detailing visible above the added pent roof awning. Pent roof on the front covers the façade, making the building a non-contributing structure. The façade has two distinct entry bays, with a projecting center display area, in the original configuration with original materials. Other features include original tile floors at the entries and interior brick chimney at the rear. Windows at the rear basement level are bricked in, but original arches remain. Other windows at the rear are six-over-six. While not fully documented, local tradition states that this was the site of the W. J. Hampton General Store. It was later torn down and replaced by this building, built for the Rose's Dime Store Company. Additional uses of this building have included Jack's 5 & 10; and a pharmacy. This store, like several others built in the 1930s, was constructed after the major expansion period of the downtown. At this time, there was no need for second stories for use as apartments, since by this time the mill workers had their own permanent housing. (Sanborn maps; survey files; oral history)

**13. 87 Main Street. Champion Bank. Contributing. ca. 1900.**

The tall one-story painted brick building with a wide arched storefront configuration is one of the oldest buildings in the district. The side and rear of the building has been stuccoed. The small one-story addition on the rear was added sometime between 1930 and 1945. A small deck and covered walkway has been added at the rear northeast corner in recent years. This building appears to have been built ca. 1900 and became the Champion Bank about 1908. Documentary photos note the building originally had arched windows and a heavy cornice. By 1923, the current single arched storefront had been built and the upper arched windows bricked in. The ghost lines of these windows and the cornice are still visible. Champion Bank remained in the building until at least the late 1910s. According to the 1916 Pictorial History the bank was prospering in the late 1910s, with assets of over \$300,000. The success of the bank was

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attributed to the "ability of its officers and the prosperity of Canton...the industrial city of the mountains." At the time the bank was organized (ca. 1908), J. H. Kirkpatrick was the cashier and largest stockholder; and W. J. Hampton was president. After the building was no longer used as a bank, it was in use for a time as the City Café and then until recent years as a dry cleaner. (Sanborn maps; survey files; documentary photos; 1916 Pictorial History; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**14. 101 Main Street. Champion Bank and Trust Company. Contributing. ca. 1925.**

Tall one-story, tan brick Classical Revival building with limestone trim built to house the Champion Bank and Trust Company. Façade is three bays wide, with limestone pilasters delineating the bays. A decorative swag ornaments the inset panels above the east and west bays. Architrave trim remains on the central entry, but the door has been replaced with a modern one, and all window sash are replacement fixed panes. Earlier photos indicate original windows were six-over-six. One window on the west bay has been replaced with an ATM machine. The flat roof capped by limestone coping, has a projecting cornice extending around three sides of the building. By the 1950s a small wing was added on the east. A drive-through has been added in recent years on the west, both slightly recessed from the main block of the building. This building, along with the (former) United States Post Office (#1) and the Champion Fibre Company Office Building (#32) are the only examples of this style in the district. The Classical Revival style was typical for bank construction of the time period, evoking a sense of strength and stability. In the 1950s the building was in use as the Haywood County Bank. It is now Central Carolina Bank. (Sanborn maps; survey files; The Enterprise, 5 May 1993; documentary photos; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**15. 107 Main Street. Martin Building. Contributing. ca. 1910s.**

This two-story-plus-basement Commercial Style brick building with some Classical Revival limestone detailing extends from Main Street on the south to Park Street on the north. The west elevation of the building faces onto Academy Street. On the Main Street façade, the storefront has been modernized with new materials, but the configuration and the brick façade above the storefront remain. Throughout the second story of the building the original arched multi-light casement windows remain. On the Academy Street elevation, the building is divided into twelve bays by pilasters. Two of these bays have distinctive Classical Revival-inspired entries to the second floor. The northernmost one of these has "Martin Building" inscribed in the limestone above the door. The second entry door is capped by a pediment with a limestone door surround. The other bays consist of boarded-over display windows, modern doors, or original inset brick panels. On the Park Street elevation, the building is a full three stories in height, with the first floor consisting of a modernized storefront and arched windows on the second floor. The brick on the rear half of the building has been painted. There is a front interior end brick chimney on the Main Street façade.

Built by Dr. Walter S. Martin, this building replaced the earlier frame building in the same location which housed Martin's Drug Store. Merchant's Construction Company of Asheville built this structure. It was designed to house seven businesses at the street level with room for offices and housing upstairs. Dr.

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Martin's store was located in the large unit facing Main Street and he lived in an apartment upstairs. Other retail stores in this building at the same time included a jeweler, a barber, a restaurant, and a telegraph office. Martin's Drug Store moved to 24 Park Street (#2) in 1949. In the early 1930s, additional Champion Bank & Trust Company offices were located in this building. They remained there until the 1940s when they moved to the Medical Building (#39). In the early 1950s, two of the businesses in the building were WHCC Radio and Myer's Variety Store. (Sanborn maps; survey files; The Enterprise, May 5, 1993; documentary photos; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**16. 109 Main Street. W. Turner Sharp Building. Contributing. ca. 1910.**

This three-story brick Commercial Style building retains most of its original architectural detailing including arched window openings with multi-light upper sash over a single light lower sash. Brick corbelling remains at the cornice. The original brick stairs to the former side balcony and the original storefront with an iron balcony above have been reconstructed as part of the recent renovations of the neighboring Imperial Hotel complex. Several interior brick chimneys are visible on the east elevation.

One of the most architecturally intact buildings on Main Street, this was built by W. Turner Sharp, who also owned the adjacent Imperial Hotel complex. It originally housed the post office on the first floor, with housing and meeting space above. The Knights of Pythias held their meetings here for many years. Sharp lived in the upper level until 1923 when he built a new house elsewhere in Canton. After the post office moved to a new location, the A & P Grocery was located on the first floor. By the late 1910s, stores had been constructed in the space between this building and the adjacent Imperial Hotel, joining this building into the overall hotel complex. At this time the upper floors were in use as additional hotel rooms for the Imperial Hotel. (Sanborn maps; survey files; documentary photos)

**17. 111-117 Main Street. Imperial Hotel. Non-contributing. ca. 1885; additions 1916; ca. 1925, renovated ca. 1993.**

This large building complex consists of the original ca. 1885 two-and-one-half-story Queen Anne style house, with several additions made to it through the years. Notable features of the building from the ca. 1885 period include the wraparound porch with turned posts and balusters and cutwork brackets, an interior brick chimney, conical roof corner turrets, asymmetrical massing, hip and gable roofline, and one-over-one windows. The westernmost portion of the house, originally covered with weatherboard siding, has been covered with brick in the ca. 1993 renovations. The 1916 brick addition, added at the southeast corner, added the projecting rounded brick wing with a conical roof, and a double-leaf entry door into the hotel office space. A small brick addition to the original house was also made at this time, located in the corner between the projecting bay and the original house. The stores added at the front southwest side of the building in the late 1910s, have been removed. The last of the additions to this building, the four-story Commercial Style brick rear addition facing parallel Park Street, was built ca. 1925. On the first floor, the storefront area has been modernized, but within the original openings. The wedge-shaped building consists of three bays on each of the upper floors, divided by pilasters, with double one-over-one windows located in each bay. Squares of yellow brick adorn this façade.

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This large complex began as a single residence ca. 1885, soon after the railroad arrived in Canton in 1881. In 1910, Turner Sharp purchased the house and remodeled it as a hotel. The building at the time contained thirty-eight rooms, with many of them occupied by Champion officials who needed housing during the early operating years of the mill. The hotel was the earliest building to have electricity, with the mill's generators connected to the hotel. Beginning in 1912, the *Canton Enterprise* newspaper was located in the basement of the hotel. The first addition to the building, completed in brick in 1916, is located on the southeast corner. This added the curving portion of the building, still visible, where the hotel office was located. In its heyday, the Imperial was known as "one of the state's best \$2 hotels." In the late 1910s, a row of brick stores were added at the front of the building, covering the southwest corner with only the tall turret of the house visible above them. At this time the front porch and much of the front detailing of the house was removed. The rear addition facing onto Park Street was added ca. 1925, first serving as additional hotel rooms, and later as apartments. Current renovations have removed the late 1910s stores and taken the building back to its 1916 appearance in the front, with the exception of the lapped wood weatherboard siding on the southwestern portion of the building being converted to brick to match the 1916 addition. Documentary photos indicate this section historically was not brick, but remained as weatherboard even after the additions were made. Much of this section was altered when the storefronts were placed in front of it. Restoring this siding back to its 1916 appearance would make this significant building a contributing property. The ca. 1925 addition remains at the rear. In the 1950s, the businesses that occupied the stores added to the front of the building included Nicholl's Clothing Store, Canton Food Center, Charlie's of Canton, Wykle's Men's and Boys Clothing, Canton Electric Appliance Company, Martin Electric Company, and Mease's News Stand. (Sanborn maps; survey files; documentary photos; oral history; The Enterprise, May 5, 1993; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**18. 119 Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1910.**

Two-story tan brick Commercial Style building with corbelling in inset panels above windows and rusticated concrete block at the cornice. Storefront configuration is intact, but plywood paneling covers some of the elements. The original door opening to the second floor, located at the southeast corner of the building, is intact, but has been infilled with a modern door. Second floor is divided into three bays separated by pilasters. Windows are one-over-one. Sanborn maps note that in 1921 a jewelry store occupied this building, with offices there by 1945. In the early 1950s, Imperial Life Insurance Company was located on the second floor, along with the office of the American Red Cross. (Sanborn maps; survey files; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**19. 123-125 Main Street. McGee Building. Contributing. 1915.**

This two-story brick Commercial Style building is distinguished by its finely detailed mortar work in the pressed brick façade and by a central parapet edged beneath with brick corbelling. "1915" is etched into a limestone block above the central window bay. The double windows with diamond-paned upper sash on the second floor are framed by concrete sills and flat arches. Parker McGee, who built this building, moved to Canton soon after the railroad arrived in 1881 and was one of the first merchants downtown.

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His first business was buying and shipping furs, beeswax, and native herbs from the mountains. McGee also ran a wholesale grocery, and later opened a general merchandise store including clothing, fabric, and notions. McGee was a successful businessman in all of his enterprises and constructed this building in 1915. Winner's was located here in the early 1950s, along with the Hotel Canton. (Sanborn maps; survey files; documentary photos; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**20. 127-129 Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1910s.**

This handsome two-story brick Commercial Style building first appears on the 1921 Sanborn map. The two modernized first floor storefronts flank a central arched entry to the second floor which retains its original double-leaf doors and fanlight. The second floor consists of five bays, each with a single one-over-one window inset within a recessed brick panel. Each window opening is capped by a flat arch with keystones. A pattern of recessed headers and stretchers creates a row of crosses at the second floor level. Decorative brick corbelling adorns the cornice with header bricks set forward and at an oblique angle. The central bay, over the entry door, has an arched window opening. Like many other buildings in the downtown, Charles Wells also built this building as the town population grew with the expansion of the paper mill. Businesses located here through the years included a pool hall, barber shops, drug store and clothing stores. Dr. Robert Owen and Dr. Margaret Owen, husband and wife, had their medical offices on the upper floor during WWII. In the early 1950s Slack's was located here, along with Carolina Surplus Store. (Sanborn maps; survey files; oral history; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**21. 131 Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1910s.**

Two-story brick Commercial Style building with one storefront that retains its original configuration and tile kick plates, although it has a modern door and a boarded-over transom. Second floor is three bays wide, with a single one-over-one window in each bay and an inset corbelled brick panel above the windows. One-story wing has been added at rear. This building first appears on Sanborn maps in 1921. Buchanan's Appliances was located here in the early 1950s. (Sanborn maps; survey files; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**22. 135-137 Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. 1921.**

Two-story-plus-basement Commercial Style corner building framing the intersection of Main and Park Streets. This building has a corner entry with notable dovetail brick detailing. First floor consists of an entry bay to the second floor and the original storefront, including a transom with leaded lights. The second floor is five bays with single one-over-one windows in each bay, with concrete sills and lintels. The corner entry has a large display window with transom and a one-over-one window above. The Park Street elevation is seven bays wide on the second floor, each with a one-over-one window, and with all window openings on the first floor bricked in. Windows at the rear are two-over-two. Sanborn maps from 1921 note that this building is "from plans", so it apparently was under construction at this time. This is the most intact of the several buildings built by early Canton merchant Charles Wells. Like the building at 59-61 Main Street (#7) and the building across Park Street (#23), this building has a corner entry. Early businesses included a craft shop, newsstand, bakery, clothing store, and tea room. By 1930 the Canton

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Drug Store was located here. The second floor was used for offices; including, beginning in 1925, the dental office of Carey Wells, son of Charles Wells. Canton Drug Store was located here in the early 1950s and attorney's offices were located on the second floor. (Sanborn maps; survey files; The Enterprise, May 5, 1993; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**23. 141-145 Main Street. C. Broadway Wells Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1916.**

Two-story-plus-basement (on the south) and one-story (on the north) Commercial Style building currently covered on the main façade by diagonal wood siding. This was built as a multi-level building to house three separate businesses. A pent roof awning extends across the first story and around the corner of the building. Beyond this, the original brick remains on the south elevation, although it has been painted in recent years. The rear of the building also has wood siding and a pent roof awning at the basement storefront level. All storefronts have been modernized. Some original two-over-two windows remain. Field examination of the building indicates that the original brick remains beneath the current wood panel covering. Charles Wells also built this building, soon after Park Street was laid out as the second commercial street in downtown. His son, C. Broadway Wells, operated a dry goods store here. In the 1920s Epstein Department Store was located here, with the Hub and Hudson's Department Store located here by 1931. By 1942 Hudson's was located in the entire building, and remained in business through at least the early 1950s. This building, along with the one across Park Street (#22), frame the intersection of Main and Park Streets. (Sanborn maps; survey files; documentary photos; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**24. 147 Main Street. Telephone Exchange. Contributing. ca. 1912.**

Three-story brick Commercial Style building with corbelling at the cornice. Very intact storefront with original double leaf glass doors and painted transom. Windows on the façade are one-over-one on the third story and replacement single light fixed panes on the second. Flat concrete sills and lintels frame all window openings. On the rear, original two-over-two and one-over-one windows remain, set within segmental arches. The oldest building in this block, this building was first used as the telephone exchange. In the 1930s, the armory was located here along with Carolina Power & Light. From 1940 to 1983 Champion Cut Rate Drug Store was located here. (Sanborn maps; survey files; The Enterprise, May 5, 1993)

**25. 149 Main Street. Bank Building. Contributing. ca. 1912.**

Two-story yellow brick Commercial Style building with a separate entry bay to the second floor at the southeast corner of the building. Storefront has been somewhat modernized and has a pent roof awning added. Raised brick panels are located above all openings. Windows are single and double one-over-one sashes. All windows at the rear are bricked in. According to Sanborn maps, this building was built as a bank. By 1937 Champion Drug Store occupied the building and Wellworth Department Store occupied the building in the 1940s. L. J. Ward Piano Company was located here in the early 1950s. (Sanborn maps; survey files; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

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**26. 151 Main Street. Gaiety Theater. Contributing. ca. 1912.**

Two-story brick Commercial Style building which has undergone several façade changes through the years. The current brick façade has two recessed brick panels on the second story with replacement windows in the openings. The storefront has been modernized. This building was first used as the Gaiety Theater, owned by K. F. Wenz. In 1915, the building was purchased by G. H. Bailie and J. T. Duckworth, two of Champion's mill managers, who added a pressed metal façade and began using the building as the Cantonian Theater. In the 1930s the building was in use as the Strand theater, and then became Pearlman's Department Store in the late 1950s. (Sanborn maps; survey files)

**27. 153 Main Street. Commercial Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1912.**

Two-story brick Commercial Style building completely covered with metal siding. The single storefront has been modernized, including the addition of stone at the kick plates. This building started out as a hardware store, with Haywood Hardware located here from the late 1930s through at least the early 1950s. (Sanborn maps; survey files; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**28. 155 Main Street. Commercial Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1925.**

One-story brick building which has become part of the adjacent business to the south. Like the building to the south, it is completely covered in metal siding with an altered storefront. One of the later buildings in this block, this building housed Bargain Grocery store in the late 1930s. Carolina Power & Light had their offices here beginning in 1942 and continuing through at least the early 1950s. (Sanborn maps; survey files; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**29. 157 Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925.**

Highly intact one-story brick Commercial Style building with original storefront, glass block transom, and corbelling at the cornice. In the late 1930s through at least the early 1940s Gene W. Young, a plumber, had his business here. (Sanborn maps, survey files)

**30. 159 Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925.**

Highly intact two-story brick Commercial Style building with an original storefront. Second floor has original one-over-one windows with brick lintels and concrete sills, and corbelling at the cornice. Windows at the rear are boarded over. In the late 1930s William G. Cole, clothiers, had a business here. Cole and Wykle Clothing Store, outfitter for men and boys, was here in the early 1940s. (Sanborn maps; survey files)

**31. 161-163 Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. 1915.**

Two-story corner building with the same corner entry as other buildings in the district. The Main Street elevation has display windows flanking a center entry. The door here is a modern replacement. On the second floor there are five bays, each with a one-over-one window with a concrete lintel and sill. The corner entry faces the railroad tracks and is also very intact with original double leaf doors with transom and a one-over-one window above. The storefront facing onto Depot Street is also very intact with

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original materials, double leaf doors, and glass transoms. One-over-one windows line the second floor of this elevation. This building was likely also built by Charles Wells, who built many other downtown buildings. In 1915, the New Canton Café occupied the space at the rear of the building facing onto Depot Street and the railroad tracks. Pete and George Passes, of Greek ancestry, opened the restaurant, the first place that visitors would see when they arrived by train. Also in the 1910s, a barber shop was located on the first floor, and the second floor housed a boarding house with baths down the hall, mostly for the mill workers. Champion Cab & Transfer Company had an office in this building in the early 1950s. (Sanborn maps; survey files; The Enterprise, May 5, 1993; documentary photos; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**32. 175 Main Street. Champion Fibre Company Office Building. Contributing. 1918.**

Classical Revival in style, this two-story-plus-basement brick building with decorative concrete elements is prominently sited at the entrance to the mill complex. Symmetrical in footprint, the building façade is five bays wide, with the central entry bays recessed behind the two flanking projecting bays. The raised parapet roofline with concrete coping over the main entrance allows for the name display of “Champion Papers” within a recessed concrete band. Below this, a typical Classical Revival detail of a projecting concrete cornice separates the flat plane of the façade from the parapet. The entry to the building is raised above ground level, with granite steps flanking either side of a landing with a solid brick balustrade with concrete coping. The original double leaf six-panel doors have one-over-one sidelight windows and transom. Single one-over-one windows flank the doorway, with three additional windows on the second floor. The existing metal canopy covering the entry stairs was added in recent years. The two flanking bays each have triple one-over-one windows on both floors. A concrete belt course separates the first floor from the basement level. All windows have a brick soldier course lintel and concrete sills.

Decorative blocks of concrete are interspersed within the brick on all elevations. The north elevation is three bays wide with a modern fire escape added and one window replaced by a door to the escape. The date of this change is unknown, but it appears to be a change made within the last ten years. The west or rear elevation is six bays wide with replacement fixed-pane windows at the basement level. All other windows here are single or double one-over-one sash. There is a small one-story storage room added at the northwest corner, date unknown, but likely ca. 1970. The south elevation is four bays wide with an entry stoop covered by an added metal awning on the first floor. Steps lead to this side entrance and to an additional door at the southwest corner. A second set of brick stairs with a brick wall has been added, further out from the original set of stairs. Stairs to the basement level are also located on this elevation. These are also modern changes, dating from the 1970s, built as a second entry to the building, but not as handicapped access. Replacing a wood frame house that served for many years as Champion’s office, this building was designed by prominent Asheville architect William H. Lord and was constructed by mill workers. (Sanborn maps; survey files; documentary photos)

**32A. Carport. Non-contributing structure. ca. 1970.**

One-story flat roof carport structure located on the north side of the building. Roof covering is corrugated metal, with the roof supported by metal posts. Lattice screening is located on the east side.

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**Main Street, South Side:**

**33. 66-68 Main Street. Mears Building. Contributing. 1914.**

This handsome brick Commercial Style building is one of the most notable examples of the work of builder Joseph M. Wray. Two stories in height at the front, the building drops in height to one story at the rear due to the significant elevation change between Main Street and Mears Avenue. The façade of the building contains two storefronts, with a central entry bay to the second floor. The original storefront openings remain, but they have been modernized with the addition of wood siding. The original center double leaf door with arched lights over panels has been replaced by a modern door. The segmental arch over the door with keystone and radiating voussoirs remains intact. The second floor is four distinct bays with an arched window opening in each bay. The fanlights remain, but the sash have been replaced with single pane fixed lights. Each bay is separated by a brick pilaster, and the cornice brickwork corbelling is outstanding. The date of the building is incised into concrete just below the roofline. The north elevation of the building is six bays, again with the original window sash replaced by fixed panes of glass with flat arches above. The rear of the building is five bays wide with a central door flanked by window openings. The door is modern, and all window openings are infilled with brick. Built by local contractor and builder Joseph M. Wray for \$15,000 for the Mears family. The first business located in this building, established in 1915, was The Fair, with two floors of clothing, notions and ready-to-wear. Mill's Bakery was located here in the early 1950s (Sanborn maps; survey files; documentary photos; "The 1916 Pictorial Story of Haywood County"; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**34. 80-82 Main Street. Crowder Building. Contributing. 1940s.**

One-story Commercial Style building constructed of glazed yellow brick laid in a pattern of horizontal and vertical stretcher courses. Two separate single-light doors and display windows articulate the building as two separate storefronts. Little has changed on this building since its construction with the exception of a full-width awning and the painting of a mural on the east wall in recent years. This building was built by Otha Crowder. Crowder Printing Company was in business here in the early 1950s. (Sanborn maps; survey files; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**35. 92 Main Street. Commercial Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1910.**

Simple one-story Commercial Style brick building which has been completely altered by the application of stucco over the original brick walls. The original storefront configuration, with central recessed entry and flanking display windows exists, but the transom is covered and the doors and windows are replacements. The Watch Shop was located here in the early 1950s. (Sanborn maps; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**36. 94-98 Main Street. Brannon Building. Contributing. ca. 1922.**

Three-story Commercial Style painted brick building with stucco applied to the façade at the first floor level. Display windows have been shortened from their original configuration, but the central door remains. The second and third floors are three bays wide. The third story is divided by pilasters. In each

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bay of the upper façade is a double one-over-one window. Several bands of brick corbelling decorate the panels between the pilasters. The east elevation is five bays wide with only one one-over-one window not boarded up. Walter Brannon, who came to Canton in 1906, built this building to expand his meat market operations. The upper stories housed the Brannon family and served as a boarding house. By the 1930s the first floor was subdivided into office space, with the upper floors still in use as a boarding house, first as the Richman Boarding House and later as the Main Street Inn. In the 1940s the first floor was reverted back to its original open floor plan, with Lindsey and Ward's piano store. Smathers Radio & Television was located here in the early 1950s, along with Stiles Office Supplies. (Sanborn maps; survey files; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**37. 100 Main Street. Commercial Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1920; alterations 1961.**

Two-story mid-century modern style building with a recessed entry, full-length display windows, and a brick stair tower at the northeast front corner. All changes were made in 1961. There is a small one-story brick addition at the rear, in the southeast corner. The 1921 Sanborn map indicates there was a grocery located here. Charles M. Curtis Grocery was located here in the early 1950s, along with Smathers' Market. Attorney's offices were located on the second floor in the early 1950s. In 1961, the open staircase at the northeast corner of the building which appears on the Sanborn map was enclosed within the present brick stair tower, metal panels and awning style windows were added, and a new storefront was built. The original older brick is still visible on the rear of the building. In the 1950s, Underwood and Lorenzo Smathers bought the building and established Smathers' Market. Carey Wells, Jr. bought the building in 1961 and made the current changes, including conversion of the second floor to dental offices. (Sanborn maps; survey files; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**38. 108-110 Main Street. Medical Building. Contributing. 1941.**

Three-story tan brick Commercial Style building with a polygonal footprint. The Main Street façade is three bays on the first floor, with display windows on either side of a central entry. The second and third floors are each three bays, with four-light windows. A corner entry at the intersection of Academy and Main Streets has an aluminum frame door with single windows above. The Academy Street elevation is seven bays wide on the first floor, with display windows and doors to the upper floors, and single four-light windows in each of the bays on the upper floors. All bays are divided by brick pilasters here and on the main façade. Sanborn maps indicate a building in this same configuration was there by 1921, but many older residents confirm the date of the present building as 1941 when it was built by a group of local physicians as a new building. These physicians included Alton Bottoms, Albert Cline, Sr., Howard Duckett, Roy Moore, Jerome Reeves, and Joseph Westmoreland. The first floor was rented to several small businesses, including Canton Savings and Loan; Hendrix Drug Store; and Margie's Beauty Shop. The upper two floors were used for the medical offices. The new building follows the same configuration as the previous structure, which conforms to the tapering corner lot. The Medical Building is a highly intact example of early 1940s architecture in downtown Canton. Hendrix Drug Store was still located here in the early 1950s, with professional offices remaining upstairs. (Sanborn maps; survey files; oral history; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

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**39. 112 Main Street. Hampton Building. Contributing. ca. 1915.**

Two-story brick Commercial Style building with an altered storefront on the first floor, but intact façade above. The two bays of the second floor are divided by a brick pilaster and corbelling at the cornice, creating two recessed panels with a single window in each. The original arched window openings with keystones are intact, but the sash has been replaced with single fixed panes. The windows on the side and rear are one-over-one sash. Brick at the side and rear is painted. At the rear is a one-story concrete block addition. Ott Hampton hired local builder Joseph M. Wray to build this building for his dry goods business. Ott Hampton, like his father and brother, was a prominent Canton merchant in the early years of the twentieth century. Wiley Johnson had his medical offices on the second floor soon after the building was completed. By the 1940s, the Hampton Building was in use as Ideal Billiard Parlor, with law offices upstairs. Ideal Billiard Parlor was still in business here in the early 1950s. In the late 1950s through the mid-1960s the building was in use by Canton Savings and Loan Association, which made renovations that completely covered the original façade. Recent changes from the 1970s have exposed the original upper façade again. (Sanborn maps; survey files; 1951-1954 Canton city phone books)

**40. 168 Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1920.**

Two-story Commercial Style brick building, only minimally altered through the years at the Main Street facade. Building is a full two stories on Main Street, and one story on Bridge Street due to the substantial elevation change. The facade is two bays wide on the first floor, with a door opening into the northernmost bay. Original display windows and transoms are intact, although transoms are boarded over. The upper floor is three bays with a single two-over-two window with concrete sill and lintel in each bay. Ornate brick corbelling decorates the cornice. At the rear, facing Bridge Street, originally the building was three bays wide with large display windows on either side of a central entry framed by limestone pilasters. This basic storefront configuration remains, but the southeast corner bay has collapsed. The original double leaf paneled doors remain. This building was a wholesale grocery business in the 1930s. By 1940 there were offices on the upper floor. (Sanborn maps; survey files)

**41. 170 Main Street. Haywood Grocery Company. Contributing. ca. 1910.**

Three-story brick Commercial Style building, is one story tall at the rear, like 168 Main Street to the south. On the Main Street façade, the first floor is intact with the only alteration being the replacement of the original garage door with a new corrugated metal door. The second floor is four bays wide, each bay with a single two-over-two arched window. The upper floor is three bays wide, divided by pilasters, with each bay having a single two-over-two arched window. Notable brick corbelling decorates the cornice. The side elevation of the building is bordered by the railroad tracks, with the original concrete loading platform still in place. This elevation also retains its original two-over-two arched windows. The Bridge Street storefront is three bays wide, with a boarded over arched window on either side of an arched double doorway. Built by local contractor and builder Joseph M. Wray for \$4,000, for the Haywood Grocery Company. The second and third floors were occupied by the Canton Inn, likely as housing for

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mill workers. J. O. Plott Wholesale Company was located in this building by 1914. (Sanborn maps; survey files; documentary photos; "The 1916 Pictorial Story of Haywood County")

**Church Street, North Side:**

**42. 35 Church Street. Bell Motor Company. Contributing. 1925.**

One-story painted brick and concrete Commercial Style building with a polygonal footprint to fit the site at the corner of Church and Bridge streets. The building is two stories on the Bridge Street side. The lower half of the building is concrete block, with the second story of brick. Roofline is hipped, unlike the majority of buildings in the downtown district. Windows on the south (front) elevation are either four-light or two-light awning style, with fixed panes at the basement; the east elevation has two-light awning windows; the north (rear) has a couple of two-light awning windows with most window openings infilled with concrete block; and the west elevation has the same window sash as the front, with fixed lights in the basement. Some window openings on the south elevation on the Church Street side have been retrofitted with smaller windows at the top of the opening, with the remaining opening bricked in. Original garage bays on the Church and Bridge Street elevations are still in place. Entrances for offices and the showroom are on the Church Street side. There is a one-story brick addition with a flat roof at the rear of the building. This building was built by William F. Bell for the Bell Motor Company, as an expansion of a business founded in 1914 which was located on Main Street. The company sold Oaklands, Cadillacs, and Hupmobiles, and advertised expert service for all kinds of cars. In 1937 the building was in use as Goodson Pontiac, and from 1939 to 1975 was used as the Smoky Mountain Vending Company. (Sanborn maps; survey files)

**Adams Street, West Side:**

**43. 16 Adams Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1935.**

One-story Commercial Style building constructed of river rock with two storefront bays. The south storefront is intact, with only the transom covered. The north bay has been infilled but the original opening is still clearly visible. This is the only building in the district constructed of stone. Sanborn maps indicate the earliest businesses here as a restaurant on the south side and a dry cleaners on the north. During World War II through at least the 1950s, there was an ice cream shop located here. (Sanborn maps, oral history)

**Bridge Street:**

**44. Bridge Street. Bridge. Contributing Structure. 1943.**

The bridge carries Bridge Street over the railroad tracks. It is constructed of massive concrete piers with steel beams and trusses. A plank board railing encloses the sides of the bridge. A pedestrian walkway constructed of wood decking lines both sides of the bridge. Sanborn maps indicate there was a wood and steel bridge here as early as 1910, likely built soon after Champion Paper Company began construction of

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the mill. This bridge, in the exact same location, is a replacement concrete and steel bridge, with the date of "1943" inscribed into one of the piers below Bridge Street. (Sanborn maps)

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**SUMMARY**

The Canton Main Street Historic District in Canton, Haywood County, is significant as an intact collection of early to mid-twentieth century commercial buildings, representative of an industrial community's boom time in the early years of the twentieth century following the 1908 construction of the Champion Fibre Company Mill. Additional growth in the town from the early 1930s to the 1950s is also represented within the district. The commercial vitality of the district has continued to the present. The period of significance begins in ca. 1885, the initial construction date of the earliest resource in the district, the private house that would later become the Imperial Hotel, and ends in 1955, the fifty-year cut-off for the National Register criteria. The Canton Main Street Historic District meets National Register Criterion C for architecture and Criterion A for its significant association with the historic commercial development of the town.

**HISTORIC BACKGROUND AND COMMERCE CONTEXT**

Canton, North Carolina is a "distinctively early twentieth-century manufacturing town. The community began as Pigeon River, a small trading center and river ford, which had a post office by 1837 and was a stop on the Western Turnpike in the 1850s."<sup>1</sup> In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the village which would later become the town of Canton was nothing more than a crossroads with a handful of businesses and a few houses. It was a four-day stagecoach ride to Murphy at the far western boundary of North Carolina. The railroad arrived in the area in 1881, which spurred a small amount of additional settlement. By the mid-1880s W. J. Hampton, W. T. Sharpe, Charlie Wells, and J. N. Mease had settled in the area and were known as the "Big Four" merchants. In 1889, the community was named Buford. The name was changed to Pigeon River in 1891 and to Canton on February 9, 1893.<sup>2</sup> But even with some population growth in the late nineteenth century, Canton remained a small mountain community located in the Pigeon River Valley. By 1905, Main Street was still the only street in downtown and there were no electricity or phones, no paved streets, no public schools, and a population of only about 300 people.<sup>3</sup>

Due to the booming economy and growth in tourism in western North Carolina in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, many visitors came to experience the beauty of the mountains of Haywood County, and to Canton, looking for places to buy land, develop business ventures, or build a summer or permanent home. Canton briefly benefited from the resort development so common in neighboring Waynesville, Asheville, and Hendersonville, establishing some inns and hotels, including the Imperial Hotel downtown.<sup>4</sup> In a July 1905 edition of the Waynesville Courier, Canton was written up as a

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<sup>1</sup>Bishir, Catherine, Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin. A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, p 345.

<sup>2</sup> Souvenir Supplement 1893-1993. Canton Enterprise. 5 May 1993.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

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“splendid summer resort.”<sup>5</sup> However, one of the turn-of-the-century visitors to Haywood County, Peter Gibson Thomson, would change Canton’s development from a resort town to an industrial one.

Thomson had founded the Champion Coated Paper Company in Hamilton, Ohio in 1893. The company at this time was looking for an area that could supply it with wood pulp. The vast forest resources of the county drew Mr. Thomson to the area, and the Champion Coated Paper Company bought 40,000 acres of forest land around Haywood County for this purpose.<sup>6</sup> He then began looking for a place for a pulp mill. The village of Canton had what he needed, and in 1906 he purchased a large parcel of Pigeon River flood plain land and began construction of the Champion Fibre Company mill complex, a subsidiary of the Ohio-based company. Production began in 1908, employing 650 workers.<sup>7</sup> Management of the Canton mill was given to Thomson’s son-in-law, Reuben Robertson, who remained at the mill for fifty years.<sup>8</sup> By 1923, paper began to be produced at the mill along with the pulp, and in 1924, over 1,000 people were employed by Champion.<sup>9</sup> The average daily production at the mill in the mid-1920s included “375 tons of pulp, 50 to 60 tons of paper, and 500 barrels of tannic acid.”<sup>10</sup> Canton, like many mountain communities, began to develop into an industrial community, drawing local people away from farming as a livelihood and into working in the mills.

Before Champion arrived in Canton, the population was only 230 people. By 1910, once the mill was running, the population grew rapidly, increasing to 1,393. By 1920 the population was 2,584 and by 1930 had reached 5, 117.<sup>11</sup> Workers at the mill were primarily from the mountain area, but many managers and scientists came to the area from all over the world, turning Canton into a diverse community.

Along with the development of the mill, commercial enterprises within the town began to develop in the 1910s and 1920s to support the growing population. There were several banks in town, including the Canton Savings Bank and Canton Building & Loan.<sup>12</sup> In 1911, the first electric street lights were installed.<sup>13</sup> By 1916, the population had reached almost 6,000, there were over fifty businesses in the downtown area, and Park Street had been added as the second commercial street in downtown.<sup>14</sup> Some of these businesses included McGee’s cash store; a dentist; Canton Studio; Champion Bank; Martin’s Drug; C. T. Wells, undertaker; Andrews & Mayo, meats; Model Pressing Club; William H. Kezziah’s Royal

<sup>5</sup> “The 1916 Pictorial Story of Haywood County”, reprint of a special industrial and resort edition of the Carolina Mountaineer. 1916.

<sup>6</sup>Wells, Camille. The Architecture of Our Home Town, Canton, North Carolina: Canton Historical Commission, 1985, p. 28.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> A Guide to the Architecture of Western North Carolina, p. 346.

<sup>9</sup>The Architecture of Our Home Town, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> A Guide to the Architecture of Western North Carolina, p. 346.

<sup>11</sup>The Architecture of Our Home Town, p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> Souvenir Supplement 1893-1993. Canton Enterprise. 5 May 1993.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 112.

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Pressing Club; J. M. Curtis & Son; Canton Hardware; Buff Leghorn Poultry; O. M. Smathers men's clothing; Canton Bicycle and Repair; Medford & Traylor, grocery; Redfoot Jeweler; Gaiety Theatre; Canton Steam Laundry; Canton Business College; Canton Motor Company, and Tipton Furniture.<sup>15</sup> Other businesses in 1916 included O. M. Hampton's Dry Goods, Notions, Ladies, and Children's Clothes; Felmet's Garage; G. L. Hampton Furniture; William Childs' Heavy and Fancy Groceries; The Fair, a clothing store located in the Mears Building; Canton Ice & Laundry; Canton Electric & Telephone Company; J. O. Plott Wholesale Company; Martin's Drug Store; the Cantonian Theatre; Sluder Furniture Company; Canton Millinery Company; and W. F. P. McGee's dry goods, notions, and ladies clothing store.<sup>16</sup> The Champion Bank of Canton claimed over \$300,000 in assets. There were several attorneys and physicians in town. The Imperial Hotel had just completed its first addition and was taking in year-round boarders, many of whom were Champion Paper Company executives.<sup>17</sup> The Carolina Mountaineer noted that in 1916 Canton had "all the advantages of a modern, progressive little city." This included water and sewage systems, electric lights, schools, churches, a library, and an active Board of Trade. Streets were not yet paved, but plans for this were underway. The local Women's Club organized in 1914, following the philosophy of the City Beautiful movement of the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. They developed plans for beautifying the town and for developing a better library system.<sup>18</sup> City officials in 1916 included Mayor Robert Edgar Higgs, Aldermen William E. Sheffield, Thomas Marr, and C. A. Hildebrand; police judge Frank May; police chief Ernest J. Stroup; and police officers C. M. Blalock, R. L. McLean, and William A. Jamison.

From 1910 to 1920, much of the commercial center of town was rebuilt due to the growth of the mill and the new prosperity it brought to the community. The early wooden commercial buildings were replaced with more substantial brick structures.<sup>19</sup> By the early 1920s, Canton was well established as a business center in Haywood County. There were four attorneys, two auctioneers, seven automobile dealers, two banks, five barber shops, three service stations, one bicycle shop, three blacksmiths, two dry cleaners, five clothing stores, three coal and fuel companies, one contractor, two plumbers, four dentists, two department stores, one druggist, five restaurants, one feed company, one five and dime store, four floor covering stores, one undertaker, four furniture stores, six general merchandise stores, five retail grocers and two wholesale, two hardware stores, five hat shops, three hotels, eight insurance agents, two jewelers, one photographer, two laundries, one printer, several boarding houses, two stationery shops, several building material companies, three bus companies, and three candy stores. The majority of these businesses were located on Main Street or on nearby Depot Street.<sup>20</sup> By 1930, Canton was "a thriving industrial town." All the streets were well defined, most buildings were masonry, and the commercial

<sup>15</sup>Levine, Katherine. "A History of the East Haywood County Townships: Beginnings to 1980", unpublished essay, 1980, p. 73.

<sup>16</sup>"The 1916 Pictorial Story of Haywood County".

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>The Architecture of Our Home Town, p. 37.

<sup>20</sup>Canton City Directory, 1923-1924.

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core of town appeared much as it does today.<sup>21</sup> Some of the businesses listed in newspaper ads of the early 1930s included the Canton Cafe; Raiff's Department Store, Hampton & Smather's men's clothing; Canton Bakery; Champion Bank & Trust Company; Canton Building & Loan; Nelle's Beauty Shop; Pressley Brothers; Hampton and McCracken furniture; Canton General Auto Repair; and Smather's Dairy.<sup>22</sup>

In 1931, Champion sold 90,000 acres of its landholdings to the National Park Service to later become part of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. At this time, the company began utilizing more pine forest. This, combined with the funds from the land sale helped the mill to expand and modernize.<sup>23</sup> The mill added a large addition in 1932, including a high-speed paper machine to increase the paper production facet of the mill's operations.<sup>24</sup>

By 1932, at the time the Colonial Theater opened in downtown Canton, with the mill growing so successfully, there was certainly the population and economic vitality to support a theater of its kind. While building in most western North Carolina communities ground to a sudden halt with the 1929 crash, the construction of a privately funded theater in 1932 of the caliber of the Colonial Theater was highly unusual for the time. Canton did not suffer economically through the early years of the Depression as much as some other communities, due in large part to the presence of the Champion mill. The Champion plant expanded in the 1930s, "installing the industry's widest, fastest, and most cost-efficient paper machine."<sup>25</sup> It was not until later in the decade, when Champion sold some of its land holdings to the United States Forest Service for national forest land, that the production of the mill began to slow down.

Downtown Canton, due in large part to the continued success and expansion of the mill, remained a vibrant commercial center through the 1940s and the 1950s. By the early 1950s, there were many thriving businesses including a wholesale candy store; beauty shops; bakeries; attorney, physician, and insurance offices; department, drug, furniture, appliance, grocery, hardware, jewelry, book, and clothing stores; ice cream parlor; a billiard hall; a cab company; a newsstand; several banks; a cleaners; and the theater.<sup>26</sup> As in most small towns in western North Carolina, the downtown remained as the center of community life until road expansion in the 1960s and 1970s opened up the opportunity for travel to other places and for more strip commercial development outside of Main Street. Champion Paper began a period of decline in the 1980s, resulting in the sale of the mill to the employees in the late 1990s. The company was renamed Blue Ridge Paper Products.

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid, p. 37.

<sup>22</sup>"A History of the East Haywood County Townships: Beginnings to 1980", p. 81.

<sup>23</sup> A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina, p. 346.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>"A History of the East Haywood County Townships: Beginnings to 1980", p. 51.

<sup>26</sup> 1951-1954 Canton city telephone directories.

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Today, downtown Canton is in a transitional state. There are many thriving businesses in the downtown, but there are also many vacant buildings. Competition from commercial enterprises outside of town and from nearby larger communities such as Asheville to the east have drawn business away from town. Difficult economic times for the Blue Ridge Paper Mill, with layoffs of workers and competition from overseas competitors has also added to the downturn in prosperity for the town. However, the re-opening of the Colonial Theater on Park Street has served as a catalyst to bring residents and visitors back to downtown and will hopefully spur continued investment in the historic heart of the town.

### ARCHITECTURE CONTEXT

The commercial buildings in downtown Canton are typical in many ways of the design of commercial buildings common to towns all over the country in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Most are one, two, or three-story structures in the Commercial Style, a style prominent in American towns from 1900 to 1930. The Commercial Style generally was a reaction to the more ornate Queen Anne or Romanesque Revival styles of the late nineteenth century, maintaining the basic commercial form but simplifying the details. Ornamentation, if any, generally consisted of some patterned brick in facades or corbelling at the cornice. Parapet rooflines were common, along with large rectangular windows arranged in bands.<sup>27</sup> Buildings could be one, two, or three stories in height, with a flat or slightly sloping roof and parapet walls extending upward on the front of the sides if the building was located on a corner lot. Some notable examples of this style in the district which retain almost all of their original features, including storefronts, include the **Telephone Exchange** (#24, ca. 1912); the **Commercial Building** at 161-163 Main Street (#31, 1915); **Hampton Clothiers** (#9, ca.1920); the **Commercial Building** at 135-137 Main Street (#22, 1921); the **Commercial Building** at 49-51 Main Street (#5, 1922); the **P L & S Building** (#10, 1932); and a late example of the style employing the use of a Carrara glass façade, **Martin's Drug Store** (#2, 1949).

Other building styles within the Canton Main Street Historic District include Colonial Revival (Colonial Theater, #3; United States Post Office, #1); Classical Revival (Champion Bank and Trust, #14; and Champion Fibre Company Office Building, #32); and Queen Anne (Imperial Hotel, #17). The Queen Anne style of the Imperial Hotel pre-dates the major development time of the downtown and was a typical residential style of the late nineteenth century. Built as a private house ca. 1885, a compatibly designed Queen Anne style addition was made in 1916, followed by a Commercial Style rear addition ca. 1925. Due to the grand entry hall and large number of rooms typical of this style, it adapted well to the building's use, beginning in 1916 as a hotel. The building incorporates many elements of the Queen Anne style including asymmetrical floor plan, corner turrets, shingles, turned porch posts, decorative brackets, and wraparound porch.

The Colonial Revival was an unusual style for a theater, with most theaters in small towns being built in the popular Art Deco style in the late 1920s and 1930s. The prominent location of the 1932 Colonial

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<sup>27</sup> "Storefronts on Main Street;; An Architectural History", Illinois Preservation Series, Number 19, 0.3.

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Theater, along with the intent of the architects to design the building to fit into the streetscape as more of a residential structure no doubt led to the selection of this style. It also typifies the style with the symmetrical façade, use of a steep gable roof with end parapet walls, dormers, six-over-six windows, and gable roof dormers.

The Classical Revival and Colonial Revival styles used in Canton were chosen for the more prominent buildings in town associated with the government (the post office, 1939), the town's industry (the Champion office building, 1918), and financial institutions (Champion Bank and Trust, ca. 1925). These styles were typically used for these types of buildings because of the evocation of stability, tradition, and permanence often associated with them. These buildings all are excellent examples of the classically-influenced styles with prominent central entrances flanked by pilasters, symmetrical floor plans, and the use of brick or stone as exterior building materials.

In addition to the use of popular building styles, it is also important to note how the buildings in the Canton Main Street Historic District are set in a steady rhythm, often lining one or both sides of the streets, with alleys or parking areas to the rear. Building lots are typically small. Canton's commercial buildings, like those of many other western North Carolina towns, retain many of their original storefronts, but have also adapted to the use of new materials and changes for its buildings to keep up with the changing business trends. Typically, to keep a modern appearance, these changes have included new doors and window framing, sometimes replacement sash, and sometimes restructuring of the storefront entry. Despite any changes, however, the rhythm and overall integrity of the district has only been minimally affected through the years, retaining within its boundaries an architectural ensemble that evokes the successful commercial development of a western North Carolina industrial town.

Several prominent architects and builders worked in Canton during its primary development years. The architects included Benton & Benton from Wilson, North Carolina; William H. Lord of Asheville; and Louis Simon, supervising architect of the U. S. Treasury. Local builder Joseph M. Wray built several buildings. Benton & Benton, architects for the Colonial Theater, also designed the first portion of the Lenoir High School, Caldwell County (1922) of Classical Revival style.<sup>28</sup> William H. Lord practiced architecture in the first few decades of the twentieth century, with his office based in Asheville. Some of the buildings he designed in Asheville in nearby Buncombe County include the Craftsman-influenced Millender House (1907); the Colonial Revival-style Powell House (1908); and the Shingle Style William B. Williamson House (1900).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Bishir, Catherine, Michael A. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin. A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999, p. 142.

<sup>29</sup> A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999, pp. 274 and 278.

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Louis Simon, located in Washington, D.C., and working as supervising architect of the U.S. Treasury during the Works Progress Administration years, also designed several other buildings in western North Carolina. Some of these include the Colonial Revival-style U.S. post offices in Elkin, Surry County (1937); Wilkesboro, Wilkes County (1934); Boone, Watauga County (1938); Franklin, Macon County (1935); and the simplified Georgian Revival-style post office in Brevard, Transylvania County (1940).<sup>30</sup> The Boone post office in particular is quite similar to the Canton post office.

Joseph M. Wray was a native to western North Carolina, born in the late nineteenth century. Some of his early jobs were with the Waynesville Wood Manufacturing Company and the Unagusta Manufacturing Company, both large furniture factories. Wray was self-taught, gaining building construction skills through correspondence courses such as the International Correspondence Schools of Scranton, Pennsylvania. By 1907, he was chosen as the construction foreman for the Canton Graded School. Wray then established a contracting company in Canton and was the builder for the Mears Building (#34); the Hampton Building (#40); and the Haywood Grocery Company (#42), all in downtown Canton. Additional commissions included the Haywood Infirmary in Waynesville; the Haywood Institute; and the Methodist Church in Clyde. He advertised as an architect beginning in 1915.<sup>31</sup>

The Canton Main Street Historic District, while small in size, contains within its boundaries many fine examples of Commercial Style, Classical Revival, and Colonial Revival architecture. Several prominent architects worked in the town during its boom years, leaving their mark on the community. The presence of the mill and its impact on the prosperity of the town likely enabled the commission of these architects to take place, which together helped to create a collection of buildings representing the best in design and construction of the day. Many skilled local builders also contributed to the array of building design and construction in the town, also leaving a lasting mark on the town.

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<sup>30</sup> A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999, pp. 121, 131, 211, 327, and 367.

<sup>31</sup> Archives & History survey files, Canton, North Carolina.

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**ADDITIONAL UTMS**

5. Zone 17 Easting: 333100 Northing: 3933430

**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundaries for this nomination are indicated on the accompanying tax/sketch map, with a scale of 1" = 200'.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

Boundaries include the area with the greatest concentration of late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth buildings which retain a high degree of architectural integrity. Areas outside of the district boundary contain new commercial construction and residential neighborhoods. The mill, while having a significant impact on the development of the town, is not included due to modern changes and building construction dating after the period of significance.

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**Canton Main Street Historic District Photographs**

The following information applies to all photographs, except where noted.

Name of property: Canton Main Street Historic District  
Canton  
Haywood County  
North Carolina  
Photographer: Sybil Argintar Bowers  
Date of photos: July 2004  
Location of  
original negatives: Division of Archives and History  
One Village Lane  
Asheville, North Carolina 28803

1. Main Street, view west.
2. Park Street, view east.
3. Colonial Theater, view southeast.
4. 87 Main Street, view northwest.
5. 101 Main Street, view northwest.
6. Main Street, view north.
7. 111-117 Main Street, view north.
8. 123-125 Main Street cornice detail.
9. 141-145 Main Street, view northwest.
10. 161-163 Main Street, view southwest.
11. 175 Main Street, view west.
12. 66-68 Main Street cornice detail.
13. 108-110 Main Street, view southeast.
14. Bridge over railroad tracks, view northeast.

