

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

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Monroe Downtown Historic District  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number Six blocks in Monroe centered around and south N/A not for publication  
city, town of the old county courthouse N/A vicinity  
state North Carolina code NC county Union code 179 zip code 28110

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>25</u>	<u>9</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	_____ objects
		<u>26</u>	<u>9</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
None

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

William J. Price, Jr. 5 Nov 87  
Signature of certifying official Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

**Function or Use**

ic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Commerce/financial institution  
Commerce/specialty store  
Government/courthouse  
Domestic/hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Commerce/financial institution  
Commerce/specialty store  
Government/government office  
Domestic/hotel

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
 (enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival  
Italianate  
Other: Late Victorian Eclectic

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick  
 walls brick  
stone  
 roof asphalt  
 other wood  
steel

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Monroe Downtown Historic District consists of the Old Union County Courthouse with its square and approximately six blocks of commercial buildings to the west and south of the courthouse. These blocks include the surviving, intact, pre-1935 portions of the city's central business district. The commercial buildings that make up the district are from one to five stories tall, all of masonry construction, in a variety of styles and dates from 1875 to the early 1930s, illustrating the development of the downtown during that period. There are twenty-six contributing properties in the district and nine non-contributing ones, plus one property already listed in the National Register, the Old Union County Courthouse.

The old county courthouse is located on a ridge overlooking the valley of Bearskin Creek and the railroad corridor next to it. For anyone approaching the downtown, the great height and mass of the courthouse's tower provides a landmark. Surrounding the courthouse is a landscaped square containing several large trees and, on the west side, the Confederate Monument. Sloping downhill from the courthouse on all sides is a grid pattern of streets, part of the original plan for the county seat laid out by commissioners appointed in 1843.

Historically, the two major streets in the central business district have been N. Main (formerly Lafayette) Street and Franklin Street, which intersect at the southwest corner of the courthouse square. Until the early 1970s, Main Street led to the railroad station, but in the 1970s, Main, north of the old courthouse, was converted to a mall at the end of which was placed the new courthouse. The east side of the courthouse square, which was the last side to be built up with brick structures, has also been the most redeveloped and has lost its integrity. The north side of the square, while retaining several early buildings, including the oldest structure in the city, the old Monroe City Hall (individually listed in the National Register), has also lost its integrity due to alterations.

Two corners of the courthouse square are anchored by buildings which, by their height and formality, reinforce the old county courthouse. At

See continuation sheet

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southwest corner is the Hotel Joffre Building [16] of 1917-1919, a five-story yellow tapestry brick, limestone trimmed Classical Revival style edifice that stretches down W. Franklin Street, filling the north end of its block. At the southeast corner of the plaza is the three-story Bank of Union Building [28] of 1905-06, a tan brick Classical Revival style bank/office building with a prominent, domed corner tower which is supported by flanking buildings of a similar style.

In addition to the Hotel Joffre, the west side of the courthouse plaza includes the two-story, stuccoed brick Peoples Bank Building [19] of 1875. Although altered on the first floor around 1900, this building is one of the earliest and most handsome masonry structures built in Monroe.

The south face of the plaza consists of two-story brick commercial buildings dating from the 1870s to the late 1920s in Italianate, Classical Revival and Italian Renaissance Revival styles. Some shopfronts have been altered, but the upper levels of the buildings, and several of the shopfronts are intact.

N. Main Street slopes down from the courthouse plaza to the beginnings of the residential area at its south end. Historically, the greatest concentration of buildings has been at the north end of Main Street, and this is also the best-preserved section. At the southwest corner of Main and Franklin Streets is the Victorian Eclectic styled Lee Building [15], constructed in 1901. Although the building's shopfront has been replaced, the ornate upper levels of the former dry goods store are intact. Next to the Lee Building are two other Victorian Eclectic buildings [13 and 14], constructed for the Belk Brothers in 1901 and ca. 1905, which are now joined at the first floor. On the east side of the block are two-story brick commercial structures dating from the turn of the century to the early 1930s, anchored at the south end by the three-story Belk/Bundy Building [6] of 1911. While the building's Spanish tile pent cornice has been removed for safety reasons, the yellow brick clad Italian Renaissance Revival style design enlivened by white glazed terra cotta trim conveys the prosperity of Monroe's early twentieth century business district.

Across narrow Morgan Street from the Belk/Bundy Building is the former Monroe Bank & Trust Company Building [5] (1919-20). Faced with Indiana limestone and with white glazed terra cotta capitals, the two-story bank has a stylized Classical Revival design unusual for North Carolina. A row of late-nineteenth century and 1920s two and three-story brick commercial buildings fills the remainder of the block, the former ele-

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ments of which were originally part of Monroe's best-known hotel in the late-nineteenth century, the Stewart House.

The rear side of this block, facing N. Hayne Street, is completely filled by the 1924 Monroe Hardware Company Warehouse's [22] three-story brick and concrete mass. Across the alley from it to the north is the Monroe Hardware Company Building of 1928 [23], constructed with a similar tapestry brick. The long side elevation of the red and yellow brick Classical Revival style Secrest Building [25], reconstructed in 1928, completes the block.

On the south side of E. Franklin Street are a row of one-story brick stores [30-34], constructed ca. 1908 but with altered fronts, and two larger, more richly-detailed two-story brick commercial buildings [34 and 36] constructed ca. 1902 and ca. 1912. One of these, 200 E. Franklin [34], is associated with J. Shute and Sons, and like their buildings at the corner of Hayne and Franklin Streets, is faced with yellow brick.

As is common in commercial districts, the first floor fronts of many of the Monroe downtown buildings have been rebuilt. However, in most cases the upper levels of the buildings have retained their integrity or the changes made to them are readily reversible. Some rehabilitation has taken place in recent years, most notably that of the Bank of Union Building. The recent restoration of the Old Union County Courthouse and its plaza has greatly improved the historic feeling and integrity of the district.

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Inventory List

Key

(C)-Contributing Property  
(NC)-Non-Contributing Property  
(NR)-Property Individually Listed in National Register

Documentation for information given in entries follows each.

N. Main Street-East Side 100 Block

1. 102 N. Main Street-(C)

This two and a half-story brick building at the corner of Main and Windsor Streets is the southern three bays of the original, seven-bay portion of the Stewart House. Constructed in 1875 for John D. Stewart, one of the town's most active early developers, it was originally a three-story edifice, seven bays long, with shops on the first floor and a boarding house on the upper two levels. In the 1920s a fire at the adjacent Monroe Hardware Company warehouse damaged the building, and it was rebuilt with only two stories. Although the first floor shopfronts have been substantially altered, the upper floor of the building retains its original bay divisions and six over six windows with corbelled pediments. Second floor windows on the Windsor Street elevation are also original. (Monroe Enquirer, 6/15/1875 and 10/5/1875; Monroe Sanborn Maps; Documentary photo of J. H. Lee and Co.)

2. 106 N. Main Street-(NC)

Like 102 N. Main Street, this four-bay, two-story brick commercial building is half of the former Stewart House. While the spacing of the original bays is evident, the current upper facade of the building is of glazed metal panels with metal jalousie windows. The first floor front elevation is covered with a shopfront of wood panelling and a wood-shingled marquee. (Monroe Enquirer 6/15/1875 and 10/5/1875; Monroe Sanborn Maps; documentary photo of J. H. Lee and Co.)

3. 108 N. Main Street-(NC)

Although now faced with glazed metal panels and sporting a modern aluminum shopfront and marquee, this three-story brick building appears to have been erected by John D. Stewart in 1875-76. The upper floors were part of the Stewart House, while the first floor for many years in the

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early twentieth century housed a bakery. A painted advertisement for the English Company is still visible on the third floor north elevation. (Monroe Enquirer, 10/5/1875, 4/3/1876; Monroe Sanborn Maps; documentary photos)

## 4. 116 N. Main Street-(C)

Constructed ca. 1928, this two-story brick commercial building has a pair of three-bay stores. The original shopfronts have been replaced in one half by a modern brick insert with a battened seam metal awning, but the other appears to have its original wooden shopfront with recessed entrance and panelled bases. The remainder of the front is faced with red and yellow tapestry brick in stretcher bond laid with a moire pattern. Vertical strips of red and yellow brick divide the stores, a belt course runs below the windows, and there are horizontal brick panels in the parapet with stone corner inserts. The second floor window sash are covered with plywood. (Monroe city directories; Monroe Sanborn maps)

## 5. 120 N. Main Street-Monroe Bank &amp; Trust Company Building (C)

The Monroe Bank & Trust Company Building was erected in 1919-1921 as the new home for a bank organized in 1903 as the Savings, Loan and Trust Company. The architect for the stylized Classical Revival style building is not known, but the contractor was E. C. Ingram of Monroe. After merging with the Farmers and Merchants Bank in the late 1920s, the bank foundered during the Depression.

The rectangular block of the building is two stories tall, faced with ashlar Indiana limestone. Across the front is a shallow portico consisting of two engaged columns flanked by pilasters. Both the columns and pilasters have white terra cotta capitals. There is incised and low-relief ornament around the main entrance and an incised panel ornamenting a low-arched pediment over the portico. A narrow cornice unites the front portico and side elevation.

On its Morgan Street elevation, the building has a row of four full-height, round-arched windows with panelled keystones, and at the rear of this row, a narrow rectangular window. On both street elevations the original windows have been replaced with anodized aluminum ones of slightly different configuration. One of the side windows was also originally an entrance bay, leading to a farmers' room, where farmers could meet with their tenants to transact business. A one-story, stone-veneered extension has also been added to the rear of the building. (Monroe Journal, 3/6/17, 8/15/19, 4/30/20, 1/28/21; Magazine section of

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Monroe Journal 10/23/25)

N. Main Street-East Side 200 Block

6. 200-204 N. Main Street-Belk/Bundy Building (C)

The Belk/Bundy Building was constructed in 1911 on two adjacent lots owned by the Belk brothers and S. B. Bundy. G. Marion Tucker was the contractor, the architect is unknown. The Italian Renaissance Revival style building has two shops on the first floor, with offices on the upper levels.

The street elevations of the three-story building are faced with yellow pressed brick. On the Main Street elevation, shops are located on either side of an arched central opening leading to the stair. This opening is flanked by brick and terra cotta Tuscan pilasters. Over the shopfronts, which are modern aluminum and glass replacements, is a deep sheetmetal modillioned cornice. On the Morgan Street side elevation are four high, segmentally-arched windows with keystones and a segmentally-arched door.

The upper two floors of the front elevation are divided into four three-window bays. The side elevation is divided into four two-window bays. On the second floor the windows have white glazed terra cotta pediments with oversized keystones, the former enriched with dart and waterleaf moldings. Above the third floor a terra cotta band course, enriched with bead and reel molding, runs across the tops of the windows. One over one sash were used for all of the windows, but these are now covered with plywood panels. Until recent years, the building had an overhanging Spanish-tiled pent above the third floor, but following a remodelling, there is now only a stuccoed band. Above this band on the front elevation is a gabled pediment, while on the side elevation the parapet is stepped. (Monroe Journal 4/11/11, 7/18/11; Union County Deeds)

7. 208 N. Main Street-(C)

This two-story brick commercial building appears to have been built ca. 1910, or to at least have been a refacing at that date of an existing building. On the 1908 Sanborn map the building is shown as having an exterior stair and being open to the building adjacent to it. It shows in its present form in a ca. 1912 photo and is pictured on the 1914 Sanborn map with an enclosed stair, the first floor being vacant, the second used as a photographer's studio. Faced with pressed brick laid

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in stretcher bond (now painted), the facade is two and a half bays wide, the half bay being devoted to the stair, which rises from an exterior door with a high double transom. The first floor shopfront is a modern replacement of brick and wood, but the second floor retains its original round-arched window openings. The sash have been removed from the double windows in each bay, which are now filled with plywood. Across the top of the building is a corbelled and panelled cornice. (Monroe Sanborn Maps; ca. 1912 postcard view)

## 8. 210 N. Main Street-(C)

Built ca. 1925, this two-story rectangular commercial building has an upper facade of stretcher bond pressed brick with diamond tile inserts, all painted. The second floor has a central double window, flanked by single ones, with louvered blinds covering all of the sash. The high parapet above the windows is stepped and has a concrete coping. The shopfront on the first floor is a modern insert of aluminum, wood panelling and tile, with an aluminum marquee. (Monroe Sanborn maps)

## 9. 212 N. Main Street-(C)

A 1925 documentary photograph of the English Drug Company on the corner shows this building in the background, indicating that it was probably built between 1922 and 1925. The entire first floor of the building is currently covered with a modern shopfront of board and batten and wood shingling, but it originally consisted of a recessed shopfront and a side entrance with high transom. The upper portion of the building is faced with tan pressed brick with gold brick trim. On the second floor are three large windows and one smaller one, all now covered with louvered blinds and with modern wrought iron grills before them. A soldier course of gold brick runs across the top of the windows. The upper parapet contains a large, framed panel of rough stucco with concrete diamond inserts, above which is a slightly-corbelled gold brick cornice. (Magazine section of Monroe Journal 10/23/25; Monroe Sanborn maps)

## 10. 222 N. Main Street-(C)

In 1876 Monroe businessman and developer John D. Stewart erected this building as a rental property. From 1883 to the late 1920s, the first floor contained the English Drug Company, which carried on a both retail and wholesale drug operations, as well as being a substantial country store supplier. Around 1900, the exterior of the building was stuccoed and new wood shopfronts with sheetmetal cornices were installed. At that point the main entrance to the building was located on the corner

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and there were two connected shopfronts facing Main Street. The Franklin Street elevation contained entrances at the rear to the upstairs offices. During the 1960s the first floor of the building was substantially reworked. It now contains shopfronts along both elevations which are constructed of brick, exposed aggregate panels and aluminum. Vertical metal panelling covers the transom area and an aluminum marquee is suspended between the shopfronts and the transom. The upper floor of the building appears much as it did in 1900, with nine bays on Franklin Street and six on Main. Each bay is recessed and has a single segmentally-arched one over one window with hood molding. Along the top of each recess is a brick dentil course. The main cornice of the building is a corbelled course of pendants. A surviving downspout collector on the southwest corner of the building has the embossed initials JDS. (Magazine section of Monroe Journal 10/23/25; Stack and Beasley; Monroe Sanborn maps)

N. Main Street-East Side 300 Block

## 11. 300 N. Main Street-Old Union County Courthouse-(NR)

In the years 1884-1888 the county Board of Commissioners replaced the old frame courthouse with a new orange brick-clad one designed by Thomas Holt of Raleigh. J. T. Hart of Monroe was the contractor. The new Second Empire style courthouse had a hipped-roofed central block with pedimented pavillions on the east and west elevations and lower, mansard-roofed wings on the north and south capped with mansard-roofed towers. A multi-storied, domed central tower was the building's most prominent feature.

By 1926 the courthouse was overcrowded and in need of repair. Charles Christian Hook of Charlotte designed wings for the north and south ends of the building which replaced the original mansard roofs. G. Marion Tucker of Monroe was the contractor. Hook's design carefully copied the detailing of the original building while expanding it dramatically.

A new courthouse was completed in 1972 at the north end of Main Street. In the early 1980s the old courthouse was restored and is now used as county offices. (Wayne K. Durrill, The Union County Courthouses, 1843-1981)

## 12. Courthouse Plaza-Confederate Monument-(C)

On July 4, 1910 Union County's Confederate monument, funds for which had been raised by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, was dedi-

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cated. The granite monument is a square column capped by a polished cannonball and set on an inscribed pedestal. The column and pedestal rest on a stepped, rock-faced base. On the sides of the monument are inscribed the names of Union County's Civil War dead. (Wayne K. Durrill, The Union County Courthouses, 1843-1981)

N. Main Street-West Side 200 Block

13. 209 N. Main Street-(C)

This two-story commercial building is half of a pair of identical and joined buildings erected by the Belk Brothers ca. 1905. The south half was demolished in the 1960s when Belk replaced its original store with the building which currently occupies the corner lot. The Belks may have initially used this building for rental purposes, but by 1922 it was part of the Belk Brothers store, and it was joined to 211 N. Main on the first floor. The first floor shopfronts have since been completely replaced by a modern brick front with small, multipane windows. All that remains of the original first floor front is a rusticated brick pier at one end.

The surviving half is four bays wide on the second floor, which is faced with pressed brick laid in stretcher bond. Brick piers define the outer corners of the building, and a rock-faced stone string course runs across between the levels. Above this course are four round-arched windows with corbelled hood moldings. The current window sash appear to be replacements for the original one over one sash with fixed transoms. A molded sheetmetal cornice with brackets at both ends runs across the top of the building below a high brick parapet. The entire front, including the windows, has been painted. (1902, 1908 Sanborn Maps; 1922-23 City Directory; Union County Deeds)

14. 211 N. Main Street-(C) Belk Building

In 1901 the Belk brothers had this two-story commercial building erected. The first floor was occupied for twenty years by the W. J. Rudge Company, a book, stationery and jewelry store in which Dr. J. M. Belk was an officer. The Monroe Telephone Exchange operated on the second floor in quarters especially constructed for it. When the Rudge Company moved out in 1921, the building became part of the Belk Brothers store, and was eventually joined to the buildings to the south of it. Today it shares a modern first floor front with 209 N. Main consisting of flush brick walls with small, multi-paned windows and a recessed, Federal Revival entrance. A sheetmetal transom signboard also unites the build-

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dings.

The second floor of the Belk building is composed of five bays of semi-circular-arched windows over a rock-faced stone belt course. A running terra cotta bead and reel hood molding unites the windows, and there are small lion's masks in the hood molding between windows. The window sash are modern replacements in the original wood frames. At the outer corners of the building above the spring line of the windows are narrow brick and terra cotta pinnacles, one of which retains its sheetmetal cap. A molded sheetmetal cornice runs between the pinnacles. A brick parapet with gabled frontispiece originally sat above the cornice. (Stack & Beasley; Monroe Journal 12/21/20; ca. 1912 postcard view, City Directories)

15. 213 N. Main Street-Lee Building-(C)

The dry goods firm of Lee and Lee constructed this three brick story commercial building in 1901. In the late 1920s the business was sold to J. J. Newberry, and it was the Newberry Company which altered the first floor front and corner in the 1960s, replacing the original wood and glass, high-transomed shopfront with one of ceramic tile and metal.

The rest of the pressed brick facade survives largely intact, although painted. A low-relief vertical frontispiece is its most prominent feature. On the second floor the frontispiece has a round-arched double window with "1901" in raised letters in the panel of the arch. At the top of the frontispiece is a triangular sheetmetal pediment with a foliate embellished tympanum and the legend "Lee Building" in its frieze. The pediment has one surviving acroterion and is flanked by sheetmetal scrolls, but it has lost its finial. Flanking the frontispiece on the second floor are single windows. The high parapet above the second floor has three evenly-spaced panels with stepped recesses and a belt course of recessed panels. A curved sheetmetal coping tops the wall.

The facade pattern continues around the side elevation for one bay, with the belt course of recessed panels running as a cornice down the entire unpainted brickwork of the Franklin Street side. Corbelled brick string courses divide the upper levels on the side, which has rows of segmentally-arched two over two windows. (Stack and Beasley; Survey Files NCDAB; ca. 1912 postcard view)

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N. Main Street-West Side 300 Block

16. 301 N. Main Street-Hotel Joffre Building-(C) ~~DEMOLISHED 1996.~~

In 1911, the Monroe Journal began announcing plans by the Heath-Houston Realty Company to build a large new hotel building on the site of the old Houston building at the west side of the public square. However, it was not until 1917 that work was actually begun, by the letting of the contract to E. C. Ingram. The designer for the building is unknown, being described only as an architect from Charlotte. World War I delayed completion of the hotel, which was not opened until April 19, 1919. The name Hotel Joffre was given to the building in honor of the French WW I general Marshal Joffre. The first floor corner section of the building was constructed especially for the First National Bank, which moved into the building in January, 1918. One of the high points of the early 1920s in Monroe was the December 9, 1921 Hotel Joffre dinner given in honor of Marshal Foch, commander-in-chief of allied forces in World War I. The room layout of the hotel has been altered by the conversion of a number of rooms to apartments and the corner is no longer occupied by a bank.

The main mass of the building is a five story, L-shaped section at the intersection of Main and Franklin Streets. A three-story, rectangular wing follows the slope of Franklin Street down to the corner of Stewart Street. The street elevations of the building are faced with yellow tapestry brick trimmed with limestone. On Main Street the first floor is faced with ashlar limestone, while on Franklin the first floor is rusticated brick with limestone trim. The second through fourth floors of the hotel have vertical bays of paired four over one windows with relief spandrel panels between the floors and limestone keystones and corner blocks. The fifth floor window bays are aligned with those below, but have round-arched heads filled with fan-pattern limestone inserts. A projecting double architrave studded with rectangular blocks forms the cornice of the main block. From this cornice dagger-like stone pennants project downward at regular intervals. The parapet above the cornice is stepped at regular, but differing intervals. Exterior fire escapes have been added at the northeast and southeast corners of the building, causing a number of windows to be filled in.

At the corner of the first floor front elevation, the former First National Bank facade contains two broad piers between which are engaged Tuscan columns. Over the entrance is a stone roundel with foliate carving. The other two openings on this elevation, including the original central entrance to the hotel, have been replaced with aluminum and

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glass shopfronts.

At the lower level of the rear side elevation are three wood-frame shopfronts. Above these are the dining room level, which has paired windows with round-arched fan transoms. A stone-pilastered side entrance leads into the side lobby, with a flight of steps up to the mezzanine in front of the dining room doors. The lobby and mezzanine, as well as the dining room, have green-tiled wainscoting with marble chairrails and baseboards, patterned mosaic tile floors, ornate wrought iron railings and elaborate tin ceilings. (Monroe Journal, 1/31/11, 4/1/11, 5/11/17, 2/19/18, 1/14/19, 3/4/19, 4/22/19; Charlotte Observer 4/1/17)

17. 309 N. Main Street-(NC)

Ca. 1965 one-story brick commercial building with aluminum and metal-panelled front.

18. 311 N. Main Street-(NC)

Ca. 1930 one-story brick commercial building with recessed brick and glass ca. 1960 shopfront, high parapet of corrugated metal.

19. 313 N. Main Street-Peoples Bank Building-(C)

The People's Bank of Monroe, the town's first bank, was organized in 1874 with H. M. Houston as president. This two-story building, erected on Houston's block, appears to have been constructed in 1875 for the bank's first quarters. About 1900 the first floor of the bank was reworked and the exterior stuccoed. First National Bank acquired People's Bank in 1905 and occupied the building until 1919, when it moved to the Hotel Joffre.

Documentary photographs show the original first floor front of the bank three bays wide, with two long four over four windows and a tall doorway with transom. Strips of quoining were placed between the windows and door, and the first floor had a machicolated brick cornice. The present first floor front has a broad, basket-arched window and a round-arched doorway. Over this front is a ca. 1900 sheetmetal first floor cornice with terminal brackets. The second floor of the building is much as it was in 1875. Three bays of tall, narrow windows with corbelled pediments are recessed in a panel formed by corner quoin strips. Above each of the windows is a recessed, diamond-shaped lozenge. The cornice is composed of corbelled pendants. (Survey files NCDH; Monroe Enquirer

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6/8/1875; ca. 1900 documentary photos)

N. Hayne Street-East Side 200 Block

20. 210 N. Hayne Street-(C)

This narrow, one-story brick commercial building appears to have been built in the early 1930s for offices. Strips of header and rowlock bricks enliven the facade. An angled, projecting course of brick provides a simple cornice, while the cast concrete coping is stepped. The original wood and glass entrance and display window with prism glass transom are intact. (Monroe Sanborn Maps)

21. 212 N. Hayne Street-(C)

J. Shute and Sons had this two-story brick commercial building erected between 1902 and 1906. A 1902 fire destroyed the frame buildings in this area, including the offices of the Monroe Journal. The second floor of the building was constructed especially to carry the weight of the Journal presses. Physical evidence suggests that this building was constructed earlier than the adjacent Bank of Union building of 1906, and it is pictured in a documentary photo that appears to show the latter still under construction. The first floor was originally used by the John Shute and Sons grocery business, followed by Crow Brothers. During this period 212 was connected at the rear to 106 E. Franklin Street. About World War I the two were separated. The Journal purchased its own building in 1910, and the street entrance to the second floor was at that time bricked up. A stair in the Bank of Union building thereafter provided access to the second floor hall, which was used for dances and meetings. American Bank & Trust Company acquired the building in 1934, and in the 1940s replaced the original wood and glass shopfront with a masonry wall. This has recently been replaced by an anodized aluminum and glass approximation of the original entrance, but with a concrete handicapped ramp included.

The facade of the four bay building is composed of speckled yellow pressed brick laid in stretcher bond with red mortar. The first floor is rusticated. The segmentally-arched second floor windows are set in recesses between brick piers, and have six over six sash with fixed four-pane transoms. Below each window is a recessed spandrel panel. Rock-faced pink granite is used for window sills. An ornamental brick hood molding runs across the building over the windows. Two corbelled string courses define a frieze in which are placed four cast-iron vents. Above these is a stepped parapet, in the center of which is a recessed

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panel. This parapet originally had two additional levels. The side elevation of the building is of common bond brickwork with six over six segmentally-arched windows. (History of the New United Way Building in Monroe, Virginia Heath; ca. 1906, 1910 and 1925 documentary photographs of the Bank of Union Building)

N. Hayne Street-West Side 100 Block

22. 109 N. Hayne Street-Monroe Hardware Company Warehouse-(C)

In early 1920, the Monroe Journal reported that the Monroe Hardware Company would soon be building a new brick and concrete warehouse to replace its several frame warehouses on Hayne Street. The new building, costing nearly a quarter of a million dollars, would be the largest building project ever carried out in Monroe, reflecting the size of the wholesale hardware business conducted by the company--in excess of \$1,000,000 annually. However, the new warehouse was not built until 1924. The designer for the half-block building was Victor W. Breeze & Co., Engineers, with G. Marion Tucker as contractor. Monroe Hardware occupied the building until moving to new quarters in 1962.

The three-story red tapestry brick-clad rectangular mass of the building is 16 bays wide along Hayne Street and six bays deep on Morgan and Windsor Streets, the bays being marked off by brick pilasters that terminate in gabled concrete caps. A concrete belt course ties these caps together. Paired pivot windows with steel sash and wire glass cover much of the wall surface. At the north corners the parapet is raised and stepped. At the southeast corner of the warehouse are a pair of large openings that have concrete lintels with large keystones. The doors that fill the openings are of panelled wood and fold vertically. A central door on Hayne Street is the original entrance to the building, but an additional door has been cut near the Morgan Street corner. There is also a ghost mark on the second floor north elevation where a bridge connected the warehouse to the adjacent Hardware Company building. (Magazine section of Monroe Journal 10/23/25; Monroe Journal 2/20/20; Monroe Enquirer-Journal Special Edition 4/72)

N. Hayne Street-West Side 200 Block

23. 201 N. Hayne Street-Monroe Hardware Company Building-(C)

When the Monroe Hardware Company's retail store on Franklin Street was rebuilt following a 1927 fire, it was decided to add another building to the complex on a lot owned by the company adjacent to its warehouse.

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This rectangular, tapestry brick-faced store building was constructed in 1928 by J. S. Stearnes and is still used by the company.

The Hayne Street elevation is three bays wide. The shopfront on the first floor, with its recessed central entrance, retains its leaded glass transoms, but the rest of the shopfront has been replaced with aluminum and common brick. On the second floor, the three wooden window bays each have a central 16 pane sash flanked by four over four windows. Aluminum awnings have been added to the windows. Over each of the windows is a rectangular panel of herringbone brickwork with a central diamond limestone lozenge, and there are diamond inserts between the panels. On the side elevation, the first floor corner shopfront and windows have been filled in, while the second floor has metal pivot windows. There is a ghost mark on the second floor where the bridge to the warehouse across the street has been removed. The interior of the building is of mill construction with large, chamfered ceiling beams and exposed tongue and groove ceiling boards. (Monroe Enquirer 2/20/28, 3/3/28; 1930 Monroe Sanborn map)

Beasley Street-West Side 200 Block

24. 203 Beasley Street-(C)

This gable-roofed, one-story, coursed-rubble stone building appears to have been constructed ca. 1935. In 1942 it was being used by the Helms Transfer Company. The Beasley Street elevation has eight regularly-spaced windows, now covered with plywood. On the southeast corner of the building is a large opening, now filled in with concrete block. A single window and door are also located on the gable end. Most of the off-street elevation of the building is constructed of concrete block, except for a small, two-bay segment of stonework. (1930 Monroe Sanborn map)

West Franklin Street-South Side of 100 Block

25. 101-103 W. Franklin Street-Secret Building-(C)

On December 27, 1927, three buildings at the corner of Franklin and Hayne Streets burned. The Farmer's Loan and Trust Company Building, which had been constructed ca. 1907, was only partially destroyed. Vann Secret, one of the owners of the Union Drug Company, purchased the burned building and its neighbor and had them joined in a reconstructed edifice by contractor G. Marion Tucker. The Franklin Street elevation was completely rebuilt; but the side elevation appears to retain some of

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the earlier material, specifically the rusticated pilasters and arched second floor windows that had formed the facade of the bank building. Rusticated yellow brick pilasters or quoining still define the corners of the building. Lost were the sheetmetal cornices and Flemish gables, and the columns which flanked the bank entrance.

The present Franklin Street elevation consists of two shopfronts, one of which is a modern replacement of aluminum and glass, the other an original 1928 front with double recessed entrances, bronze-framed display cases and marble-veneered bases. On the second story are alternating sets of double and triple one over one windows. The parapet area has a long panel with widely-spaced limestone diamonds.

The Hayne Street elevation is eleven bays long. The first five bays from the corner are the side of the Franklin Street elevation. On the first floor are a row of high, segmentally-arched windows with tan brick archivolt and rock-faced sills. The corner entrance to the shopfront has been filled in. The second floor has alternating single and double windows with rock-faced granite sills and lintels. Over the windows is a long panel with inserts like that on the Franklin Street elevation. At the other end of this elevation are two more bays, with similar windows on the second floor, but with two segmentally-arched small shopfronts on the first floor. These shopfronts retain their marble bases, but the display windows and doors have been replaced with multipane elements.

Between these two areas is a four-bay frontispiece, the remains of the ca. 1907 entrance to the Farmers Loan and Trust. The first floor has yellow brick rusticated pilasters with sheetmetal caps. The space between these pilasters was filled in in 1928 and contains a variety of entrances, as well as a half-story filled with multi-pane sash. Between the levels is a sheetmetal entablature and cornice. On the second floor are four round-arched windows that have yellow brick archivolt and keystones. The stepped parapet above contains two large, concrete roundels. (Monroe Journal 12/29/27, 1/6/28, 6/22/28; Monroe Enquirer 3/3/28; Monroe Sanborn maps; documentary photographs)

## 26. 109 W. Franklin Street-Monroe Hardware Company Building-(C)

The present Monroe Hardware Company building was constructed in 1928, following a December 1927 fire that destroyed the stand at which the concern, previously known as Heath Brothers Hardware Company, had operated since 1891. The new building, 30 by 180 feet, was constructed by J. S. Stearnes and has been attributed to Charlotte architect C. C. Hook.

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The first floor shopfront is framed by a tripartite architrave of concrete in which is set a modern aluminum and glass entrance. An aluminum marquee has been added to this front. On the second floor the front elevation has an arcade of six round-arched windows with twelve over twelve sash and fanlight transoms. Above this arcade is a shallow pent roof covered with standing seam metal, possibly a replacment for Spanish tiles. The upper corners of the gabled parapet also have small strips of metal roofing. On the interior, the showroom retains its stamped metal ceiling and corner mezzanine. (Monroe Enquirer 2/20/28, 3/3/28; Monroe Journal 8/28/28; Stack & Beasley; Survey Files NCDAAH)

27. 111 W. Franklin Street-(C)

This ca. 1890 two-story brick commercial building was occupied in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by T. P. Dillon and D. McKenzie as a furniture store and undertaking parlor. Following the 1927 fire, the building was remodelled for J. C. Penney Company, which occupied it for fifty years. The first floor shopfront has ca. 1950 display windows with 1920s tiled bases. The transom area has been covered over and an aluminum marquee installed. Above the transom is a sheetmetal cornice added in the 1920s. The upper shopfront consists of three segmentally-arched four over four windows with hoodmoldings. Wood shutters have recently been installed on these windows. The building's cornice is a row of corbelled brick pendants. Documentary photographs indicate that the facade was probably stuccoed in the 1928 renovations. (Stack & Beasley; Monroe Sanborn maps; Monroe Enquirer 1/30/28; Documentary photographs)

East Franklin Street-South Side of 100 Block

28. 100 E. Franklin Street-Bank of Union Building-(C)

The Bank of Union Building was constructed in 1905-06 by J. R. Shute and Sons, prominent Monroe businessmen. Its first floor originally contained the Bank of Union and J. R. Shute and Sons Grocers, while the second and third floors were occupied by the Jackson Club, a social organization. The Bank of Union continued in the building until its failure in the early 1930s. A few years later the building was sold to, and occupied by, the American Bank & Trust Company.

The three-story, rectangular building is faced with speckled yellow brick laid in red/brown mortar and has principal elevations facing N. Hayne and E. Franklin Streets. On the corner is a full-height engaged tower with a raised-rib dome that rises above the corner parapet. This

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dome was originally supported by paired Tuscan columns and was open underneath. However, glazing was soon put between the columns and the columns themselves were later removed. The main entrance to the first floor is through a corner doorway in the tower's base, which is supported by two polished granite Ionic columns. The building's first floor brickwork is rusticated. On the E. Franklin Street elevation are two shopfronts with modern anodized aluminum inserts which approximate the appearance of the original woodwork. Between the shopfronts are two round-arched doorways, one of which has been converted to a window. These arches have spring blocks of rock-faced pink granite, which is also used for window sills and lintels throughout. On the Hayne Street side, the first floor has one opening which originally contained a wood and glass insert, but which now has two modern windows with stuccoed surrounds. A modern pierced screen of brickwork surrounds the stair to the basement. Beyond this stair are two doorways, originally arched, which have been filled in.

On both elevations the second and third levels have three corner bays which project forward slightly and are rusticated. The Hayne Street elevation has one additional outside bay, while the Franklin Street side has three. The second floor windows have nine over nine sash. On the third floor on Hayne Street is a large, arcaded gallery with three round arches. These arches are now filled with screening, behind which are the original wrought iron ornamental railings. On the other elevation are three smaller, round-arched windows. The building's parapet is stepped, with a molded sheetmetal coping. (Documentary photos; Virginia Heath, The United Way Building; Monroe Journal 11/16/20; Charlotte Daily Observer 2/1/06)

## 29. 108 E. Franklin Street-(C)

This two-story brick commercial building was built for J. Shute and Sons, probably between 1902 and 1905. It was initially used by the Shutes as part of their grocery and dry goods business. Later it was occupied by Crow Brothers. During this period it was linked at the rear to 212 N. Hayne Street. After WW I both shopfronts were occupied by department stores.

The rectangular brick building is constructed of red brick laid in common bond, with a facade of speckled yellow pressed brick with red mortar joints. The original wood and glass shopfronts have been replaced with modern board and batten fronts and the transom area is covered with a signboard. The upper level is largely intact. It shows a six-arch arcade of windows with corbelled brick capitals and hood

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moldings. Beneath the windows are spandrels with recessed brick panneling. The second floor windows sash are now covered with plywood. Above the windows is a high parapet in which is centered a corbelled brick frontispiece that rises above the roof. This frontispiece and the adjoining parapet are ornamented with rows of recessed panels and corbelled brickwork. (Virginia Heath, the United Way Building; Documentary photographs; Monroe Sanborn maps; Monroe City Directories)

## 30. 112 E. Franklin Street-(NC)

This one-story brick commercial building appears to have been constructed by J. Shute & Sons ca. 1905. However, its original yellow brick front has been stuccoed over in recent years and the original shopfront replaced with a modern board and batten one. (Monroe Sanborn Maps)

## 31. 114 E. Franklin Street-(NC)

A one-story brick building was located here as early as 1908, but the present building has a common brick face dating from ca. 1950 and an aluminum and glass shopfront. (Monroe Sanborn Maps)

## 32. 116 E. Franklin Street-(NC)

Apparently one of a row of one-story brick commercial buildings constructed ca. 1908. Now faced with mosaic tile and with a modern multi-pane display window. (Monroe Sanborn Maps)

## 33. 118 E. Franklin Street-(NC)

Apparently one of a row of one-story brick commercial buildings constructed ca. 1908. Refaced ca. 1950 with black vitrolite glass and aluminum front. (Monroe Sanborn Maps)

East Franklin Street-South Side of 200 Block

## 34. 202 E. Franklin Street-(C)

This two-story commercial building faced on the front with yellow brick was probably constructed for one of the Shute brothers ca. 1912. In 1914 it contained a flour and feed store in one side and a general store on the other, with boarding on the second floor.

The building is now in the process of being rehabilitated. The interiors have been gutted and all of the window sash and jambs removed.

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surviving elements of the original wood and glass shopfronts are being retained. These shopfronts are framed by panelled brick pilasters, and there is an exterior entrance to the second floor between them. The shopfronts have a continuous overhanging sheetmetal cornice. The upper level of the facade is a symmetrical composition that continues for one bay down Beasley Street. It consists of a central, slightly projecting bay with three round-arched windows in an arcade. Flanking this bay are three window bays on either side with rock-faced granite lintels. A stone string course runs along the bottoms of the windows over a frieze of large, diamond-shaped brick lozenges. An overhanging, modillioned sheetmetal cornice runs across the facade. A blind balustrade of sheetmetal runs from corner pedestals to the central frontispiece. The side and rear elevations of the building have rows of segmentally-arched windows. (Monroe Sanborn maps; Survey files NCDAAH)

## 35. 214 E. Franklin Street-(C)

This ca. 1935 one-story brick commercial building has an Art Deco-influenced facade with stepped parapets, a recessed central panel and relief striped elements. The shopfront is a modern one of wood and aluminum with a wood shed roof. (Monroe Sanborn maps; Monroe city directories)

## 36. 216 E. Franklin Street-(C) DEMOLISHED IN MAY-JUNE, 1987, AFTER COMPLETION OF NOMINATION

Constructed ca. 1905, this two-story brick commercial building contained two groceries and a bakery according to the 1908 Sanborn map. The masonry detailing is similar to that of buildings being constructed in the period for J. Shute and Sons. At present, the building is undergoing a substantial rehabilitation. The interior has been largely gutted and all window sash and many jambs removed. A one-story wing at the rear has been demolished. The one surviving wooden shopfront of the original two has been retained, including its double transom of leaded prism glass.

Brick pilasters divide the front elevation into two halves and articulate the Church Street side elevation into six bays. The symmetrically-arranged front elevation treatment continues for one bay down Church Street, and these portions have been painted. The second floor front of the building has two sets of paired segmentally-arched windows with corbelled brick hood moldings. A corbelled brick cornice runs down both street elevations. Windows on the side elevations are also segmentally-arched, and have brick hood moldings. (Monroe Sanborn Maps)

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West Windsor Street-North Side 100 Block

37. 100 W. Windsor Street-(NC)

Ca. 1975, small, one-story brick commercial building with plain brick front.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>Commerce</u>	<u>1874-ca. 1935</u>	<u>1874</u>
<u>Architecture</u>	_____	<u>1884-1888</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	Cultural Affiliation	_____
_____	<u>N/A</u>	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Significant Person	Architect/Builder	
<u>N/A</u>	<u>Various/Unknown</u>	
	<u>Holt, Thomas</u>	

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

The Monroe Downtown Historic District consists of the recently-restored 1888 Old Union County Courthouse, already listed in the National Register and sited on a landscaped square and two sides of the square extending west and south to include approximately six blocks of commercial buildings. These twenty-six contributing and nine non-contributing properties form the surviving commercial core of the City of Monroe prior to 1935. The district qualifies under Criterion A in the area of Commerce because it is representative of the growth and development of the city as a southcentral piedmont North Carolina railroad hub and cotton exchange from the coming of the railroad in 1874 to the early years of the Depression. Many of the properties in the district are associated with a small number of owners who played important roles in the city and region, including W. H. and J. M. Belk, who established one of the Southeast's largest retailing networks in Monroe in 1888, and J. Shute and Sons, who were involved in numerous business activities from brickmaking to cotton ginning to wholesale groceries. Another important regional business founded in Monroe was the Monroe Hardware Company, begun in the 1880s, and by 1919 the largest hardware jobber in the Carolinas, who built a large warehouse and two stores in the district in the 1920s. The district qualifies under Criterion C in the area of architecture because it contains well-preserved examples of the eclectic late-Victorian brick commercial buildings typical of many piedmont North Carolina main streets, together with buildings of unusual sophistication for a small turn-of-the-century city. Although many of the buildings have received some alteration, individually, and as a group, they retain an integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling with local significance in both commerce and architecture.

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### Historical Background

Union County was formed by an 1842 act of the General Assembly from portions of Anson and Mecklenburg counties. A supplemental act provided for the appointment of commissioners to determine a county seat, which would be located within two miles of the center of the county, and which would be named in honor of President James Monroe.(1) On June 8, 1843, Henry Chaney conveyed 75 acres to the Chairman of the County Court, on which the commissioners laid out the nucleus of the new county seat.(2) At a high point at the north end of the plat they located a courthouse square, bounded by Jefferson, Franklin, Hayne and Lafayette (now Main) Streets, each eighty feet wide. The use of a grid plan with squares for public buildings followed a tradition in North Carolina urban planning at least as old as William Christmas's 1792 plan for the new state capital, Raleigh, but which is pre-dated by plans for Fayetteville (1783) and Pittsboro (1785).(3) However, these and other North Carolina plans drawn in the late 18th and early nineteenth centuries generally employ a form apparently derived from Pennsylvania practice, in which streets intersect the sides of the square.(4) The block square, in which the courthouse is located in a central square, without intersecting boulevards, appears to have spread east from Tennessee in the early nineteenth century.(5) Another example of this type of plan from the same period is Shelby, in nearby Cleveland County.

Over the next thirty years a predominantly frame business district grew up around the courthouse square, in which was located a frame courthouse. The blockfaces surrounding the courthouse did not develop evenly; along Franklin and Lafayette Streets were located the largest and most important businesses.(6) During that period Monroe served largely as an intermediate point in highway travel between North Carolina cities and the South Carolina counties immediately to the south. (7)

The December 1874 completion of the Carolina Central Railway between Wilmington and Charlotte brought important changes in the town's commercial standing. Monroe became a market town where agricultural products from Union and the surrounding rural counties of North and South Carolina could be exchanged for manufactured goods brought in on the railroad. It was a hub between the state's greatest seaport and its fastest growing metropolis. Construction of the Georgia, Carolina and Northern Railroad in 1887-1892 between Atlanta and Monroe further strengthened the city's status as a railroad center. These railways were merged into the Seaboard Air Line Railway in 1901 and, since the railroad did not go through Charlotte, Monroe became an important link in

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the Seaboard's north-south route.(8)

Parallelling the arrival of the railroad was the growth of the cotton economy in the south central piedmont. Cotton production in Union County grew from 1,196 bales in 1870 to 24,441 bales in 1900 and 27,000 bales in 1923.(9) Similar development occurred in the surrounding counties. Formerly, planters provided seed and other materials for the production of their tenants' and other local farmers' crops, marketed the tenant's cotton, and often sold manufactured goods to the tenants from plantation stores. With the arrival of the railroad and the growth of market towns like Monroe, tenants and small farmers could sell their crops directly to specialized buyers. Farmers could purchase goods from merchants in town, or from country stores supplied by wholesalers in the city. Financing was provided by merchants or by newly-developed banks. The expansion and specialization in agriculture and trade increased production and the general level of prosperity. (10)

Businessmen in Monroe were quick to exploit the arrival of the railroad. Within a few years Monroe went from a town of wood stores to one with a substantial number of brick commercial buildings. In 1874 H. M. Houston and others founded the People's Bank of Monroe, the town's first bank.(11) Their new bank building on N. Main Street [19], constructed in 1875, was followed immediately by Houston's three-story brick store (demolished). John D. Stewart, one of the town's early citizens, constructed a number of new brick commercial buildings in the late 1870s, including three that survive, the English Drug Company Building [10] of 1876, and the two buildings which made up the Stewart House (1875-76), parts of which remain in 102 N. Main [1], 106 N. Main [2] and 108 N. Main [3].

In 1884 the county Board of Commissioners began what is still the town's most impressive building, the Second Empire style Union County Courthouse [11] (Individually listed in the National Register). Designed by Raleigh architect Thomas Holt, it was among the finest courthouses built in the state during the Post-Reconstruction period.

At the turn of the century, one family, prominent in the commercial life of Monroe, was also instrumental in the construction of a series of fine brick commercial buildings. This was the Shute family, led by John Shute. With his three sons, J. R., H. A. and J. T., he built up a small empire of cotton gins, brick yards, planing mills, dry goods and grocery outlets and other ventures. The elder Shute died in 1896, but the firm continued as J. Shute and Sons until 1911, when the brothers divided their property.(12) Two of the Shute's largest and most ornate early

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buildings, The Monroe Opera House on N. Hayne and the Monroe Hardware Company Warehouse on N. Main Street have not survived. However, within the district are the yellow brick-faced Bank of Union Building [28], 212 N. Hayne [21], 108 E. Franklin Street [29] and 202 E. Franklin Street [34], all built for the Shutes between 1902 and 1914 and all carefully-composed and well-proportioned examples of turn of the century commercial architecture.

Another family of considerable importance in the physical and financial development of the downtown was the Belk brothers. W. H. Belk, who started his retail career at age 14 as a clerk for B. D. Heath, began his first store in a rented building at the corner of N. Main and Morgan streets (since demolished) in 1888. In the following year he opened another "racket" store in Chester, S. C. in partnership with A. W. Kluttz. Dr. J. M. Belk, W. H.'s brother, moved to Monroe in 1890 and purchased an interest in the Monroe store. From that point the Belks opened another store almost yearly, growing to one of the southeast's largest retailers.(13) The Belk brothers had a variety of other interests in Monroe. They were stockholders in the Monroe Telephone Company and the W. J. Rudge Company, for which they erected the building at 211 N. Main Street [14] in 1901. They also built the double store at 209 N. Main Street [13] half of which survives. In the early 1920s these two buildings became part of the Belk brothers' Monroe store. The Belks also merged a lot on N. Main with the adjacent parcel owned by S. B. Bundy and constructed the Belk/Bundy Building [6], at that time one of the town's largest office/commercial buildings. W. H. Belk moved to Charlotte in the late 1890s to run the store there, but his brother remained in Monroe until his death in 1928.

Another enterprise with which the Belks were involved was the Monroe Hardware Company. Begun in 1887 as the Heath Hardware Company by B. D. and A. W. Heath, it built its own business house on W. Franklin Street facing the county courthouse. This building, 180 feet deep, had painted on its facade the company slogan, "We handle everything under the sun, from a pin hook to a Gatlin gun." (The building burned in 1927.) The company incorporated in 1900 as the Heath-Lee Hardware Company.(14) The Monroe Hardware Company was founded in 1901, with D. E. Allen as president and Dr. J. W. Belk as vice-president. This company soon merged with the Heath-Lee company, taking the name Monroe Hardware Company, Incorporated.(15)

Although these hardware companies conducted a retail business in Monroe, the bulk of their operations were in wholesaling. Companies like Monroe Hardware supplied small stores throughout North and South Carolina. By

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1919 Monroe Hardware Company was the largest hardware jobber in the Carolinas, doing an annual business of \$1,000,000.(16) In addition to the store on W. Franklin Street, they occupied a large brick warehouse on N. Main built by the Shutes (demolished), as well as several large frame warehouses on N. Hayne Street. These warehouses were consolidated with the construction of a large, three-story warehouse on N. Hayne in 1924. The new Monroe Hardware Company warehouse [22] was the largest and most expensive (at approximately \$250,000) building to have been erected in Monroe.(17) A fire in 1927 led to the construction of a new store on W. Franklin Street [26] and to an additional building on N. Hayne Street [23].

Monroe's status as a hub in the Seaboard Air Line meant that it became home to a large transient population of railroad men. Travelling salesmen, or "Knights of the Grip," were also drawn to the city by its large wholesale business, and there were always travelers stopping in their north-south journeys. As early as 1911, the Heath-Houston Realty Company had plans for a large and modern hotel at the corner of N. Main and W. Franklin Streets. (18) However, work was not begun until 1917, and wartime shortages of manpower and materials delayed its completion until 1919.(19) The name Hotel Joffre was given to the new building in honor of the French World War I general, Marshal Joffre. Although located in a town with a population of only about 9,000 persons, the new hotel had 100 guest rooms and a large dining room. It was in this dining room that a large dinner was given on December 9, 1921 in honor of Marshal Foch, the commander-in-chief of allied forces during World War I.(20) Also included in the new building was a corner banking facility for the First National Bank, Monroe's premier financial institution and successor to the People's Bank.

Another bank constructed during this period was the stylized Classical Revival Monroe Bank & Trust Company [16] on N. Main. This institution was a merger of the Savings Bank & Trust Company, founded in 1903 by R. B. Redwine and the Farmers Bank & Trust Company.(21) Together with the First National Bank and the Bank of Union on E. Franklin Street, they comprised Monroe's banking community for the first quarter of the 20th century.

A large number of buildings constructed in the downtown in the late nineteenth and first quarter of the twentieth century were the work of two local contractors, G. Marion Tucker and E. C. Ingram. Positively attributed to Tucker are the Monroe Hardware Company Warehouse, The Belk/Bundy Building, the Secrest Building, and the 1926 expansion of the county courthouse. Attributed to Ingram are the Hotel Joffre and the

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Monroe Bank & Trust Company Building. Although there are frequent general references to architects in newspaper articles describing new buildings for the downtown, the only documented attributions are Thomas Holt of Raleigh for the county courthouse, Charles Christian Hook of Charlotte for the courthouse renovation, and Victor W. Breeze and Associates of Asheville for the Monroe Hardware Company Warehouse. Many of the 20th century buildings are sufficiently sophisticated to indicate the hand of an architect and, given the proximity of Charlotte, it is likely that Charlotte firms were involved in their construction.

The deepening of the Depression in the early 1930s brought the development of the downtown nearly to a halt. Whereas cotton was the major crop in Union County and the south piedmont in the 1920s, it went into a decline during the Depression from which it never recovered, eventually virtually vanishing as a crop altogether. All three of Monroe's banks failed. Although the establishment of Camp Sutton in Monroe during World War II brought large numbers of soldiers and their families to the city, very little new construction resulted in downtown. Increasingly, following the war, new construction was centered on the periphery of the city and along U. S. highways 601 and 74 that bypassed downtown by several miles. Government redevelopment activities in the 1960s and early 1970s resulted in the destruction of a number of significant structures, and others were substantially altered by modernization. Construction of a new county courthouse in 1972 that physically separated downtown from the railroad station was symbolic of the business district's decline. While some rehabilitation has taken place, and more is in process, many of the surviving buildings have been maintained at a nominal level and are good candidates for preservation activity. The recent completion of the restoration of the old county courthouse for county offices gives hope for the revival of the historic downtown.

Notes

1

"Organization of the County," Magazine Section of the Monroe (NC) Journal, 23 October 1925, p. 9.

2

Wayne K. Durrill, The Union County Courthouses (Charlotte: Herb Eaton Historical Publications, 1986), p. 5.

3

Edward T. Price, "The Central Courthouse Square in the American County Seat," in Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture, ed. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1986), p. 132-133.

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4

Ibid., p. 130-132.

5

Ibid., p. 131-135.

6

Durrill, Union County Courthouses, p. 5.

7

Ibid. p. 10.

8

"Carolina Central Ante-Dated Seaboard," (Monroe) Enquirer-Journal Historical Edition, April 1972, p. 10-C.

9

"Agricultural Development in Union County," Magazine Section of the Monroe (NC) Journal, 23 October 1925, p. 13.

10

Durrill, Union County Courthouses, p. 10.

11

Amos M. Stack and George Beasley, Sketches of Monroe and Union County (Charlotte: News and Times Press, 1902), p. 88.

12

Ibid., p. 94-96 and Union County Deeds, Book 45, p. 282.

13

Stack and Beasley, Sketches, p. 81-83 and Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, (1979), s. v. "Belk, William Henry," by Paul S. Wyche, Jr.

14

Ibid., p. 101-102.

15

"Monroe Hardware Started in 1887," (Monroe) Enquirer-Journal Historical Edition, April 1972, p. 3-E.

16

"Monroe has Wonderful Record Industrial Growth," Monroe Journal, 19 August 1919, p. 4.

17

"Hardware is to Erect a Building to Cost \$250,000," Monroe Journal, 20 February 1920, p. 1.

18

"Big New Building This Spring," Monroe Journal, 31 January 1911, p. 1 and "Plans for Hotel Building," Monroe Journal, 4 April 1911, p. 1.

19

"Local and Personal," Monroe Journal, 22 April 1919, p. 5.

20

(Monroe) Enquirer-Journal Historical Edition, April 1972.

21

"'Farmers Room' Unique Feature of New Building," Monroe Journal, January 28, 1921, p. 5.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 11 acres

UTM References

A 

1	7	5	40	8	90	3	87	1	02	0
Zone	Easting		Northing							

C 

1	7	5	4	1	2	9	0	3	8	7	1	0	0	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

B 

1	7	5	4	10	3	0	38	7	1	1	4	0
Zone	Easting		Northing									

D 

1	7	5	4	1	0	6	0	3	8	7	0	6	3	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the district are indicated by the dashed line drawn on the enclosed Monroe planimetric map, drawn at a scale of 1"=200'.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries have been drawn to include the greatest concentration of intact surviving elements of the historic central business district. Where properties are part of larger parcels containing principally non-contributing elements, the line has been drawn to include only the contributing buildings.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David R. Black/Architectural Historian

organization Black & Black Preservation Consultants date 6/1/87

street & number 620 Wills Forest Street telephone (919) 828-4616

city or town Raleigh state N. C. zip code 27605

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Monroe Downtown HD

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"Monroe and Union County." Magazine Section of the Monroe Journal, 23 October 1925.

Monroe City Directories, 1922, 1927-28, 1942-43.

Monroe Enquirer, 1875-1880 and 1927-1930.

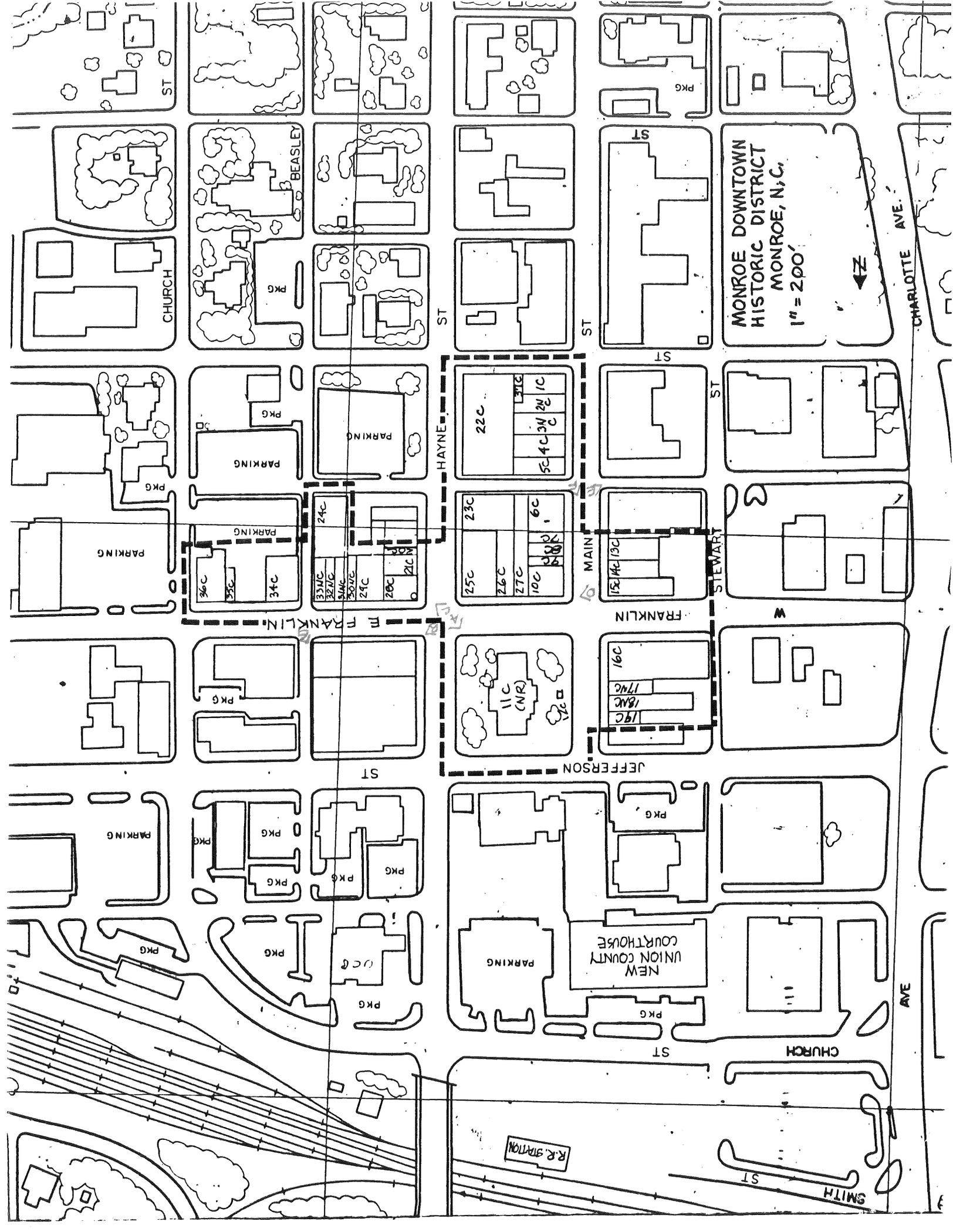
Monroe Journal, 1910-1922 and 1926-1928.

"Monroe N. C. Wants You." Monroe Journal Supplement, 15 December 1919.

Sanborn Map Company. Insurance maps of Monroe, 1885, 1892, 1897, 1902, 1908, 1914, 1922, 1930.

Stack, Amos M. and Beasley, George. Sketches of Monroe and Union County. Charlotte: News and Times Press, 1902.

Union County Deeds.



MONROE DOWNTOWN  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
MONROE, N.C.  
1" = 200'



CHARLOTTE AVE.

AVE

ST

CHURCH

PARKING

PARKING

PARKING

PARKING

PARKING

PARKING

BEASLEY

PKG

PARKING

PARKING

PKG

PKG

PKG

PKG

PKG

ST

HAYNE

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

PKG

ST

MONROE DOWNTOWN  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
MONROE, N.C.  
1" = 200'

22C  
LTC  
5C 4C 3C 2C 1C

23C  
25C  
26C  
27C  
10C  
6C  
15C 14C 13C

11C (NR)  
12C

19C  
18C  
17C  
16C

NEW UNION COUNTY  
COURTHOUSE

R.R. STATION

SMITH

M TANKLIN

FRANKLIN

JEFFERSON

CHURCH

ST

