

Introduction

Explain survey and research process

The Cherryville Downtown Historic District encompasses fifty-nine primary resources: an intact and cohesive group of early- to mid-twentieth-century commercial buildings in the central business area as well as several adjacent architecturally significant residences. Natural topography and notable changes in building type, age, and integrity mark the district's edges. The primary east-west corridor is Main Street, which runs east-west south of the CSX tracks and right-of-way.

Most of the district's commercial buildings are brick and one or two stories tall, although a few three-story structures occupy key locations. The majority abut each other on small lots bordered by concrete sidewalks and parking areas. Three of the district's four service stations are situated on corner lots in order to increase visibility and facilitate access to gas pumps.

A pivotal component of the National Register process is determining why a district is noteworthy and during what time period it achieved and maintained importance. Cherryville's significance is rooted in commerce that stemmed from industrial growth. Concerns such as the town's first cotton mill, Cherryville Manufacturing Company, which opened in 1892, and the five additional mills that followed attracted new residents. The flourishing economy encouraged entrepreneurial investment in mercantile concerns, professional offices, restaurants, and entertainment venues, which proliferated along Main Street and intersecting roads through the mid-twentieth century. These buildings and expansive residences erected by industrialists and merchants represent the architectural types and styles that predominated in North Carolina communities as the twentieth century progressed.

The locally important district's period of significance begins in 1901—the completion date of its two oldest buildings, Dr. A. W. Howell' store and the Queen Anne-style house at 203 West Main Street—and ends in 1966. With approximately ninety-two percent of its primary resources categorized as contributing, the district retains a high degree of integrity.

In cases where buildings have been deemed noncontributing, entire façades have been significantly altered by a combination of storefront updates, replacement window installation, and the application of brick, stone, or cast-stone veneer after 1966. Multi-story buildings with modified storefronts but intact upper floors remain contributing. These two buildings are examples of noncontributing resources, Kendrick Mercantile Company due to its altered storefront and Cherryville Savings and Loan because it is not yet fifty years old.

Cherryville's earliest extant commercial buildings feature brick façades with Italianate and Classical Revival-style corbelling, pilasters, and decorative parapets. A few structures also exhibit the use of cast-iron and pressed-metal storefront, window, and cornice ornamentation. Dr. A. W. Howell's store epitomizes this trend in its corbelled cornice, window hoods, and cast-iron pilasters.

Community investment in the built environment during the 1910s is manifested in fourteen edifices within the downtown historic district. The 1911 Classical Revival-style Cherryville City Hall set the tone for subsequent development. The eclectic blonde-brick façade features cast-stone cartouches, garlands, and egg-and-dart and foliated moldings. The adjacent 1913 Self-Hoffman Building has classical cast-stone keystones and impost blocks.

The 1916 First National Bank of Cherryville at 100 South Mountain Street, designed by architect Willard G. Rogers, a principal in the Charlotte firm Hook and Rogers, displays classical cornices, pedimented and arched windows, and a cast-stone foundation scored to emulate stone.

Most of the twenty-two commercial buildings erected within the district during the 1920s and 1930s have minimally-adorned facades. Variations in brick texture, pattern, and color add interest to the streetscape. The 1920 commercial building at 113 South Mountain Street is characterized by a textured-red-brick façade, stepped parapet, slightly projecting brick pilasters, and decorative header and soldier courses. The one- and two-story building at 106-108 North Mountain Street, constructed in 1930, features a wire-cut red-brick running-bond brick façade, a stepped parapet, and a header course spanning both storefronts above the first story.

Blonde brick was particularly popular in Commercial Style edifices, as seen in these 1920s examples including the commanding three-story 1924 Masonic Building.

The 1930 Pliskin and Londner Building features a cast-stone parapet panel with a bas-relief eagle, horn-of-plenty garlands, and scrolled outer edges.

A few Cherryville buildings illustrate the manner in which business owners employed Spanish Revival and Art Moderne stylistic elements to attract customers. The ca. 1930 Beam's Shell Service Station and Office and the 1932 Homesley Chevrolet - Homesley Super Service Station are executed in the Spanish Revival-style with stuccoed walls and metal-barrel-tile roofs.

This 1940 service station at 220 East Main Street displays the same features, but tall pilasters flank the façade bays. An Art Moderne influence is manifested in the 1942 Lester

Theater, where fluted vertical panels and scored horizontal lines enrich the second story.

From the 1950s through the 1970s, Cherryville's commercial buildings tended to incorporate elements of the Modernist style, reflecting the era's progressive thinking and optimism in the use of new materials, construction techniques, and spatial arrangements. Smooth concrete panels sheathe the projecting entrance bay of the 1958 United States Post Office. A pressed-red-brick, running-bond, 1961 façade unifies the commercial buildings at 120-124 West Main Street.

The district also encompasses seven residences that manifest popular early-twentieth-century architectural styles. The five oldest dwellings, ranging in age from the 1901 residence at 203 West Main Street to the neighboring 1917 house at 201 West Main Street, exhibit a combination of Queen Anne-style and classical features.

The 1920 McDowell House displays Craftsman-style elements. The influence of the Colonial Revival is evident in the finely detailed 1924 Carl A. and Verner Dellinger Rudisill House. I hope that this quick overview demonstrates the significance of Cherryville's Downtown Historic District.

Next steps

Rehabilitation tax credit process

Eligibility for the program is a primary benefit of National Register listing.