

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 Main Street Commercial Historic District
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Nos 2-105 Main Street not for publication
city, town Hamlet vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Richmond code 153 zip code 28345

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 type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>23</u>	<u>5</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>27</u>	<u>6</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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 S. Fair, Jr. Signature of certifying official 2-6-92 Date

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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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Main Street Commercial Historic District
Richmond County, NC

Historic Functions

DOMESTIC/hotel

COMMERCE/TRADE/professional
COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE/department store
COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse

SOCIAL/meeting hall

GOVERNMENT/post office

RECREATION & CULTURE/auditorium
RECREATION & CULTURE/theater

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

Current Functions

DOMESTIC/hotel

COMMERCE/TRADE/professional
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty
store

INDUSTRY/manufacturing
facility

GOVERNMENT/post office

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

RECREATION & CULTURE/museum

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
(see continuation sheet)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
(see continuation sheet)

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)
(see continuation sheet)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)
foundation brick
walls brick

roof asphalt
other glass
metal

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

General Physical Description

The Main Street Commercial Historic District in Hamlet is a two-block long area that largely achieved its present appearance by 1916. Its core is the Main Street business district that is defined by commercial facades, executed mostly in brick, immediately adjacent to the sidewalks on the north and south sides of the street. Additional buildings in the district include the Seaboard Air Line Passenger Depot (NR, 1971), located northeast of the commercial district in a V-shape formed by the north-south railroad tracks that form the east boundary of the district and the curved spur line that forms the north boundary; the 1940 U.S. Post Office on the southwest corner of Main and Raleigh streets, at the west edge of the district; and a brick warehouse complex on McDonald Avenue, on the south boundary of the district. Main Street slopes gently upward from east to west, and the terrain rises slightly to the north and south, thus placing Main Street and its commercial development in a small depression. (The north-south and east - west lines described in this district really run northeast-southwest and southeast-northwest, but for the sake of clarity, only the four cardinal directions are used.)

Railroad tracks and rights-of-way are major features in the historic district. A major north-south railroad right-of-way defines the east boundary of the district and an east-west line bisects it north of Main Street, separating the business district from the passenger depot. The two lines intersect immediately south of the depot. A spur line connects the two main line in an arc from a point near the north end of the depot platform to the east-west line northwest of the depot. Much of this spur line forms part of the district's north edge. Another connecting curved spur line west of the main lines' intersection, that separated the Terminal Hotel (entry number 17) and Union Building (entry number 18) from the rest of the Main Street development, has been paved over. The paved spur line links the rear alleys on the north and south sides of Main Street (the south alley is McDonald Lane), and a north-south alley separates the Central Hotel (entry number 32) from the adjoining commercial block. Another north-south alley divides the block between Raleigh Street and the paved spur line. The only empty lot in the district is on the north side of Main Street, adjacent to the railroad tracks on

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Architectural Classification

Commercial Style
Queen Anne
Classical Revival
Art Deco

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the east boundary. It was the site of a tavern in the early 1900s and presently is a municipal mini-park with a gazebo and flagpole.

The Main Street area of the district is composed largely of one-, two- and three-story brick commercial buildings that feature the decorative brickwork and ubiquitous early-twentieth century plate glass storefronts of small town North Carolina. Distinctive examples of the Italianate, Neo-Classical Revival and Art Deco styles enliven the streetscape and are interspersed among the more typical buildings. These architectural highlights are complemented by six largely unaltered two- and three-story buildings that are typical in their overall form and basic treatment but are distinguished by their scale or the degree of their ornamentation. The balance of the commercial fabric is composed of straightforward one- and two-story brick commercial buildings, many of which feature distinctive brickwork, cornices and metalwork and combine to create a sense of pedestrian scale and unity in the streetscape.

The five dominant buildings in the district are the Seaboard Air Line Passenger Depot (entry number 1), the Terminal Hotel (entry number 17), the Bank of Hamlet (entry number 29), the Old Hamlet Opera House (entry number 15) and the U.S. Post Office (entry number 33). The 1900 Seaboard Airline Passenger Depot is a handsome two-story frame building dominated by a massive, rounded pavilion and enlivened by decorative brackets that support a deep, overhanging roof. The 1912 Terminal Hotel, on the south side of Main Street opposite the depot, is an exuberant eclectic example of late Victorian architecture that displays a distinctive octagonal tower, curved, stepped Flemish parapets, and prominent modillioned cornices. The 1912 Bank of Hamlet at 55 Main Street displays an unaltered Neo-Classical, temple-front main elevation and the vault form that was prevalent among bank structures built during the first half of this century. The 1912 Hamlet Opera House originally displayed an impressive Neo-Classical facade that was completely remodeled in the Art Deco style in 1927. The U.S. Post Office is a W.P.A. project rendered in a severe, Classically-inspired motif that was popular among government planners in the 1930s.

The group of standard commercial buildings that stand out due to their scale or degree of ornamentation is comprised of the two Lackey buildings (entry numbers 20 & 26), the Central Hotel, 30-34 Main Street (entry number 9), 65-67 Main Street (entry number 31), and the Union Building. The originally identical Lackey buildings at 23-27 and 41 Main Street are largely intact examples of the Italianate style and feature distinctive cut-away corners and decorative metal entablatures with architraves, swags, bracketed friezes and molded cornices. The three-story Central Hotel built in

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1911 at 69 Main Street is a massive brick block executed in a restrained Italianate style. The building at 30-34 Main Street, also built in 1911 by E.A. Lackey with a distinctive cast-iron storefront, and the 1925 building at 65-67 Main Street, with its Spanish-tile decorative shed roof and urn-like stone ornaments, are both largely intact commercial structures that reflect typical architectural tastes at the time of their construction. The 1920 Union Building is a three-story block with Art Deco detailing.

The balance of the one- and two-story buildings in the district are typical brick commercial structures dating largely from the 1910s. Of this group, the buildings at 33, 35, 36 and 39 Main Street (entry numbers 22, 23, 9, and 24) were remodeled in the 1920s.

The historic district is distinctive and cohesive, with 24 contributing buildings and five contributing structures that include the network of railroad tracks and the passenger platform and small "subway" structures at the depot. There is a total of nine non-contributing elements, six of which are buildings that have been inappropriately altered and one site with structures that are combined into the mini-park with its small gazebo and flagpole.

Most of the modern alterations to numerous storefronts and interiors do not impact strongly on the overall architectural character and scale of the district, which remains remarkably similar to that recorded in photographs dating from the 1910s and '20s. An unusual number of storefronts remain intact (for example, those on the Union Building and the building at 65-67 Main Street, as well as the pedestrian levels of the the Bank of Hamlet and the Terminal Hotel) as do virtually all of the upper main facades and rear elevations. Since almost all the storefronts were originally designed with the recessed central entry flanked by plate-glass display windows designed to maximize the display space, they have remained functional and many, therefore, have suffered only the minimal renovations of new plate-glass with aluminum surrounds. Many of the upper levels of the buildings in the district remain unaltered or only slightly changed, and even those classified as non-contributing (such as 29, 40 44, 52, 56 Main Street) due to alterations retain original elements such as corbels, cornices and roof lines. Among the characteristic small scale early twentieth century buildings in the district, the seven at 28, 39, 42, 33, 39, 47 and 53 Main Street display largely intact main elevations decorated with entablatures, corbels, brackets, metalwork and stonework.

Numerous early buildings in the district had their historic fronts re-exposed recently when main Street was used as a site in the

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production of the film "Billy Bathgate." The film company removed incompatible modern materials from several facades, notably that of the E. A. Lackey Building at 23-27 Main Street, and added elements such as porches, awnings and painted signs to others. The most notable addition is the one-story wooden porch with chamfered posts on the north and east elevations of the Terminal Hotel which can be reversed with little trouble or damage to the building. A few of the buildings also received painted signs on secondary brick elevations. Although these will remain until they weather off these and other changes wrought by the film company did not damage the overall integrity of the buildings or the district.

Hamlet was a thriving railroad passenger and freight center until the railroad companies consolidated and moved their headquarters to Atlanta, Georgia, in the early 1970s. Today the commercial downtown area is approximately one-half to two-thirds occupied with business concerns. The City Council is developing plans to improve the downtown streetscape with the additions of planters and compatible street lights, and they hope to work with property owners to remove inappropriate awnings and signs. They are also developing plans to restore the Old Hamlet Opera House and convert it into a community cultural center.

Inventory List:

Sanborn Insurance Maps dating from 1900-1940 and a 1919 survey of the estate of E.A. Lackey show that the Main Street Commercial Historic District was completely developed by 1941 and largely achieved its present appearance by about 1916. Two buildings were added and five were remodeled in the 1920s. There was no building activity in the district from 1930 until 1941, when the Works Progress Administration built a U.S. Post Office on the southwest corner of Main and Raleigh Streets. The criteria for assessing contributing elements of the district include assessments of the integrity of the style, basic shape and form, architectural details, and materials of the resources that were erected or remodeled between 1900 and 1941. The Sanborn Maps, the E.A. Lackey estate survey, contemporary newspaper accounts, and contemporary photographs were used to determine the development of the district and the subsequent changes to some of the buildings within it. Buildings and elements that have retained the integrity of styles common to the period of the district, their basic shape and form, and all or most of the materials and period architectural details are counted as contributing. Buildings that have been remodelled out of their period context on their main elevations and post-1941 additions to the district are counted as non-contributing.

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Richmond County, NCMain Street: North Side

1. The Seaboard Air Line Passenger Depot. 2 Main Street (NR, 1971) ca. 1900. Contributing

The depot originated as a late Queen Anne style two story, L-shaped frame building covered with German siding that is dominated by a large rounded nine-bay pavilion at the outer angle of the L. In 1944, a two story brick addition was built perpendicular to the end of the north wing and, probably at the same time, a one-story frame addition was constructed to the end of the west wing, giving the building its present U-shaped plan. Covering each wing is a splayed gable roof that merges with the splayed conical roof of the pavilion. The roof has a very deep overhang that continues in the form of a pent across the gable ends. The overhang is supported by triangular stick-style brackets consisting of slender chamfered members. A fourth member bisects the triangle and extends beyond its base, ending a projecting onion-shaped bulb. The windows and doors in the wings are irregularly spaced, and all the windows on both levels are set in molded surrounds containing wooden double-hung one-over-one sash. The gable of each wing is covered with imbricated siding and features a three-part window consisting of a tall arched window flanked by shorter ones.

The building was constructed by the Seaboard Air Line Railway Company as both a passenger depot and its North Carolina division offices. The original ca. 1900 arrangement of the first floor centered around a general waiting room and ticket office in the pavilion. The east wing contained a ladies waiting room, washrooms, a staircase to the second floor, and a baggage room. The west wing contained a waiting room and wash room for Negroes, a staircase to the second floor, a battery room and a baggage room. The arrangement of the second floor centered around the dispatchers' office in the pavilion, with the offices for the train master and supervisors in the north wing and offices for conductors, road-masters and division engineers in the the west wing. The upstairs offices are connected by a hall on the inside angle of the L-plan. The walls of both levels are finished with plaster and vertically sheathed wainscot with a narrow molded cornice. The ceiling of the waiting room is also sheathed and has heavy molded exposed beams radiating from the center, where there are two round supporting posts extending from floor to ceiling. The floors throughout the building are wooden, the doors are six-panel wood, the balustrade and handrail of the staircases are turned and molded wood, and the baseboards and interior window surrounds are molded wood.

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The interior arrangement of the second floor was altered in the 1940s to accommodate more office space. Presently the building is unused except for the brick addition to the north wing that houses the National Railroad Museum, a comprehensive collection of railroad displays and memorabilia.

2. Passenger Platform. 2 Main Street. ca. 1940. Contributing

A long, narrow, concrete platform sheltered by a flat asphalt-covered roof supported by square wooden posts with diagonal braces resting on square wooden braces. Extending approximately 400 feet off the north wing of the SAL Passenger depot, the passenger platform parallels the north-south tracks that are adjacent to the depot and provided passengers protection from bad weather while boarding trains.

3. Subway Stations. 2 Main Street. ca. 1940. Contributing

A pair of small concrete, Art Deco-style hood-like enclosed shelters over staircases to a passage under the north-south railroad tracks adjacent to the SAL Passenger Depot. Located opposite each other to the north and northeast of the depot on either side of the the tracks, the "subway" allowed passengers to cross the railroad tracks safely.

4. Seaboard Caboose. 2 Main Street. ca. 1940. Contributing

A caboose retrieved from out-dated SAL rolling stock that is now permanently located north of the SAL Passenger Depot and is associated with the Railroad Museum housed within the depot. The interior of the caboose displays typical pre-World War II rolling living quarters of railroad workers.

5. The SAL Train Tracks and Rights-of-Way. ca. 1900. Contributing

Metal railroad tracks laid on wooden ties that consist of a major, north-south railroad right-of-way approximately 100 feet wide defining the east boundary of the district and an east-west line bisecting it north of Main Street, separating the business district from the passenger depot. A spur line with an approximately 40-foot right-of-way connects the two main lines in an arc from a point near the north end of the depot platform to the east-west line northwest of the depot. Much of this spur line forms part of the district's north edge. Another connecting curved spur line, west of the main lines' intersection that separated the Terminal Hotel and Union Building from the rest of the Main Street development, has been paved over.

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6. Mini-Park, Gazebo and Flagpole. 8-10 Main Street. ca. 1980.
Non-contributing

A small, grassy park with no plantings featuring a small round, open-sided gazebo with an octagonal asphalt-shingled roof and a flagpole that memorializes a long-time Hamlet mayor, W. Stewart Gordon. In the early years of the twentieth century, this was the site of a tavern.

7. Commercial Building. 14 Main Street. ca. 1916. Contributing

A common bond brick, tall one-story, flat-roofed building, two bays wide and four bays deep with a one story, one bay wide, two bay deep annex of the date date on the west elevation. The south (main) elevation features a cornice of ornamental brickwork composed of denticulation, corbelled stringer courses, and mousetoothing above plate glass display windows flanking a centered, recessed entrance. There is another entrance to the west of the display windows, and a third one in the annex. Below the transoms, now covered with plywood, a one-story, flat-roofed frame canopy supported by plain wooden posts shelters the storefront and sidewalk. The bays of east and west elevations are stepped to accommodate the slope of the site; the bays are window-less and are distinguished by corbels and plain brick buttresses. In 1916, the main building housed a gentlemen's clothing store and there was cleaners a in the annex. Presently, the building and annex house a furniture store.

8. Commercial Building. 28 Main Street. ca. 1906. Contributing

A common bond brick one-story, flat-roofed building. The south (main) elevation features a panel of ornamental brickwork composed of dentils, corbelled stringers and mousetoothing surmounted by a molded metal cornice with brackets at each end. The recessed central entry is reached by three concrete steps and is flanked by plate glass display windows and the entire storefront is sheltered by a new fabric awning. The blank, three-bay east elevation has a stepped roofline and corbelled brick pendant cornice. The west elevation shares a wall with the adjacent building and the rear elevation displays an irregular fenestration pattern. The interior has been modernized. Listed as a grocery store in 1906, the building presently houses a beauty shop.

9. Commercial Building. 30-34 Main Street. ca. 1911.
Contributing

A cast-iron storefront distinguishes this common bond brick two-

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story, flat-roofed building. The second story of the south (main) elevation features a plain metal cornice surmounting a panel of decorative brickwork. The second story features double-hung one-over-one sash windows surmounted by flat-arched metal hoodmolds. The first story features a central entry wooden staircase to the second story rising directly from the sidewalk and what were originally matching storefronts with recessed entries flanked by plate glass display windows. The west storefront has been altered with the addition of plywood panels in the display windows to create smaller casement windows shaded by awnings. The east elevation contains a row of arched window openings filled with double-hung wooden sash in a one-over-one pattern on the second story and a corbelled cornice. The west elevation is a common wall with the adjacent building. A 1912 photograph shows the main elevation surmounted by an Italianate bracketed metal cornice with a small central parapet. Built by the noted Hamlet developer, E.A. Lackey about 1911, the building housed a clothing store and a jewelry store on the first level and the YMCA on the second level. Presently the east storefront is vacant and its interior is inaccessible; the west one houses a pool hall.

10. Commercial Building. 36 Main Street. ca. 1911, remodeled ca. 1920. Contributing

A common bond brick, two-story, flat-roofed building. The second story of the south (main) elevation features a shallow stepped brick parapet surmounting long corbelled brick pendants that surround brick diamond-pattern Art Deco medallions. The second story windows are joined by brick soldier courses and are presently boarded over, as are the first story windows and doors. A 1912 photograph shows a one-story flat-roofed building with a metal Italianate bracketed cornice with small parapets above its two storefronts, each with recessed entries flanked by display windows. Vestiges of the original building with its brickwork of corbelled stringer courses and soldier courses that surrounded the storefronts are still visible on the first story of the main elevation. The 1911 Sanborn Maps show that the building housed a furniture store. The 1920 Sanborn maps show that the building still housed a furniture store, and that it had been enlarged to two stories. It is presently vacant and the interior is inaccessible.

11. Commercial Building. 38 Main Street. ca. 1911. Contributing

A common bond brick, one-story, flat-roofed building. The upper south (main) elevation features a band of corbelled brick pendants and a simple row of mousetoothing. The top of this elevation, now flat and bearing a sign, probably originally had several courses of

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plain corbelling like that of 44 and 42 Main Street, to which it is otherwise identical. The storefront consists of two recessed entries and plate glass display windows with a full-width transom (now covered) and a molded metal cornice. A modern metal flat-roofed canopy with plain metal uprights affixed to the base of the transom shelters the width of the facade. In 1911, 38 Main Street housed a grocery and notions shop; presently it houses an appliance store. The interior has been modernized.

12. Commercial Building. 40 Main Street. ca. 1912, remodeled ca. 1970. Non-contributing

A common bond brick, one-story, flat-roofed building, slightly taller, but otherwise originally identical to the flanking buildings at 38 and 42 Main Street. Most of the south (main) elevation has been covered with perma-stone and the storefront has been completely reconstructed, but the original cornice of plain corbelling, corbelled pendants and mousetoothing remains intact. A flat metal awning supported by plain metal uprights shelters the lower main facade. A 1912 photograph shows that the main elevation of the building matched those of its neighbors on either side with plate glass display windows flanking a recessed central entry. In 1916, the building housed a restaurant; presently it houses an accounting office.

13. Commercial Building. 42 Main Street. ca. 1912. Contributing

The most intact of the three original identical buildings at 38 to 42 Main Street, this one-story brick building continues to display its tall full facade transom of prism glass. The storefront retains its original configuration with the recessed central entrance and the decorative brick upper elevation is identical to that of 40 Main Street next door. A modern metal awning mounted at the base of the transom shelters the width of the facade. In 1916, the building housed an undertaker; presently it houses an equipment rental business. The interior has been modernized.

14. Commercial Building. 44 Main Street. ca. 1916, remodeled ca. 1970. Non-contributing

A common bond brick, one-story, flat-roofed building that originally contained two storefronts. The south (main) elevation has been radically altered with brickwork covering the entire east storefront, a reconstructed, recessed west storefront containing metal and glass, and a modern panel obscures the full-facade transom. Only the very restrained decorative brickwork at the cornice remains.

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15. The Old Hamlet Opera House. 46 Main Street. ca. 1912, remodeled, 1927. Contributing

This common bond brick building originally featured an elaborate Neo-Classical Revival facade in dressed stone copied from the original Wilmington (N.C.) Opera House. In 1927, that facade was replaced with a sleek, poured concrete Art Deco one that features pilasters rising to a massive symmetrical stepped parapet. A three-sided marquee shelters the five-bay-wide lower facade containing paired central entry doors, ticket booths and single entry doors on either side. The paired entry doors are modern and have been covered with plywood cut and painted with a Deco pattern for the filming of "Billy Bathgate." The pedestrian level is distinguished by bold, geometric soldier courses that link the entryways and the feature attraction poster display cases. Except for the elaborate plaster proscenium arch of stylized foliage that defines the stage, the auditorium is presently rather plain. The 1927 seating has been replaced with fixed wooden seating from old courthouses and school auditoriums and the walls are plain except for undecorated pilasters placed at intervals along the walls. The lobby features a tessellated floor in a geometric pattern and a sleek glass and formica refreshment counter. The Opera House was a special project of the early Hamlet developer E.A. Lackey, who built it in 1916. It boasted a seating capacity of 793 in a proscenium-style auditorium with a balcony, and attracted audiences from the surrounding counties to view famous road shows including Abie's Irish Rose, Al G. Fields, the Cogburn Minstrels, Enrico Caruso, and "The Birth of a Nation." After its remodeling in 1927, it became a movie theater and remained one until the mid-1970s.

16. Commercial Building. 52-56 Main Street. ca. 1916, remodeled ca. 1960s-70s. Non-contributing

This long, one-story common bond brick building, unified by repeated patterns of ornamental brickwork in the upper facades of its four units, has modern, reconstructed storefronts incompatible with the original design. The westernmost unit features an angled corner that conforms to the intersection of Main and Raleigh streets. In 1916, the building housed a market and office space. Today it houses a flower shop and a lending company.

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Main Street: South Side

17. The Terminal Hotel. 3 Main Street. ca. 1912. Contributing

This large two-story common bond brick building dominates the east end of the Main Street streetscape. The building is U-shaped in plan, with main facades addressing Main Street and the railroad's north-south tracks. A short but distinctive octagonal brick tower with a shingled, octagonally-planed roof and tall finial rises above the main roofline at the northeast corner. The northeast plane of the tower is continuous with the narrow, angled corner bay containing the double-leaf entry into the space once housing the hotel restaurant. The roofline of the building is accented at the center bays of the north and east elevations with a curved and stepped Flemish parapet. There is a granite panel set beneath the north elevation parapet that is carved with the name "Terminal Hotel." Prominent molded and modillioned cornices appear on either side of the parapet on the north elevation and to the north side of the east elevation parapet. The main entry of the hotel lobby is located in the north elevation under the brick parapet. At the first story, plate glass windows with transoms in wooden frames mark the second and third bays, respectively, immediately south and west of the angled restaurant entrance. All other first story windows are one-over-one double-hung sash. The windows of the second story are arranged in pairs in each bay except beneath the parapets where they are arranged in a tripartite pattern. The second story windows are wooden double-hung sash in a one-over-one pattern with stone lintels, brick sills and wooden blinds. A flat-roofed one-story wooden veranda with chamfered posts, spandrels and a balcony rail was added to the north and a portion of the east elevation in 1991 for the film, "Billy Bathgate." The rear elevations of the building are unadorned brick with double-hung, one-over-one windows lighting each room on each elevation.

The lobby of the hotel is located in the northwest corner of the first story and is dominated by a brick Craftsman-style fireplace on the rear (south) wall with a doorway leading to ground-floor guest rooms on its west side. There are four large paneled wooden square posts arranged in front of the fireplace that support the four-square paneled beams of the plastered ceiling. The staircase rises on the west wall of the lobby and the wooden paneled registration desk with a foreshortened square post in its curve is located on the east and south walls of the lobby. The walls of the lobby are finished with Craftsman-style wood-paneled wainscoting with plaster above, and wood paneled pilasters support the ends of the ceiling beams. The interior window and door surrounds are molded wood. Interior access to the restaurant is gained through a door in the

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east wall of the lobby, north of the registration desk. The restaurant is composed of three rooms in an L-shaped plan separated by flat, tri-partite arches in the walls. The interior walls and window and door details of the restaurant are the same as those of the hotel lobby. The floors throughout the building have been covered with linoleum. The rear west wing on the first floor contains guest rooms arranged around a center hall plan, as does the second floor.

The building was constructed by a consortium of Richmond County businessmen as a hotel and restaurant to serve the passengers disembarking at the nearby SAL Passenger depot. Presently the hotel houses permanent guests and the restaurant is vacant. The building was recently a major setting for the film, "Billy Bathgate."

18. The Union Building. 5 Main Street. ca. 1920. Contributing

A three-story, flat-roofed, common bond brick building. The north (main) elevation of the building contains a central entry leading to a staircase and a storefront on either side. Each storefront has a recessed central entry flanked by plate glass display windows and a transom with vertical wooden mullions spanning the width of the front. The west storefront has an additional transomed display window on the west side elevation. The stylish front portion of the building, extending one bay deep, is accented by Art Deco style brick and stone-capped pilasters that seem to support a bracketted stone cornice. Above the cornice is a tall stepped brick parapet with a stone coping. The rear and larger portion of the building, executed in common bond brick, is six bays deep, quite plain, and irregularly shaped since it parallels the adjacent SAL spur right-of-way that has been paved over. The rear (south) elevation contains an above-ground basement that conforms to the north-to-south downward slope of the site. The window openings in the west and south elevations are segmental arched and filled with rectilinear double-hung wooden sash in a one-over-one pattern. The third story windows of the west elevation are connected at the sills with a brick soldier course and the south elevation of the basement level is similarly defined. The southwest corner of the building is defined with a parapet and cornice that matches those on the main elevation. The interior of the building is presently vacant and is inaccessible. In 1920, it housed a fruit store and an ice cream store on in its storefronts. The upper levels contained office space and there was a Masonic Lodge on the second floor of the south block.

19. Outbuilding. (rear of) 5 Main Street. ca. 1920. Contributing

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A wood-framed, two bay, front gable garage covered with clapboard siding and an asphalt shingled roof. There are no doors on the two garage openings.

20. The E.A. Lackey Building I. 23-27 Main Street. Contributing

A two-story, flat-roofed common bond brick building featuring an angled northeast corner that continues the treatment of the main elevation. At the pedestrian level, the north (main) elevation storefronts are separated by a central entry with a staircase rising directly from the sidewalk. The east storefront is vacant and was a major site for the movie "Billy Bathgate"; the west one presently houses a drugstore and has been altered with a flat metal awning and a sign obscuring the glass transoms. The second story window openings are defined by brick flat arches and stone sills and are filled with wooden double-hung sash in a one-over-one pattern. Originally those in the main facade had metal hoodmolds. The roofline is accented with a band of small corbelled pendants that define the top and slightly recessed second story of the main elevation and the angled corner. Above the corbelled pendants is a stamped metal entablature that matches that on the E.A. Lackey Building II at 41 Main Street, at the west end of the block. These entablatures are composed of an architrave with swags, a modillioned frieze and a molded cornice. The name "E.A. Lackey" (a well-known real-estate developer in early twentieth-century Hamlet) appears on the angled wall within the entablature. The east and west elevations display a band of corbelled pendants that match those on the second story of the north elevation. The south (rear) elevation is unadorned. The east and south elevations display a regular fenestration pattern on the second story and an irregular one on the first. The building housed a drugstore and a grocery store in its storefronts in 1916. Presently it is vacant except for the drugstore in its west storefront, the interior of which has been modernized.

21. Commercial Building. 29 Main Street. ca. 1906, remodeled ca. 1970. Non-contributing

This one-story, common bond brick flat-roofed building with a bracketed metal cornice has been extensively altered with a modern replacement storefront and a concrete and aluminum panel covering the upper main elevation. In 1906, the building was the easternmost of a group of three (with 31 and 33 Main Street) that were joined by matching stamped metal cornices and storefronts of plate glass display windows flanking recessed central entries, all spanned by a tall transom. In 1911, the building housed a furniture store; presently it is occupied by an insurance agency. The interior has

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been modernized.

22. Commercial Building. 31 Main Street. ca. 1906, remodeled ca. 1970. Non-contributing

A one-story common bond brick, flat-roofed building with a stamped metal cornice. The original storefront has been removed and replaced with wooden fencing and a double-leaf gate to accommodate a feed and seed store. The building is the center one of a group of three (29, 31 and 33 Main Street) that originally were very similar due to their matching metal cornices surmounted by small metal parapets and matching storefronts of plate glass display windows flanking recessed central entries. The front of this building retains only its brick upper elevation with corbelled pendants and metal cornice. In 1906, the building housed a grocery store.

23. Commercial Building. 33 Main Street. ca. 1906, remodeled ca. 1925. Contributing.

A one-story common bond brick, flat-roofed building with a decorative metal cornice. Above the storefront, spanning the full width, is a transom of small square glass blocks that appears to have been added about 1925. The building is the westernmost of a group of three (29, 31 and 33 Main Street) that originally were very similar due to their matching stamped metal cornices surmounted by small parapets and matching storefronts of plate glass display windows flanking recessed central entries. All three buildings retain their cornices, without the parapets, but this is the most intact as the upper elevation with its brick corbelling remains exposed and the storefront, although now with replacement metal-framed display windows, retains its original configuration. In 1906, the building housed a store; presently it is vacant and the interior is inaccessible.

24. Huguelet's Jewelry Store. 35 Main Street. ca. 1906, remodeled ca. 1925. Contributing

A one-story, common bond brick, flat-roofed building with a decorative brickwork cornice rising to a flat parapet. In 1912, the main elevation was almost completely brick with only two bays defined by an arched entry in the east portion and a matching window in the west. It appears that the main elevation was remodeled with a large plate glass storefront with a recessed entry and surmounted by a transom window filled with diamond-shaped tracery about 1925. In 1906, the building was the Bank of Hamlet; presently it is occupied by a jewelry store that has been there since about 1912; the interior has been adapted for retail purposes.

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25. Commercial Building. 39 Main Street. ca. 1906, remodeled ca. 1925. Contributing

A two-story common bond brick, flat-roofed building with a decorative brickwork cornice. A 1912 photograph reveals that the lower elevation was mostly brick with an arched entry in the east half and a matching window opening in the west. The three original segmental arched window openings with one-over-one sash of the second story of the main elevation remain intact and there is a round arched opening at the west end of the first elevation that is probably an element of the original fenestration pattern. The balance of the main first story elevation appears to have been remodeled about 1925. In 1906, the building was occupied by the Post Office. Presently, it is occupied by a video store; the interior has been modernized.

26. The E.A. Lackey Building II. 41 Main Street. ca. 1906. Contributing

The westernmost building on the block, this is the companion, both stylistically and in terms of location, to the other E.A. Lackey Building at 23-27 Main Street at the eastern end of the block. Of the two originally virtually identical buildings, this is the more intact, with all of the metal hoodmolds at the second story main elevation windows and its brick work fully exposed. The pedestrian level is divided by a central entry with a staircase and is flanked by flat display windows that replaced the original recessed storefront arrangements. Above the display windows are transom windows filled with square-shaped tracery that are probably original. As on the earlier building, the name "E.A. Lackey" appears in the frieze of the angled wall. The building interior has been largely modernized on its pedestrian level, but still retains the decorative tile floor in its westernmost storefront. In 1912, it housed a drugstore and a dentist. Presently, it is occupied by a drugstore and was a major site for the film "Billy Bathgate."

27. Commercial Building. 47-51 Main Street. ca. 1916. Contributing

A two-story common bond brick, flat-roofed building. The pedestrian level of the north (main) elevation is divided by a central entry leading to a staircase and to either side are storefronts with recessed central entries flanked by plate glass display windows. The storefronts are modern but retain their original basic configurations. The pedestrian level is sheltered by a modern flat-roofed awning that extends west to shelter the pedestrian level of 53 Main Street as well. The second story windows are flat arched

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and filled with wooden one-over-one sash. Pilasters with corbelled bases define the outer edges of the second story front, and there are stringer courses across the main elevation. The roofline is accented with a brickwork cornice of decorative corbelling and paired shallow, gabled brick parapets bearing corbelled pendants above the two outside bays. The east and south (rear) elevations are of a different brick in a common bond and are unadorned, with a regular fenestration pattern of segmental arched window openings on the second story, no openings on the pedestrian level of the east elevation, and an irregular pattern on the rear. In 1920, the building housed a drugstore and a variety store. Presently, it is occupied by a gift shop and eye clinic on the pedestrian level and doctors' offices in the second story.

28. Commercial Building. 53 Main Street. ca. 1916. Contributing

A one-story, flat-roofed, common bond brick building with striated corner pilasters and a cornice of restrained decorative brickwork of simple corbelling and mousetoothing. The recessed central entry is flanked by modern plate glass display windows that retain the original configuration. The east and west elevations are common walls with the adjacent buildings and the rear elevation is unadorned with an irregular fenestration pattern. In 1916, the building housed a grocery store; presently it is vacant and the interior is inaccessible.

29. The Bank of Hamlet. 55 Main Street. Ca. 1912. Contributing

A monumental temple front with two Ionic columns in antis dominates the main elevation of this Neo-Classical Revival style two-and-one-half story common bond brick building. The name "Bank of Hamlet" is chiseled into the frieze and the dentilled and modillioned pediment bears foliate relief in the tympanum. A double-door entry and massive lunette occupy most of the brick wall recessed a few feet behind the temple front. A mitered surround of molded stone blocks enframes the entry and is topped by a molded cornice with a modillion at each end. The massive lunette above is defined by a raised surround and a carved keystone and is filled with small panes set in brass mullions in an intricate rectilinear design. A decorative stone clock casing (the clock has been removed) rests on the base of the lunette. The main banking lobby occupies approximately half the interior space and rises to the full height of the building. It is finished with plaster walls and wide, heavily molded woodwork, a skylight, and a decorative tile floor. It has been stripped of its original banking fixtures and the rear of the building presently houses a television repair shop. Built by E.A. Lackey, the 1912 Bank of Hamlet was an architectural statement

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of the commercial and transportation importance of the town in the early years of the twentieth century. It housed the first banking institution in Hamlet and the second in Richmond County and the bank listed the area's leading citizens on its board of directors.

30. Commercial Building. 57 Main Street. ca. 1916, remodeled ca. 1970. Non-contributing

A one-story, common bond brick, flat-roofed building with a decorative brickwork cornice. The storefront has been replaced with a modern recessed wall of ashlar stone with a picture window on the east and a plate glass and metal door on the west, with a wide transom window above both. In 1916, the building housed a grocery store; presently it is occupied by an insurance company.

31. Commercial Building. 63-67 Main Street. ca. 1925.
Contributing

A two-story, common bond, flat-roofed brick building with what appear to be its original storefronts. The pedestrian level of the main elevation contains two storefronts, each with the typical recessed central entries flanked by plate glass display windows. A panel defined by string courses marks the division between the first and second stories. The one-over-one double-hung second story window openings with stone sills are evenly spaced across the facade. Brick piers topped with stone urn-like ornaments rise from the corners and middle of the facade and between them are heavily bracketed false shed roofs covered with Spanish tiles. There is a narrow one-story annex at the east end of the building containing a single plate glass display window and a recessed entry. The annex has a stepped and gabled brick parapet roofline. The east, west and south (rear) elevations are unadorned, displaying a regular fenestration pattern on the second story and an irregular one on the pedestrian level. The building was a site for "Billy Bathgate" and displays some advertising lettering used as props for the film in its storefronts. In 1925, it housed a retail store on its pedestrian level and offices above. Presently, it is vacant and its interior is inaccessible.

32. The Central Hotel. 69 Main Street. ca. 1911. Contributing

A large, boxy configuration lends a massive quality to this three-story, common bond painted brick, flat-roofed building with an attic. Originally, the main elevation featured a two-story wooden veranda which was replaced around 1955 with the one-story hipped-roofed screened porch supported by plain wooden posts resting on brick piers and approached by three concrete steps. The central entry is a segmental arched opening defined by a molded wood

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surround and filled with double-leaf wood and glass doors, sidelights, and an arched transom. On either side of the entry are pairs of arched window openings filled with double-hung wooden sash in a one-over-one pattern. The second story window openings are segmental arches with brick sills and are filled with rectangular one-over-one wooden sash. The roofline is accented with a brick cornice of corbelled pendants. The side and rear elevations are unadorned. They display a regular fenestration pattern of arched window openings on the second story, and an irregular one on the pedestrian level. The building interior presently houses a soup kitchen on the first floor and is vacant and inaccessible on the second and third stories. This massive hotel was built by E.A. Lackey in 1911, and remained a hotel until the early 1950s, when it was converted into a nursing students' residence for the nearby Hamlet Hospital.

33. U.S. Post Office. 105 Main Street. 1940. Contributing

A square, common bond brick, five-bay, one-story, hipped-roofed building resting on a raised foundation. The main elevation of this Works Progress Administration project displays a symmetrical three-part composition featuring three-bay, full-height entry pavilion reached by a short flight of stone steps. Severe, monumental, dressed stone piers define the three bays consisting of a central entrance with a twelve-pane window above and a full-height twelve-over-twelve sash double-hung window to each side. On either side of the piers are large window openings filled with double-hung wooden sash in a nine-over-nine pattern. The brick walls east and west of the entry pavilion each contain one window opening filled with double-hung wooden sash in a six-over-six pattern. The east and west elevations display an irregular fenestration pattern composed of window openings filled with six-over-six sash. The tall stone frieze encircling the building is plain except for the words "United States Post Office" chiseled above the main entrance. There is a one-story, flat-roofed ell with an open, flat-roofed loading dock on the rear (south) elevation of the building. The main post office lobby has a terrazzo floor, plaster walls and wooden fixtures. To the rear of the lobby are offices and mail processing rooms.

34. Industrial Building. McDonald Lane. ca. 1920 and 1925.
Contributing

A one-story, common bond brick, flat-roofed, unadorned industrial building that is irregular in shape. The 1920 Sanborn Maps show two small, unattached brick buildings on the site. By 1925, there were three brick units in a row connected by fire walls and an additional

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brick wing on the north side to form a single building of four irregular parts. In 1920, the initial building component was identified as the Mose Warehouse. Presently, it houses a light manufacturing plant.

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
Architecture	1900-1941	1900
Community Development		
Transportation		
Commerce		

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person

Lackey, E. A.

Architect/Builder

unknown

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

Summary Paragraph:

The Main Street Commercial Historic District in Hamlet is a densely developed area of composed primarily of brick commercial buildings spanning the period 1900 to 1941, with the majority constructed by the mid-1910s. The town of Hamlet came into being on September 17, 1876, when the town founder, John D. Shortridge (1818-1882), deeded a strip of land near his house, woolen mill and sawmill to the newly established Raleigh & Augusta Airline Railroad for \$1.00. The town gained prominence as a railway center in 1900 when the Seaboard Airline Railroad, created through a series of railway company consolidations and expansions in the 1890s, built its distinctive passenger depot and North Carolina Division office building at its crossroads in Hamlet. The resulting building boom is perhaps best represented by the Main Street Commercial Historic District. The area reflects significant local development in the areas of transportation and commerce generally, as well as the accomplishments of E.A. Lackey, a prominent businessman, banker and real estate developer who was responsible for almost all of the construction in the Main Street commercial area from from 1890 until his death in 1918. The Main Street Commercial Historic District exhibits stylistically important buildings designed for specific uses, including the Seaboard Air Line passenger depot, the Terminal Hotel, the Bank of Hamlet, the old Hamlet Opera House and the U.S. Post Office. The rest of the commercial fabric of the district consists of one-, two-, and three-story brick buildings in typical early twentieth century designs exhibiting decorative brickwork and metal cornices, some of which are quite distinctive. Overall, the area is architecturally cohesive and for the most part intact, notable for its numerous unaltered storefronts.

Architectural Context

The one-, two- and three-story brick commercial buildings of the Hamlet Main Street Commercial Historic District exhibit the styles

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and characteristics of similar small, turn-of-the-century railroad, commercial and manufacturing centers in North Carolina. These small towns blossomed as the tide of Reconstruction politics ebbed and mills, agrarian-based commercial activities, and railway company consolidations were established during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. These factors, as well as a persistent depression in agriculture, caused a shift from rural to urban populations that continued through the first decades of the twentieth century. (1)

Hamlet experienced a sustained growth of its Main Street commercial fabric from 1900, when the Seaboard Air Line passenger depot and division office building was built, through the 1920s. (2) The commercial fabric of Hamlet recalls that of the numerous small and medium-sized towns across North Carolina whose commercial centers expanded in the early years of this century in response to significant transportation and industrial development. Good examples of similar places include Maxton in Robeson County, Clinton in Sampson County, and Aberdeen in Moore County. (3) Their commercial fabric is almost uniformly of brick, is one-, two- or three-stories tall, and, for the most part, displays the restrained, conservative detailing of the Italianate, Neo-Classical Revival and the ubiquitous main street commercial style. The commercial architecture of Hamlet's Main Street reflects the prevailing mood of the state at the time: citizens were confident of the future with the expansion of business, manufacturing, and the railroads, but conservative in nature with the rise of the Democratic party's "white supremacy" platform and emphasis on partnerships between business and government. (4)

The confidence that the citizens of Hamlet felt in the future of their town was expressed in four major, stylish commercial buildings that were erected before 1915 and that still exist. They are the late Queen Anne style Seaboard Airline passenger depot (N.R., 1971), erected about 1900; The Terminal Hotel, finished in 1912; the Neo-Classical Revival style Bank of Hamlet, erected in 1912; and the Hamlet Opera House, erected in 1914 and remodeled in 1927.

The Seaboard depot was one of a family of early twentieth-century depots that were erected in towns across the state as the importance of railway transportation grew in the early 1900s. Most of the depots erected in small towns like Hamlet were brick or frame and were linear in form and one story tall. In spite of the town's small size, Hamlet's importance as the junction of the Charlotte to Wilmington route and as a stop on the major line from the North to the Deep South is exemplified in the grand, L-shaped building with

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its handsome pavilion waiting room and second story housing the railroad company's North Carolina Division offices. (5)

The bank and the opera house, as well as several buildings in the Main Street Commercial Historic District and the surrounding residential area, were built by Mr. E.A. Lackey (1861-1918) a businessman and real estate developer who resembled such entrepreneurs in other early twentieth century North Carolina cities. (6) The 1914 Bank of Hamlet, an institution that Lackey established in 1903, is the epitome of the classical vault form of bank architecture that was built in towns across the state as a reflection of the increasing public confidence in the state's multiplying financial institutions. (7) The Opera House, a copy of the Front Street Wilmington Opera House, was a special project of Lackey's and was large enough to accommodate such large road shows as Coburn's Minstrels and Abbie's Irish Rose and drew audiences from the surrounding counties. (8) Its Neo-Classical Revival main facade was remodeled in 1927 into a bold, Art Deco statement, a style especially popular for movie theaters at that time. The stylishness of the remodeling probably reflected Hamlet's pride in being a major stop-over on the main railway line between New York City and Miami, Florida. (9) These two cities were on the leading edge of the Art Deco movement in architecture in the 1920s and exported their interest in it to the rest of the country.

The typical commercial fabric of Main Street in Hamlet is like that of most early twentieth century commercial buildings in small and medium-sized North Carolina towns. It is composed of buildings that are one and two stories tall with an occasional three-story one. All have flat roofs, some with parapets, and most display storefronts composed of recessed central entries with plate glass display windows. Typically, the storefronts were plate glass set in wooden surrounds, but an occasional cast iron storefront was installed and at least one survives in Hamlet at 30-34 Main Street. Typical facades are distinguished with restrained ornamental brickwork featuring corbelled pendants, string courses, soldier courses and mousetoothing. Since the storefronts were designed to display retail goods, the original basic configuration of many of them survive in spite of the widespread installation of modern materials. An unusual number of unaltered or only slightly altered storefronts such as those on the Union Building at 5 Main Street and on the building at 65-67 Main Street exist in the Main Street Commercial District, making it a valuable resource in continuing studies of typical early twentieth century commercial architecture.

The 1940 Hamlet branch of the U.S. Post Office is a severe,

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classically-inspired, four-square brick building designed and built as a result of the Works Progress Administration, a Depression-era domestic program that was launched in 1935 and continued until 1941, when the United States entered World War II. The Post Office is similar to many others of its era that were built in North Carolina towns. It was the only major construction project in the Main Street Commercial Historic District from the late 1920s until 1940.

Transportation Context

Beginning in the 1830s, a policy of state aid to railroads was adopted and implemented by the Legislature as a means to allow farmers and timbermen easy access to markets for their products. State appropriations in 1834 and 1835 allowed the completions of the privately-owned north-south Wilmington to Weldon line that connected with Richmond, Virginia, and the privately-owned Raleigh to Gaston line that connected to Petersburg, Virginia. Although these two lines were financial disasters for the State, their importance to local economies increased the demand for more state involvement in planning and financing additional lines, especially in the western counties. In 1849, the state-owned North Carolina Railroad, a line from Goldsboro to Charlotte through Raleigh was chartered, and in 1856 the 223-mile line, the largest state-funded project to date, was opened to traffic. The State investment in these railroad lines paid rich dividends for many of its citizens. Freight rates were halved, thus encouraging the production of surplus agricultural goods for market and reducing the cost of finished goods to the state's citizens. Piedmont towns on the railroad lines grew, and that area's industrial development began. The Civil War, Reconstruction-era railroad bond scandals, and state financial problems put an end to state support of railroads in 1870 when the system was privatized. (10)

Between 1880 and 1900, privately-financed railway expansion in North Carolina linked towns not on the antebellum lines and made them important components in a system that rapidly expanded because of an influx of Northern capital, the consolidation of many smaller lines into conglomerates, and a friendly legislature that granted special privileges and freedom from regulation to major railway companies. Starting in 1870, track mileage in the state more than doubled to a total of 3,001 miles in 1890, and in 1900 it was 3,800 miles. This system was integrated into a national network with many interstate connections.

These reorganizations resulted in three major railroad systems in the state: the 1894 Southern Railway Company that dominated the

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Piedmont and the western counties; the 1900 Atlantic Coastline Railroad that dominated the Coastal Plain; and the 1900 Seaboard Air Line Railway. (11) The Seaboard Air Line emerged from railroad consolidations that occurred between 1873 and 1900. In 1873, the Seaboard and Roanoke from Norfolk, Virginia, acquired controlling stock in the Raleigh and Gaston and laid track from Raleigh to Hamlet on a line optioned by the Carolina Central in 1877. In 1880, Seaboard acquired control of the Carolina Central, and between 1881 and 1892, it built a new road from Monroe to Atlanta that connected to the earlier line from Wilmington to Hamlet to Monroe. By 1900, the line was complete and caused Hamlet to become a major interstate railroad crossroad, a fact that was demonstrated by the construction of the handsome new Hamlet depot that year. (12) On August 3, 1912, a special Trade and Industrial issue of the Hamlet Messenger characterized Hamlet as "The Town of Opportunities," and boasted that the town ". . . is on the main line of the Seaboard Air Line Railway and is the terminal of the North and South Carolina Railway [a small trunk line to Greenville, South Carolina]."

Community Development and Commerce Contexts and Historical Background

In 1876, the site of the present town of Hamlet was occupied only by the mills and house of John D. Shortridge (1818-1882) and a few shanties. That year Shortridge deeded a strip of land to the newly established Raleigh & Augusta Airline Railroad for \$1.00, for a track right-of-way, and proclaimed to two friends that the settlement would soon be a "Hamlet" in the sense of the English villages of his native land. Shortridge's faith in the future of the settlement was well placed; the railroads came, with the first train from Raleigh arriving on August 10, 1877. The nineteenth century business district of Hamlet was on Hamlet and Front streets and Railway Avenue, north and east of the Seaboard Air Line Passenger Depot. Much of that commercial fabric has been destroyed, but accounts of the area relate that there was a hotel and numerous saloons in the area. On February 9, 1897, the town was formally incorporated (13). Between 1900 and 1910, the population of the town quadrupled from 639 to 2173, and increased steadily every decade until 1940. (14)

The Main Street Commercial Historic District was largely developed by Eli A. Lackey, (1861-1918) a native of Alexander County who settled in Hamlet in 1890. Lackey was one of a generation of early twentieth century land developers in the state who built residential and commercial areas to accommodate growing urban populations. His vision for the town of Hamlet may have been similar to that of such

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early twentieth century developers as Daniel A. Tompkins and Edward Dillworth Latta in Charlotte, James H. Pou and V.O. Parker of Raleigh, and Moses and Ceasar Cone in Greensboro. (15) He began his career in the town by building a still and distilling spirits for sale. In 1897, the year the town was incorporated, he purchased 100 acres of land on the west side of the Seaboard tracks and south of the nineteenth century business district, and opened up Main, Lackey, Champlain, Henderson and Rice streets. Main Street was divided into four blocks of commercial lots, divided by alleys, with two blocks on the north and two on the south sides of the street. The balance of the property was divided into residential blocks bisected by alleys and composed of lots averaging 60 feet by 100 feet. (16) Affectionately known as "Lackey Town," this area was recorded and sworn to in 1898, and the first store, Lackey Brothers Department Store, opened at 36 Main Street in 1901. (17) By 1911, the south side of Main Street, from the SAL right-of way west to 41 Main Street was developed, and by 1916 both sides of the street west to Lackey Street were developed. (18) The Department Store at 36 Main Street, the YMCA building at 30-34 Main Street, the two Lackey Buildings at 23-27 and 41 Main Street, the Central Hotel, the Bank of Hamlet and the Hamlet Opera House were Lackey enterprises. The balance of the street was owned and developed by E.A. Lackey and his brothers, Fred and Ollie, either as a part of their business, or in partnerships with other businessmen. (19)

In 1912, Hamlet was a flourishing town that served the railway passengers who passed through it as well as the railway workers based there and it was the source of commercial goods, banking services and professional services for the agrarian townships that surrounded it. A special issue of the Hamlet Messenger dedicated to trade and industry was published on August 3, 1912, and described Hamlet in glowing terms.

. . . the best town in North Carolina. . . . It has many municipal advantages and is reached from the surrounding territory by good roads. Its agricultural possibilities are extensive, the climate is unsurpassed, and every opportunity is offered to large and small manufacturing industries. It has splendid business houses, a number of which carry immense stocks of merchandise and the men who conduct them justly enjoy the reputation of being progressive.

Among the many businesses that the Messenger boasted of in 1912, were the Main Street businesses that were vital to the economy of the area. The Terminal Hotel at 3 Main Street was dedicated on

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January 1, 1912, and was probably a reflection of the rapid growth of the need for guest accommodations generated by the railway company traffic. It was built by the Terminal Hotel Company, a corporation whose members were Richmond County businessmen, not Lackeys, and were, according to the Messenger, "prompted by motives of purely public spirit, rather than by any consideration of profit to invest their money in an enterprise which was so essential to the welfare of the town and whose presence and operations would directly and indirectly foster and promote conditions that would be an incentive to progress." Among the other 1912 Main Street businesses described by the Messenger were the Rice and Folsom grocery store in the E.A. Lackey Building at 41 Main Street, the Lackey Brothers Department Stores at 36 Main Street, Hugellet's Jewelry Store at 35 Main Street, and Lackey's Central Hotel at 69 Main Street.

Premier among the Main Street businesses was the Bank of Hamlet, the first bank in Hamlet and the second in Richmond County, which was organized by E.A. Lackey in 1902 and occupied the grand, ca. 1912 Neo-Classical Revival building at 55 Main Street. The Messenger recognized the importance of the bank to the commercial development of Hamlet and to the surrounding area in the following statement:

The inception of this enterprise, looking backward over the intervening years, really marked the beginning of the development which since characterized Hamlet, for by being raised to the importance of a banking town, it became at once a regular visiting point for many owners, and in supplying them with financial facilities of a reliable character a new era of commercial and industrial progress was immediately introduced which has never for one moment abated, and whose impetus at the present time is in the direction of greater results at all times. . . . the following figures read financial strength, wise management and prosperity in undivided profit account, popularity in volume of total deposits and general standing in influence in total resources and assets:

Capital.	\$35,000.00
Undivided Profits.	20,000.00
Deposits.	200,000.00
Total Resources.	250,000.00

By 1916, E.A. Lackey's Main Street was almost completely developed and all of the buildings were occupied by such diverse enterprises as hardware, jewelry, dry goods, furniture and grocery stores, professional offices, the two hotels, and the elegant Hamlet Opera

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House, completed in 1914. (20) The Opera House, a copy of the Front Street Opera House in Wilmington, was a special project of E.A. Lackey and his brothers in partnership with J.C. Niemyer, and it brought to Hamlet and the surrounding townships a breath of big-city sophistication with the coming of road shows, plays and musical revues. Among the entertainment offered at the Opera House in its early years was Abie's Irish Rose, Al G. Fields, the Coburn Minstrels, Enrico Caruso, and "The Birth of a Nation." (21)

Sanborn Insurance maps show that the nineteenth century Hamlet business district centering on Hamlet Avenue, Front Street and Railroad Avenue, north and northeast of the Main Street Commercial Historic District, developed much along the same lines as did E.A. Lackey's Main Street. Between 1900 and 1925, grocery stores, dry goods and clothing stores, livery stables and the Coca-Cola Bottling Works on East Hamlet Avenue were established. It appears that the difference in the two districts was that the original business district housed retail and industrial enterprises, while Lackey's Main Street housed retail enterprises and professional offices, as well as two hotels, the Bank of Hamlet, the Opera House, the Masonic Lodge and the Y.M.C.A. Much of the original fabric of Hamlet and Railroad avenues has been destroyed, but a substantial amount remains on Front Street and some is used by retail businesses.

E.A. Lackey's businesses flourished with Hamlet until his death on October 17, 1918, during the Spanish Influenza epidemic that ravaged Richmond County and caused the governor to place Hamlet, Rockingham, and ten nearby mill towns under strict quarantine. His two brothers and business partners, Ollie and Fred, died in the same epidemic. (22) A survey of his estate made in 1919 shows that E.A. Lackey left a vast amount of real estate to his widow, Ella Halyburton Lackey, and their four children. The survey shows the Main Street district completely developed and occupied by businesses, (with the exception of the lot just east of the Central Hotel), and much of the residential area west and south of Main Street in the process of being developed.

The beginning of the new decade in Hamlet was marked by the construction of the ca. 1920 Union Building at 5 Main Street adjacent to the west side of the Terminal Hotel. Other 1920s development included the erection of the ca. 1925 building at 63-67 Main Street (adjacent to the Central Hotel), the construction of a warehouse on McDonald Avenue to the rear of the first E.A. Lackey Building that was finished about 1925, the 1927 remodeling of the Neo-Classical facade of the Hamlet Opera House into a sleek, sophisticated Art Deco statement, (23) and remodelings of the

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buildings at 33, 35 and 39 Main Street. The new construction and the various Main Street remodelings reflected Hamlet's continuing growth and status as a vibrant community during the 1920s.

E. A. Lackey's Main Street that he had surveyed and platted in 1898 and guided to a remarkably rapid degree of development until his death in 1918, was fully built up and largely occupied when the Stock Market crashed in 1929 and the Great Depression gripped the state. The 1930s saw the closing of many businesses and the collapse of the Lackey real estate and business enterprises in Hamlet. In 1935, Lackey's heirs lost almost all of their Main Street holdings and many of their nearby residential tracts when the Investors Services Corporation foreclosed on the property and Richmond County claimed back taxes on it. (24) The Lackey family's financial troubles reflected those of many thousands of North Carolina citizens during the Depression. Cash farm income in the state dropped from \$283,000,000 in 1928 to \$97,000,000 in 1932; value added by manufacturers declined from \$603,000,000 in 1929 to \$384,000,000 in 1931; retail trade dropped from \$1,155,000,000 in 1928 to \$878,000,000 in 1933; and income payments to individuals declined from \$1,046,000,000 in 1929 to \$603,000,000 in 1932. (25)

Prosperity in Hamlet was linked to the prosperity of the railroad companies, so during the 1930s, when the companies were forced to reduce their ranks of employees, the town suffered. Many of the laid-off railroad company workers returned to their original homes to look for work, and of the approximately six drygoods stores in the Main Street Commercial Historic District, only two remained open. Other businesses failed and their owners moved away, leaving landlords, especially the Lackeys, with empty buildings and unpaid rent. Of the original Main Street businesses, the only one that survives today is Hugel's Jewelry Store at 35 Main Street. (26) The only major development that occurred in Hamlet from 1930 until 1941 were three projects initiated by the Works Progress Administration. They were the Post Office at 105 Main Street, and the City Library and the Community center outside the district. (27) Only the Post Office remains; the library on Main Street was replaced in the early 1980s, and the Community Center was destroyed about the same time.

Today, Hamlet is a town of about 6,640 citizens. The mergers of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad and other companies into CSX Transportation have reduced the town's importance as a shipping and passenger center, but CSX still employs local people at a large maintenance yard a short distance from the town. Hamlet, true to its progressive heritage of the early years of this century, retains

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its civic pride and, in recognition of its accomplishments that ranged from building a handsome new library on the 1940 library site on Main Street, to retaining its hospital in spite of a threat of the regionalization of medical care, was named an All-America City in 1990. (28) Recently, the East Main Street Historic District was used as the backdrop for the film, "Billy Bathgate," that was released in November, 1991. The old SAL Depot is the home of the National Railroad Museum, and although many of the Main Street buildings are currently vacant, the citizens and the Board of Aldermen are anxious to revitalize their Main Street and are planning civic improvement projects to achieve that goal.

Footnotes:

All newspaper articles and deeds cited below are copied and on file at the Survey and Planning Office, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. The Sanborn Insurance Maps are on microfilm at the North Carolina State Library.

1. Powell, William S. North Carolina Through Four Centuries. the University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1989, 1p. 402, & 414-418.

2. Sanborn Map Company, insurance maps, 1900-1925.

3. Butchko, Tom. An Inventory of Historic Sampson County, North Carolina. the City of Clinton, Clinton, North Carolina, no date, pp. 36 & 40. Letsinger, Philip S. Inventory of Historic Architecture of Maxton, North Carolina. The Town of Maxton, 1982, pp. 22-24 & 36-42. The Aberdeen Historic District, National Register Historic District nomination, 1989.

4. Bisher, Catherine W. North Carolina Architecture. published for the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, Inc., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1990, pp. 364-365.

5. Ibid. pp. 372-373.

6. Bisher, Catherine W. and Early, Lawrence S. Early Twentieth-Century Suburbs in North Carolina. Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1985, various essays on development practices in the early twentieth century in the state.

7. Bisher, Catherine W. North Carolina Architecture. published

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for the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, Inc., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1990, pp. 404-405.

8. Huneycutt, James E. and Ida C. A History of Richmond County. Rockingham, North Carolina, 1976, pp. 88-89.

9. Conversation on September 18, 1991, with Ms. Norva Jernigan, Head Librarian at the Hamlet Public Library and curator of the local history collection. Ms. Jernigan was unable to locate the exact newspaper article that contained this information, but remembers it clearly.

10. Lefler, Hugh Talmadge and Newsome, Albert Ray. North Carolina, The History of a Southern State. The UNC Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1979, pp. 372-375, 379-381, map on page 400.

11. Ibid., p. 517.

12. Ibid.

13. Huneycutt, James E. and Ida C. A History of Richmond County. Rockingham, North Carolina, 1976, pp. 185-186.

14. U.S. population figures for Hamlet, North Carolina. 1900, 639; 1910, 2,173; 1920, 3,808; 1930, 4,801; 1940, 5,111.

15. Bisher, Catherine W. and Early, Lawrence S. Early Twentieth-Century Suburbs in North Carolina. Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1985, various essays on development practices in the early twentieth century in the state.

16. Survey of the E.A. Lackey estate by J.S. Utter, dated October, 1919.

17. Gordon, Stewart. "The Squire," a regular column of the Richmond County Daily Journal. June 15, 1978.

18. Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1900-1925.

19. Survey of the E.A. Lackey estate by J.S. Utter, dated October, 1919 and Richmond County Registrar of Deeds Book 223, pages 526-532 listing the the properties owned by the E.A. Lackey heirs in 1935.

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20. Sanborn Insurance Map, 1916.

21. Gordon, Stewart. "The Squire," a regular column of the Richmond County Daily Journal. June 22, 1978.

22. "E.A. Lackey." The Post-Dispatch (Rockingham). October 17, 1918, p.4, and "Towns and Mills Quarantined," The Post-Dispatch (Rockingham). October 17, 1918, p.1;

23. Conversation on September 18, 1991, with Ms. Norva Jernigan, Head Librarian at the Hamlet Public Library and curator of the local history collection. Ms. Jernigan was unable to locate the exact newspaper article that contained this information, but remembers it clearly.

24. Richmond County Registrar of Deeds, Book 223, pages 526-532

25. Lefler, Hugh Talmadge and Newsome, Albert Ray. North Carolina, The History of a Southern State. The UNC Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1979, p. 603.

26. Conversation on November 5, 1991, with Ms. Norva Jernigan, Head Librarian at the Hamlet Public Library and curator of the local history collection.

27. "Hamlet Plans Big Celebration in 3-Way Dedication Program," The Messenger, April 24, 1941, no page number.

28. "N.C. Town Gets Back on Track," The News and Observer, June 15, 1990, no page number.

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 approximately 12 acres

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>6</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>
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D	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>
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E 1 7 6 1 9 0 4 0 3 8 6 0 8 2 0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Main Street Commercial District is delineated by the heavy black line on the attached 1" = 100' map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Main Street Commercial Historic District defines the commercial development that occurred between 1900 and 1940.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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organization _____

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"Larger Hotel For Hamlet." The Post (Richmond County). February 8, 1917, p. 1.

Lefler, Hugh Talmadge and Newsome, Albert Ray. North Carolina, The History of a Southern State. The UNC Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1979.

London, Issac S. "Remember This Picture In Hamlet?" The Post-Dispatch (Rockingham). March 4, 1953.

Massengill, Stephen E. The Photographs of Frank Marchant, Commercial Photographer: Hamlet, North Carolina. booklet published in 1989.

Register of Deeds Office, Rockingham County Courthouse, Rockingham, North Carolina, Tax Maps 300, Blocks A, B, C & D.; Tax Map 301, Block H, various deeds.

Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1900-1925.

The News and Observer, June 15, 1990.

The Post (Richmond County).

The Post-Dispatch (Rockingham).

The State. July 1, 1972, pp. 8-9.

