

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Siler City Commercial Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Second Avenue on the east, Birch Avenue on the west, Third Street on the north and Beaver St. on the south. Not for publication

city or town Siler City N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Chatham code 037 zip code 27344

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Choose as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Choose only one box)

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

- private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

- building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, and Total.

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/TRADE/business
COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE/department store
COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
GOVERNMENT/post office
GOVERNMENT/correctional facility
DOMESTIC/hotel

- COMMERCE/TRADE/business
COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE/department store
COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
GOVERNMENT/post office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

- Late 19th and early 20th century
American Movements: Commercial style
Colonial Revival

- foundation BRICK
walls BRICK
roof METAL
other STONE
BRICK

Narrative Description

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 6.15 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	6 3 8 9 3 0	3 9 5 4 1 3 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Beth Keane (research assistance from Kaye Graybeal)

organization Retrospective date August, 1999

street & number 321 N. Front St. telephone (910) 341-3000

city or town Wilmington state NC zip code 28401

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Siler City Commercial Historic District
Chatham County, NC

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Siler City Commercial Historic District is located in the heart of the town of Siler City in Chatham County. Siler City is located in Matthews Township, in the western portion of the county. The town is sixteen miles due west of Pittsboro, the county seat. It is served by U. S. Highways 64 and 421 and by a line of the Southern Railway system that runs northwest-southeast between Greensboro and Sanford. Second Avenue and Birch Avenue roughly bound the central business district on the east and west, while Third Street and Beaver Street generally define its northern and southern edges.

Siler City's streets were laid out parallel and perpendicular to the rail line. Thus, the town's street plan is a rotated north-south grid pattern with avenues that run northwest to southeast and cross streets running northeast to southwest. Chatham Avenue is the main spine, running generally north-south. Raleigh Street is the main cross street, running generally east-west.

The commercial character of the central business district is defined by its one- and two-story brick buildings. Most of the buildings on the long blocks of Chatham Avenue are contiguous, though there are occasional interruptions by alleyways. The buildings on the shorter blocks of Raleigh Street are more varied in size, setback, and orientation, since the sides of some buildings fronting Chatham Avenue are visible. Several vacant lots, parking lots, and alleys are also present on Raleigh Street.

The earliest buildings in Siler City's central business district date to around 1897; however, the majority of the commercial buildings date from 1900 to 1919, with the highest concentration being built between 1910 and 1915. The dates of these buildings reflect Siler City's boom period. The population of the town doubled between 1900 and 1910 and it experienced a peak construction period between 1912 and 1913 when seven new buildings were completed (Hadley, p. 2).

A significant number of buildings were also constructed between 1920 and 1928. Construction came virtually to a halt, however, after the onset of the Great Depression in October of 1929 and did not recover until after World War II (Hadley, p. 2). Several significant buildings, including the Thorpe and Associates

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Warehouse Building and the Phillips Office Supplies Building, both located on North Chatham Avenue, and two buildings built for W. T. Collins on West Raleigh Street, were constructed in the late 1940s.

As a rule, these later buildings did not exhibit the same degree of brick ornamentation as the pre-war buildings. Only two buildings in the central business district, a c. 1960 commercial building (4) on the southeast corner of South Chatham Avenue and East Raleigh Street and the First Union National Bank (12) built in the 1980s, were not constructed during the period of significance.

Several additional buildings, although built during the period of significance, have been deemed non-contributing due to significant alterations. Common changes to the contributing buildings of the district include new storefront windows and doors and brick veneer facades. Several of these non-original facades, such as the 1927 facade built on the 1906 C. D. Riddle Building (30) were erected during the period of significance.

The majority of buildings in the Siler City Historic Commercial District are typical of the one- and two-story brick buildings built in downtown areas all over eastern North Carolina in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Decorative brick corbelling at the cornice is the most common architectural feature. Stylistically, this feature along with other common features such as segmentally arched windows, elaborate corbel tables at the cornice, and parapeted roof lines are common to late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century commercial architecture in North Carolina.

The south end of Siler City's Commercial Historic District comprises a long block of one- and two-story brick buildings constructed between 1905 and 1930, some with more recent alterations. The Farmers Alliance Store (19) at 134 South Chatham Avenue is among the earliest and most important buildings on the block. Completed in 1909, it was erected to the front (east) of the original 1888 frame building, which was demolished in 1939. It is the longest continuously operated business concern in Siler City, celebrating its centennial in 1988 (North Carolina Survey Files).

Further north on the block at 112 South Chatham Avenue, is the 1905 building that originally housed the jewelry store of prominent African-American businessman, Tod Edwards (25). Although the

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present facade is not authentic, the rear of the building retains its original brick wall.

At the intersection of Raleigh Street and Chatham Avenue, several Chatham Avenue buildings exhibit characteristic brick corbelling, as well as more notable patterns of brickwork such as herringbone designs, which became popular in the early 1930s. A good example of this is the Edwards-Wren Building (27). Built by Dr. J. D. Edwards and Lossing L. Wren, this building was the town's largest and finest at its completion in 1906. The building has a parapeted roof highlighted by stone coping matching the stone lintels above the windows. The present Art-Deco-inspired facade, which is not original, displays decorative panels of brick in a herringbone pattern surrounding a diamond of blond brick.

The northern end of the Siler City Commercial Historic District is comprised of two long blocks of North Chatham Avenue. The first of these blocks, running between Raleigh Street and Second Street, is characterized by one- and two-story buildings including some of the most architecturally significant in Siler City, interspersed with smaller, simpler structures. The 1913 Chatham Bank (28), located on the corner of West Raleigh Street and North Chatham Avenue, is notable for its stonework trim and the smooth and fine-grained "pressed brick" used on the body of the building. Its northern neighbor, the 1912 Wren Building (29), retains its original brick detailing, including a corbelled brick cornice and continuous drip moldings above the windows. On the east side of this block is the Hotel Hadley (46; NR 1989), Siler City's most elaborate commercial building. Completed in 1908, the Hotel Hadley featured "water works", namely piped-in running water for the basins in the rooms, water closets, and bathtubs. The architecture of the building is best described as an elaborate and eclectic mix of Victorian stylistic influences such as Eastlake and Queen Anne.

The west side of the two-hundred block of North Chatham Avenue contains predominantly one-story brick buildings, though the northern end of the block is anchored by the two-story Phillips Office Supplies Building (39). The corbelled recessed panels and pilasters of the Thorpe and Associates Building (38) along with the stepped-parapet roof and contrasting blond brickwork of the Fred C. Justice Building (37) enliven the block.

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Turning attention to the cross streets, Second Street, the northern-most of these, is characterized by simple one-story brick buildings including the small, utilitarian structure that housed the jail and mayor's office from 1917 to 1927 (17). The main cross street is Raleigh Street, which is located to the south of Second Street. The western end of this street has a mixture of one- and two-story buildings. One of the most stylish is the 1945 W. T. Collins Building I (6), which features a large central entrance recessed within an arched opening with recessed glass display windows on either side. Decorative brickwork, including a corbelled cornice and corner pilasters, highlights the 1912 Lossing L. Wren Building II (13).

Significant examples of early-twentieth-century, two-story brick commercial buildings remain near the northeastern corner of Raleigh Street and Chatham Avenues. The former Siler City Furniture Building (10), for example, was constructed in 1928 and exhibits a pantile-covered pent roof. Supported by heavy brackets, this roof illustrates the influence of the Spanish Mission style.

In sum, the architecture of the Siler City Commercial Historic District provides excellent examples of one- and two-story, early-twentieth-century brick commercial buildings. Though the architectural embellishment of most of the resources is limited to simple recessed brick panels or corbelling at the cornice, there are several more elaborate buildings illustrating the influence of popular vernacular Victorian, Art Deco, and Spanish Mission Revival styles. Completed in 1940, the one-story granite-veneer post office follows a Colonial Revival style common to many public buildings of its era.

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Siler City Commercial Historic District Inventory List

The inventory list encompasses portions of three streets in Siler City. It begins with the south side of the one-hundred blocks of East and West Raleigh Street moving roughly from east to west, then moves to the north side, covering the same blocks. It then covers the south side of East and West Second Street moving from east to west. The inventory list then moves to the one-hundred block of South Chatham Avenue and the one- and two-hundred blocks of North Chatham Avenue, moving roughly from south to north, beginning on the west side, then moving to the east side. A combination of documentary sources was utilized to determine the original date and owners of the buildings including deeds, secondary sources, tax records, survey files, and interviews.

C = Contributing resource
N = Noncontributing resource
B = Building
V = Vacant

100 block East Raleigh Street, south side

1. Elder Motor Company Building C/B 1923-25 134 E. Raleigh

A one-story brick building built for H. H. Elder, who owned the local Ford dealership. The building features a roof parapet with a heavy modillion cornice beneath, and two round-arched, keystoned entrances. Large plate-glass windows light the facade and South Second Avenue side. The building is several bays deep and has stepped sides.

2. United State Post Office C/B 1940 116 E. Raleigh

This granite-veneer Colonial Revival edifice was completed in 1940 on the site of the early Federal-period John Siler House (now demolished). Colonial Revival details include a double-leafed entrance headed by a round-arch supported by fluted columns, 12/12 sash windows, and a boxed dentilled cornice. A small cupola lit with sash windows capped by a concave pyramidal roof lend further emphasis to the entrance. A mural inside the post office, completed by artist, Maxwell Starr of New York, was commissioned by the Works Progress Administration. The mural depicts nineteenth-century Matthews Crossroads and the John Siler House. There is a

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V

Parking lot.

3. Wrenn Brothers Co. Bldg.
& Annex C/B c. 1910/ 106-110 E. Raleigh
c. 1924

In 1910, a 23- by 75-foot one-story brick annex (106 E. Raleigh) was added to the east side of a no longer extant 1902 Wren Brothers Co. building which was located on the southeast corner of S. Chatham and E. Raleigh. Only the rear and side brick walls of the 1910 building remain. The current (front) facade was built c. 1924 as was the entire adjacent building at 110 East Raleigh Street. The building features a raised parapet, recessed brick panels in the upper facade, and recessed entrances.

4. Commercial Building N/B 1962 100-104 E. Raleigh

A one-story brick commercial building. The lower level features walls of plate-glass windows; while the upper level of the building has vertical stuccoed panels.

100 block West Raleigh Street, south side

5. Edwards-Wren Building II C/B 1909 107-109 W. Raleigh

Built by Dr. J. D. Edwards and L. L. Wren, this two-story brick building was erected with two street-level units: the unit at 107 W. Raleigh St. was first occupied by the barbershop of John Cheek. The unit at 109 W. Raleigh St. housed the town's meat market for many years. The second floor was used as a lodge by two fraternal orders, the Odd-Fellows and the Knights of Pythias. The building is four bays wide with plate-glass windows flanking the two entrance doors. The second level has four 1/1 sash windows. The west facade has a stepped parapet. A faded coca-cola mural is visible on the west facade of the building. A narrow alley separates the building with the adjacent building at 113-115 E. Raleigh St.

6. W. T. Collins Building I C/B 1945 113-115 W. Raleigh

This two-story brick commercial building features a large recessed central entrance with an arched opening flanked by recessed glass display windows. Recessed panels with brick corbelling frame the four paired 4/2 sash windows at the second story.

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7. W. T. Collings Building II C/B c. 1949 125 W. Raleigh

The one-story flat-roofed, brick commercial building features multiple entrances and simple brick corbelling.

100 block East Raleigh Street, north side

8. Commercial Building C/B c. 1915 127 E. Raleigh

The two-story brick building has typical commercial features including a parapeted front with a recessed panel highlighted by brick corbelling. The single-step parapet creates a central portion that is slightly higher than the rest of the building. It has both a main business entrance and a secondary door on the front facade leading upstairs. The second level features four 2/2 sash windows.

9. Commercial Building C/B c. 1915 123-121 E. Raleigh

The two-story, two-unit brick building has typical commercial features including a parapeted front with two recessed panels near the top of the facade and a corbelled brick cornice. The second level includes four 1/1 sash windows. The ground-level store fronts have been altered. A modern wood-shingled awning protects the recessed entrance to one unit of the building.

10. Siler City Furniture (former) C/B 1928 119 E. Raleigh

This two-story 35- by 90-foot brick building was constructed by the Siler City Furniture Company, which occupied it until 1933. The building is distinguished by a Spanish Mission style pantile-covered pent roof supported by heavy brackets. Eight-over-eight-over-four pivot windows on the second floor are set in metal frames. The first floor has a central recessed entrance flanked by plate glass surmounted by a multipane transom. A metal awning shades the first-level facade. The facade also has recessed brick panels, while the sides are stepped. Former occupants also include Chatham Furniture Company and Siler City Hardware.

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11. H.H. Elder Hardware (former) C/B 1913 105 E. Raleigh

The substantial two-story brick building erected for H. H. Elder was occupied by Elder Hardware Store from 1913 to 1939, then it became the home of Chatham Furniture Company until 1971, followed by the Siler City Auction House in the 1980s. The second floor included offices. During the 1920s, a basketball court in the rear was used by high school teams. The embellished six-bay facade is composed of a recessed entryway at the eastern end. The original entrance and display windows have been covered, and the principal entrance moved to the east side of the building. A cornice with a large dentil row remains on the front facade. The second-floor window openings have temporarily been covered with plywood. A metal frieze band with a modillioned cornice is situated over the windows.

12. First Union Bank N/B 1980s 101 E. Raleigh

A one-story modern brick office building with recessed corner entrance and seamed tin roofing. An open courtyard entrance is landscaped with shrubs and large trees.

100 block West Raleigh Street, north side

13. Lossing L. Wren Bldg. II C/B 1912 104-108 W. Raleigh

The two-story brick building housed the post office from 1913 until 1927. From 1938 to 1979, Bean's Grocery, the last independent grocery store in the downtown business area, was located here. In addition to the characteristic brick corbelling on the five-bay facade, the two-story building also displays brick herringbone designs which became popular in the early 1930s. The irregular facade on its first floor is composed of two single-leaf entrances at one end and a third recessed entrance at the other end with display windows with multiple light transoms in between. The central window has a large fan window above it. The upper story features 1/1 sash windows (two of them paired) surmounted by decorative brickwork.

14. Lossing L. Wren Bldg III C/B 1927 114-116 W. Raleigh

This two-story 50- by 90-foot brick building was occupied by the local United States Post Office from 1927 until 1934. The office and printing plant of the Chatham News moved into this

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building during September, 1935, and remained there for over twenty-five years. Architectural details include three brick pilasters creating two bays on the facade. The corner two of these terminate in pyramidal finials. The building has a corbelled cornice, ridged coping, and multi-light second-story windows.

100 block of East Second Street, south side

15. F. M. Hadley Warehouse Bldg. C/B 1913 124 E. Second St.

This one-story 30- by 80-foot brick building was built as a garage and machine shop by F. M. Hadley in 1913. Later occupants included the local Ford agency and its service department and the P. J. Reitzel Motor company. Inside is an old rock-lined well, probably first used by the Chatham Warehouse Company which opened in 1885 in the area. Later this well supplied water for the adjacent Hadley Hotel. The three bays making up this building are accented by corbelled brick cornices, segmental and full arched warehouse doors, and segmental arch lintels over the windows on the front and side of the western most bay.

100 block of West Second Street, south side

16. Commercial building C/B c. 1930 115 E. Second St.

A one-story brick and cinderblock building with a flat roof, saddle-back coping, and large plate-glass display windows.

17. Siler City Jail (former) C/B 1917 117 E. Second St.

This small one-story brick building which had two cells located at the rear portion served as the town's jail and the mayor's office until 1927. The dominant architectural feature is the ridged, saddle-back coping on the parapet. The final three courses of brick beneath this are corbelled, flush to one another creating a minimal cornice.

18. Dorsett & Jordan Bldg. C/B 1919 119 E. Second St.

This one-story brick building originally housed a garage and general service station. Later occupants included the Oval Oak Broom Works and Chatham Motors Shop. The details include ridged coping on the parapet, a simple corbelled cornice, and a storefront cornice over the three large storefront bays.

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100 block of South Chatham Avenue, west side

19. Farmer's Alliance Store (former) C/B 1909 134 S. Chatham

The Farmer's Alliance Store is Siler City's longest running business having been in operation continuously for 100 years. The business was originally housed in a frame structure erected in 1888 behind the present one. In 1915, an 18-foot by 80-foot addition was erected on the north side. Although the front facade has been altered, the south side of the building remains in its original condition. The front facade has stone veneer "pilasters" and shed-roofed metal awnings. The south side steps down towards the rear of the building. Beneath each step are two recessed panels highlighted by corbelled brick. The parapet is capped with ridged, saddleback coping.

20. Commercial Building C/B c. 1945 126-130 S. Chatham

This two-story brick building has three recessed entrances, each flanked by plate-glass display windows. The second level has two sets of five windows; between these are three single corbelled courses.

21. Commercial Building N/B c. 1949 124 S. Chatham

This one-story brick building is relatively non-descript, the storefront having been altered with plate glass and a shingled shed roof creating an awning over the recessed windows and doors. The fascia was of black carrera glass in a 1983 survey photo (North Carolina Survey files).

22. Commercial Building N/B c. 1949 120 S. Chatham

This plain two-story brick building has a parapeted roof topped by ridged, saddleback coping. The facade has been altered with large plate glass windows.

23. Commercial Building N/B c. 1925 118 S. Chatham

The storefront of this narrow, two-story brick building was altered c. 1950 with plate glass. Most of the facade above this contains three abutting twelve-light windows. The parapet is capped by a single corbelled brick course.

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24. Commercial Building C/B c. 1920 116 S. Chatham

Below the parapet roof of this brick building is a recessed brick panel. The parapet is accented by corbelling with a header course several courses below. Different colored bricks above the metal awning indicate an altered storefront.

25. Tod R. Edwards Jewelry (former) N/B 1905 114 S. Chatham

This one-story brick building was originally the jewelry store of an important African-American businessman, Tod R. Edwards. The Edwards operated a family-owned jewelry store here from 1905 to 1961. The present facade is not original, 1940s, but original brick remains at the rear of the building. The current facade is parapeted with two soldier courses between the parapet top and the top of the storefront windows.

26. Perry-Smith Grocery (former) C/B c. 1909 112 S. Chatham

The parapet of this one-story beige brick building has corbelled brick coping and two square panels of herringbone brickwork similar to that on 102-106 S. Chatham accent the fascia. Large plate-glass windows surround the central single-leaf glass door. The grocery store of A. H. Perry and W. T. Smith originally occupied the building. Richardson Brothers Grocery Store was located here from 1913 to 1923. Other occupants included W. H. and A. H. Womble cash-and-carry-store and Country Vogue.

27. Edwards-Wren Building I C/B 1906 102-108 S. Chatham

Built by Dr. J. D. Edwards and Lossing L. Wren, this two-story brick building was the town's largest and finest at the time it was completed. The ground floor on the corner was occupied by various pharmacies for 61 years. The section of the building at 106 S. Chatham Ave. was occupied during the early years by the Ladies' Furnishing Store and the Ladies' Emporium. The section at 105 W. Raleigh was occupied by the Post Office from 1906-13. The brick building currently accommodates four businesses; two fronting S. Chatham and two fronting W. Raleigh. The parapeted roof is highlighted by stone coping. Each of the second-story windows features a stone lintel above which is a decorative panel of brick in a herringbone pattern surrounding a diamond-shaped stone inset.

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100 block North Chatham Avenue, west side

28. Chatham Bank (former) C/B 1913 101-103 N. Chatham

The Chatham Bank occupied this 22- by 46-foot building from 1913 to 1935. The second floor was office space. Much of the building's exterior remains in its original condition and is notable for its stonework trim. The second level features large arched windows with stone keystones. A projecting stone cornice features modillion blocks. The brick is of a smooth and fine-grained texture, termed at the time as "pressed brick".

29. Lossing L. Wren Bldg. I C/B 1912 105 N. Chatham

The first and long-time occupant of this two-story brick building was the J. B. Marley Furniture Store; Marley also ran an undertaking business upstairs. Although the lower half of this facade has been altered by covering the brick with wood paneling (removable), the upper story retains the complex original brick detailing. At the roof line is a corbel table cornice below which is another three-course corbel that completes the entablature. Below the entablature are continuous corbelled drip moldings above the windows.

30. C. D. Riddle Building C/B 1906 109 N. Chatham

The ground floor of this two-story brick building was first occupied by grocery and clothing stores, then by Rose's variety store from 1929 to 1979. Patterned brickwork distinguishes the exterior. A new facade covered this building in 1927. The occupants at that time were J. M. Marley and Son and Womble's Store. The second floor was known as Riddle Hall or Town Hall between c. 1910 and 1930. Equipped with a stage, a Venetian scene drop curtain, footlights, and dressing rooms, it served as the town's meeting place for public events for many years. This simple brick building features stone lintels over the second-floor windows and small accent diamonds above. Two recessed entrances are flanked by plate-glass display windows.

31. Teague and Lambe Building C/B 1904 117-123 N. Chatham

The partnership of William A. Teague (1855-1936) and John F. Lambe (1844-1935) operated a general merchandise store in this one-story brick building until 1919. Later occupants included C. L.

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Brower who operated his men's clothing store here from 1919 until 1927 and W. W. Jones and Sons of Asheboro, who opened a department store. A new facade was added in 1923. In 1939, the Jones Department Store was enlarged and remodeled. It extended from 119 to 127 N. Chatham Ave. and occupied both the John Lambe and the Teague and Lambe buildings. The facade features a corbelled cornice, recessed panels creating the effect of brick pilasters, a stone parapet proclaiming the name of the building, and stone coping.

32. John F. Lambe Building C/B c. 1913 125-127 N. Chatham

The facade of this one-story brick building and the Teague and Lambe building are of similar design. The Gem Theater, which opened in December of 1913, was once located here. The facade was renovated in 1923. The facade features a corbelled cornice, a recessed panel, a stone parapet proclaiming the name of the building and stone coping. The glass display windows and recessed doors are topped by transoms.

33. H. L. Terry Building C/B 1926 129 N. Chatham

This intact one-story brick building was the home of Terry's Market, which sold groceries, fish, and meat. The business closed in 1968. The facade has a recessed panel with corbelling, stone coping at the top of the parapet, and transom lights over the store front.

34. H. L. & Frank Stone Grocery C/B c. 1912 133 N. Chatham

This small one-story brick building was first occupied by the grocery store of H. L. and Frank Stone. From 1920 until c. 1924, the building was occupied by John T. Ferguson who opened the Siler City Grocery Company. The building features stone veneer three-quarters of the way up the facade. Above the veneer is a recessed panel in the brick and stone coping.

35. Moore's Department Store N/B c. 1930 141 N. Chatham

This one-story brick building features a recessed entrance flanked by plate-glass windows. The upper level has been covered with a corrugated metal false front.

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36. G. L. Harris Building C/B c. 1900 143 N. Chatham

Three-quarters of this building's facade is covered by vertical board siding. However, a stepped parapet and recessed panel in the original brick facade are visible at the top. The building has a shingled awning addition. A recessed entrance is flanked by large plate-glass windows.

200 block of North Chatham Avenue, west side

V Parking lot.

37. Fred C. Justice Building C/B 1941 223 N. Chatham

The one-story brick commercial building with a tall stepped parapet and wide expanse of storefront glass was built in 1941 by Fred C. Justice. A single-leaf entrance is framed by contrasting blond brick that is also used to accentuate a large frieze above. The roof is gabled. A garage is located in the rear. Chatham Motors, a Chevrolet dealer, was once located here.

38. Thorpe & Asso. Warehouse Bldg. C/B c. 1948 227 N. Chatham

The brick facade of this one-story building is accented by three recessed panels above the storefront. Each of the panels has several courses of corbel bricks creating a cornice. Brick pilasters divide the panels as well as the storefront below. The storefront is covered with vertical board siding.

39. Phillips Office Supplies C/B c. 1948 229 N. Chatham

The simple facade of this two-story brick building has multi-light second-story windows topped by stone or concrete lintels. The storefront has two large areas of plate-glass windows and a recessed entry. The parapet is finished with ridged coping.

100 block South Chatham Avenue, east side

40. Daniel G. Fox Building I C/B c. 1897 117 S. Chatham

Kate Vestal's millinery shop was an early and long-term occupant of this one-story brick building. Later occupants included Banks Clothing and Douglas Deaton Photos. The one-story brick building has a recessed brick panel, brick pilasters at

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either corner, and a corbelled cornice. A recessed entrance on the north side of the facade is flanked by a large plate-glass window. Original brickwork is visible on the rear wall.

41. Daniel G. Fox Building II C/B c. 1897 115 S. Chatham

The building was occupied c. 1897 until 1917 by D. G. Fox and Son, a general merchandise store. Later occupants included the grocery store, Fox and Company, the *Chatham News*, a Montgomery Ward catalog store, and D & D Music Factory. The one-story brick building has a raised parapet with a corbel table at the cornice and a recessed panel above the storefront. A central entrance is flanked by plate-glass display windows and capped by a multi-light transom. Original brickwork is visible on the rear wall.

42. Daniel G. Fox Building III C/B c. 1897 111 S. Chatham

The grocery store of Fox and Company occupied this building from 1905 until 1917. This one-story brick building has a recessed panel and corbelling and a recessed central entrance flanked by plate-glass windows. Original brickwork is visible on the rear wall.

100 block North Chatham Avenue, east side

V Vacant lot.

43. F. M. Hadley Building I C/B c. 1900 120 N. Chatham

The Hardware Store was the first tenant and occupied the building from 1904 to 1907. Later occupants included the Feedwell Cafe from 1920 to 1930, and Teague's Coffee Shop from 1930 to 1974. This one-story brick building has a recessed panel above the storefront with several courses corbelled out to create a cornice. A recessed entrance is located on the south side of the facade, flanked by a large plate-glass display window.

44. F. M. Hadley Building II C/B c. 1900 124 N. Chatham

Gregson and Dorsett, wholesale grocers, were the first known occupants of the building, remaining there from 1904 to 1912. From 1922 to 1995, the Sanitary Barber Shop operated here. This one-story brick building features a multi-light transom over the entire storefront, and a raised panel with diamond-shape detail.

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45. F. M. Hadley Building III C/B c. 1900 128 N. Chatham

First occupant, from 1902 to 1913, was the Chatham Bank, Siler City's first bank. During recent years, the building was occupied by the Moody Shop, Adele's, and Michael's, all ladies' clothing shops. This one-story brick building has a corbel table at the cornice and two large multi-paned storefront windows which flank the recessed entrance.

46. Hotel Hadley (former) C/B 1908 130 N. Chatham

Constructed by F. M. Hadley, one of Siler City's most prosperous and influential business leaders, the hotel was the city's most desirable and served as Hadley's residence into the 1940s. When Hotel Hadley opened with about thirty guest rooms, it featured "water works", piped-in running water. The two-story brick building was originally lighted with acetylene gas; a central steam-heating system was installed in October, 1914. An elaborate eclectic Victorian structure with Eastlake detailing, its four-bay facade was designed with a recessed first-floor lobby entrance in one corner offset with a projecting bay surmounted by a second-floor balcony. A surface of rusticated cut-stone blocks contrasts with the facade's brick veneer.

47. Commercial Building C/B c. 1920 134 N. Chatham

This is a very narrow one-story brick building sandwiched between 130 and 136 North Chatham Avenues. It has a recessed entrance with a recessed brick panel above the door.

48. J. C. Gregson Office Building C/B 1912 136 N. Chatham

This one-story brick building housed offices for J. C. Gregson and the Hadley-Peoples Textile Mill. The building features a recessed entrance and display windows, an off-center door with transom, and a multi-faceted transom above large plate-glass display windows. The metal cornice above the entrance and window features modillion blocks. The upper facade has recessed brick panels and an ornamental raised parapet, containing decorative balusters and the inscription, "J. C. Gregson" with "office" at either end. The facade is of pressed brick with marble dust mortar.

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49. Siler City Loan & Trust Co. C/B c. 1906 138-140 N. Chatham
(former)

The corner unit was occupied by the Siler City Loan and Trust Company from 1907 to 1919. The exterior and interior were remodeled in 1917. The second unit, at 138 N. Chatham Avenue, was occupied by The Hardware Store from 1907 to 1987. The upper facade of this one-story brick building features a stone band and inset, a corbelled cornice, and recessed circular vents outlined with brick. In 1912, an addition was erected at the rear of the building. A coca-cola mural is painted on the building's north side.

200 block of North Chatham Avenue, east side

50. Commercial Building C/B c. 1930 200 N. Chatham

The one-story brick corner building extends east along East Second Street off of which other businesses in the 200 building open. The building features a cut-away corner entrance, a recessed panel on the fascia, tile coping at the parapet roof, and a shingled awning addition.

51. Commercial Building C/B c. 1945 208 N. Chatham

This is a brick, one-story building with a recessed entrance flanked by plate-glass display windows, a recessed brick panel on the fascia, tile coping at parapet roof, and a shingled awning addition.

52. Commercial Building C/B c. 1945 210 N. Chatham

This is a brick one-story building with a recessed entrance flanked by plate-glass display windows, recessed panel on the fascia, and tile coping at parapet roof.

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SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Siler City Commercial Historic District is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of commerce and community planning and development and under Criterion C for architecture. The period of significance for the district begins in c. 1897, the date of the Daniel G. Fox Buildings, and extends to 1950 when Siler City's growth and expansion peaked.

Siler City incorporated in 1887 and its development was closely associated with the establishment of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad through Chatham County in 1884. The location of a depot at what is now Siler City spurred the continued growth of this important crossroads site, originally known as "Matthews Crossroads." The newly incorporated town provided essential services for the surrounding rural population, including retail stores, banks, schools, and churches. A variety of turn-of-the-century industries, including a yarn factory, a brick yard, several lumber companies, a washboard factory, a feed mill, and a chair factory, also contributed to Siler City's sound economic base and led to its rapid expansion. The city experienced substantial growth between World War I and the Great Depression. By 1930, Siler City had grown to become Chatham County's largest town. The industrial base of the town began an expansion about 1937 and increased after World War II. Furniture manufacturing, poultry and meat processing, hosiery, lingerie, yarn, and textiles are among the principal industries currently located in Siler City.

Siler City's business district retains a substantial number of modest and sophisticated commercial buildings dating from the turn of the twentieth century. As the earlier frame buildings succumbed to the ravages of fire and weather, they were replaced with more substantial brick buildings. Siler City's historic commercial buildings feature details typical in North Carolina rail towns including high false fronts, stepped sides, ridged coping, and corbel courses on the facades. The 1907 Hadley Hotel (NRN 1985) is Chatham County's only Queen Anne commercial structure. The historic commercial district also includes notable buildings influenced by the Victorian era and popular Art Deco, Spanish Mission Revival, and Colonial Revival styles.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

For more than one hundred years before the town of Siler City was formally established, country homesteads and family farms comprised the region's landscape. Although Siler City grew with the combined efforts of many individuals, the origins of the town are associated with John Siler. He was the son of Plickard Dedrick Siler and Elizabeth Hartsoe Siler who came from Germany through Philadelphia and Virginia and around 1750, settled about four miles north of the present town of Siler City. Their son, John Siler (1756-1822), purchased a nearby plot of land in February, 1794, and farmed a large plantation. By 1805, the home and farm of John Siler were established in the current center of the town. Two regional roads that crossed near the John Siler House appear on the Price-Strother's map of North Carolina, dated 1808. One of these roads extended east to west from Raleigh to Randolph County courthouse, and the other ran north to south from Martinsville (now Greensboro) to Fayetteville. The juncture of these two roads lay near the present intersection of North Chatham Avenue and Second Street in Siler City. Siler's two-story, center-hall brick house stood at that location until 1938; two years later the current post office building was erected on the site (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 122).

In December, 1842, after Siler's death, William W. Matthews (1814-1894) bought the John Siler house and 140 acres of surrounding land. Matthews provided food and lodging for stagecoach travelers, and this important crossroads came to be known as Matthews Crossroads. By 1870, Samuel Siler (1810-1900), the son of John Siler and a Civil War veteran, was operating a small gristmill at a point on a creek about three blocks south of the Siler-Matthews House. He owned and operated a store near the mill along with his son, Cincinnatus Siler. A blacksmith shop was also located nearby. In 1880, a rural post office was established at the Silers' country store and was called Energy. The establishment of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway through Chatham County in 1884 and the location of a depot at Energy were the main impetus for the continued development of Matthews Crossroads. Samuel Siler donated the land for the depot and in his honor, it was named Siler Station (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 123).

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Town streets and lots were laid out in 1884. Three general merchandise stores were opened at this time by newcomers: the E. R. McLean and Company store, the Fox and Wrenn store, and Wrenn Brothers and Company. Relying on the area's agricultural base, a tobacco warehouse and market known as the Chatham Warehouse Company was constructed on North Chatham Avenue in November 1885. The building was also used for public meetings and religious services.

In 1888, eighteen local farmers established the Farmers' Alliance Co-operative Association on the former South Birch Avenue at the intersection of Beaver Street (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 123).

In 1886, the name "Siler Station" was changed to "Siler City" and the town was incorporated on March 7, 1887. The corporate limits encompassed one square mile with the streets emanating from the railroad depot. Rail transportation facilitated the import of supplies and the export of regional products to outside markets. In addition to a bustling railway business, the town included seven small commercial enterprises, three hotels, three livery stables, a school, and two churches. Industries included a saw and planing mill, an agricultural machinery plant, a sawmill, and a cotton ginning mill (*Branson's Business Directory*, 1896, pp. 174-175). These buildings, along with about thirty dwellings, were grouped around the former John Siler house, and all were constructed after 1884. An agricultural fair had been held in the Chatham Warehouse, and the first of several newspapers had been established (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, pp. 35, 123).

Siler City's earliest business district was located around the depot (no longer extant) along the east side of what was Main Street and is now Birch Avenue. The first store buildings in Siler City were one- and two-story frame structures with high false fronts. About 1890, town growth resulted in a shift of the central business district to the currently named Chatham Avenue, which was originally called Fayetteville/Greensboro Street (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map). By this time, the town's population had reached 254 citizens. In 1891, a business directory published by the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway listed twenty-two concerns in Siler City ranging from insurance agents to general merchandisers and included two physicians. *Branson's Business Directory* for 1896 listed one black and four white churches, nine boarding houses, and eight manufactories in Siler City (pp. 174-175). The first brick commercial building was constructed in 1889 on the northeast corner

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of East Raleigh Street and North Chatham Avenue. It initially housed the Hadley-Peoples and Company general merchandise store. By 1900, the population of the town stood at 440, representing a seventy-three-percent increase over the previous decade (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 35).

By 1909, Siler City included twenty-four stores and by the following year, all but two frame store buildings had been replaced by brick buildings. The oldest extant brick commercial buildings in the business district at 111, 115, and 117 South Chatham Avenue, were built c. 1897 to house the various retail businesses of Daniel G. Fox and his sons (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 123).

Three major industries organized within the first two decades of the 1900s: the High Point Bending and Chair Company (now the Boling Company) founded in 1901; the Oval Oak Manufacturing Company founded in 1909; and a feed and grain milling enterprise known as Siler City Mills incorporated in 1910. The Hadley-Peoples Manufacturing Company, a prosperous textile plant was established in 1895 (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 124).

Modern twentieth-century improvements for the town were heralded by paved sidewalks in 1909, macadamized (crushed stone) streets in 1911, and the introduction of streetlights in 1912. All of these improvements were confined to the business district. Public electric power became available in Siler City in 1913; a public water and sewer system was installed between 1924 and 1925; and the main roads of the town were hard-surfaced between 1926 and 1927 (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 125).

Siler City has retained the status of Chatham County's largest town since 1930, when the population reached 1,730 residents. New industries and businesses continued to be established throughout the 1930s and the industrial base started an expansion about 1937 which picked up momentum beginning around 1945, after World War II. During the decade between 1940 and 1950, the town limits of Siler City were extended and the population grew over 100 percent from 2,501 to 4,455 people. The population of Siler City stands now at approximately 4,700. U. S. Highways 64 and 421 have become four-lane highways leading to the town. Although the town is easily accessible by these major roads, Siler City has retained its small-town atmosphere (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, pp. 125-126).

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The county's towns and industries continued to develop along railroad right-of-ways during the first decade of the twentieth century. By 1909, the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway had become part of the Southern Railroad, and the Raleigh and Augusta Air Line Railroad Company was incorporated into the Seaboard Airline Railway (later mergers turned this railroad into the Seaboard Coastline, and then CSX). Railroads reached their peak importance to Chatham County, fortifying the county's development, between 1900 and 1920 (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 37).

Near the close of the nineteenth century, the lure of developing towns within Chatham County increased despite improvements in rural areas. In each decade between 1890 and 1910, Chatham County's population decreased by just over five percent. In 1910, the population stood at 22,635, which was 1,277 fewer people than in 1900. In comparison, Siler City's population grew from 440 in 1900 to 895 in 1910, a 103 percent growth rate. Rural depopulation trends predicted by the Chatham County Farmers' Alliance in 1889 were exceeded due to heightened urban and industrial growth (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 36).

During the twentieth century, Chatham County continued to build on trends that had been established in the previous two decades. Prosperity, attributed to the growth of industry and manufacturing, continued until thwarted by the Great Depression. Other forces of modernization were at work in the county. By 1902, public telephone service had been established in Pittsboro and Siler City, with a line connecting the two towns. Electricity arrived in Siler City by 1913, but did not reach the county seat of Pittsboro until 1922 (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 36).

Siler City's urban industrial areas continued to grow at a brisk rate during the early twentieth century. Some of Siler City's most notable industries had formed just after the turn of the twentieth century. The High Point Bending and Chair Company (now the Boling Company) was founded in 1901. In 1909, two entrepreneurs began manufacturing unique oval oak washboards that required no nails. The business was incorporated in 1911 as the Oval Oak Manufacturing Company. The predecessor of the Siler City Mills, a feed and grain milling enterprise was incorporated in 1910 in the heart of Siler City. In 1908, Franklin Minter Hadley, businessman and co-founder of the Hadley-Peoples Manufacturing

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Company, built a stylish hotel in the downtown business district (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 38).

Siler City experienced substantial growth between World War I and the Great Depression. Between 1910 and 1920, the population grew forty percent to 1,253 residents, a growth rate that continued for the next decade. Considering that Chatham County's entire population grew just five percent between 1910 and 1920, and under two percent between 1920 and 1930, Siler City's growth rate was substantial. Suburbs for white residents formed south, east, and west of the central business district, where all the important stores and industries were still located. An African-American community grew up on the north side of town, particularly north of the present U. S. 64 bypass. By 1927, many of the town's streets were paved, as were most of the major thoroughfares in the county.

By 1930, Siler City's population had grown to 1,730, surpassing Pittsboro to become the county's largest town (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 38).

To accommodate Siler City's growing student population, a new school was constructed in 1923, a few blocks east of the central business district. As a combined elementary and high school, the Siler City High School housed a large portion of the town's white student body until 1956. A second white elementary school, named for teacher, Henry Siler, was constructed in 1931. Several small black schools were consolidated in 1932 to form the Siler City School (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 38).

After the Great Depression, recovery was slow in the county generally and almost nonexistent in many of the smaller communities not located on major roads. A detailed map produced by the Works Progress Administration in 1933 conveyed county growth and development patterns. Siler City was an uneven grid of seven by eleven streets; Pittsboro, a grid of four by nine streets. Goldston and Bennett were represented by even smaller grids (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 40).

The Great Depression ended with the nation's entry into World War II. Although the county's economy and architecture did not change dramatically after the war, fundamental changes in social life were set in motion. The county's population increased by less than three percent during the 1940s and by less than six percent in

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the 1950s. During this same decade, the town limits of Siler City were extended, increasing the population by nearly 100 percent from 2,501 to 4,455 people (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 40).

Late twentieth century developments have included a population boom, growth in housing and road development, shifts in economic and recreational activity, and increasing attempts to address social problems. Preserving and enhancing the quality of life as it has developed over the past two-hundred years is a primary concern of the elected officials of Siler City.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Siler City, like many of Chatham's County's towns was greatly affected by the 1884 completion of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway track between Sanford and Greensboro. Four small towns sprang up where major county roads emanating from Pittsboro, the county seat, intersected the track of the railway: Goldston, Bear Creak, Bonlee, and Siler City. Typically, it was around these transportation axes that various enterprises were clustered. The road paralleling the railroad track normally became the main street in each town. Other streets were positioned in a more-or-less gridwork fashion around this major transportation axis.

In 1884, Siler City was the first of the railroad towns to have its streets and lots laid out. With its pivotal position on the county's major east-west route, it grew more quickly and more substantially than the other towns. The first store buildings in Siler City were one- and two-story frame structures with high false fronts, located close to the railroad tracks along what is now Birch Avenue. After 1890, most commercial development took place along what is now Chatham Avenue, a block east of the railroad track. As fire regularly eliminated the early frame buildings, they were replaced with brick ones, which not only satisfied insurance requirements, but provided a respectable and stable image for the town's business leaders.

Commercial buildings of handsome brick construction became an enduring source of civic pride throughout eastern North Carolina's small towns. Brick was cheaper than ever before due to the proliferation of railroads and brick manufacturing plants (Bisher, p. 330). Typical ornamentation included the addition of masonry

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pilasters, corbelling, and paneling, often combined with the rough and smooth textures of stone detailing. In addition, windows and doors were often emphasized with arched openings and additional brick trim, creating a rich and lively commercial architecture (Bisher, p. 332).

Siler City retains a number of significant early twentieth-century commercial buildings, the more elaborate of which exhibit the influence of vernacular Victorian, Art Deco, Spanish Mission Revival, and Colonial Revival styles. The oldest extant brick buildings include three one-story stores on South Chatham Avenue built for Daniel G. Fox c. 1897. Three additional buildings situated on North Chatham Avenue, built for Franklin M. Hadley c. 1900, feature ornamental brick work, including corbelled cornices and raised panels with geometric detailing. Mr. Hadley is also responsible for the 1908 Hadley Hotel (45, NR 1985), an elaborate eclectic Victorian building with Eastlake detailing. The 1913 Chatham Bank (28), exhibits notable stonework trim and large arched windows with stone keystones, along with a projecting stone cornice supported by modillion blocks.

Several large warehouses and automobile showrooms were constructed in Siler City during the 1920s. The 1923 Elder Motor Company (1), a Ford dealership, exhibits Colonial Revival features including a roof parapet and a heavy modillion cornice and two round-arched windows. The F. M. Hadley Warehouse building (15) also exhibits corbelled brick cornices, segmental and full arched warehouse doors, and segmental arch lintels over the windows.

The 1940 Colonial Revival-style post office building (2) displays typical Colonial Revival details including a double-leafed entrance headed by a round-arch supported by fluted columns, and a boxed dentilled cornice.

Although not as large as Siler City, Goldston's commercial district also developed primarily between 1890 and 1935. The commercial buildings are located on the east and west sides of South Main. Facing the tracks of the former Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad, the stores stand as a reminder of the golden age of the railroad which brought prosperity to isolated rural areas across North Carolina. Goldston's depot was constructed in 1894 and the post office established in 1889. Although Goldston retains

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several of its late-nineteenth-century frame buildings, the commercial district expanded in the early twentieth century when the town became a trading center for an increasing number of people who came by train from smaller communities in southwest Chatham County. By the early 1930s, growth in Goldston had peaked and most of the buildings comprising the present business district had been built. Like Siler City, the early twentieth century buildings consist primarily of flat-roofed brick and stucco structures featuring segmental arched windows and brick corbelling. The first brick store was built in 1910, a large two-story building used as a grocery store on the first level and a town hall on the upper floor. Other important commercial buildings include the c. 1910 Walter Goldston Store, featuring a stepped roof and a later stuccoed brick facade; the c. 1920 J. T. Waddle Store, a two-store stepped-roof building; the c. 1930 McLaurin Grocery Store with double-leaf corner entry; and the c. 1932 Milton Garner Building, notable for its unique arched-brick parapeted front divided into five sections by brick pilasters (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, pp. 148-149).

Bonlee, located west of Siler City, is another Chatham County town founded in the late nineteenth century. As in other turn-of-the-century railroad towns, Bonlee underwent a transition from frame to brick commercial buildings during the early twentieth century. Reflecting this change is the two-story brick Pugh Store, which features a typical corbelled brick facade with round-arched windows and stepped sides. The main commercial building, located at the intersection of Main Street and the road to Siler City, was built in several stages up to 1919. The eastern one-story section, is the oldest part and is laid in a brick pattern of one-to-six common bond. It follows an L-shaped plan and features recessed panels following the line of the flat-roof front and stepped sides. Successive additions made to the west end of the building culminated in a two-story section built by 1918 (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 195).

Several additional Chatham County towns which experienced growth with the 1884 advent of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad, failed to prosper during the twentieth century. Bear Creek, for example, now a tiny crossroads community with about twenty-seven buildings, was once the center of a large crosstie market. The only remaining early-twentieth-century brick building

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associated with this time period is the general store, which exhibits stepped sides, relieving arches over the windows, and a double-leaf entrance (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, p. 261).

The Siler City Commercial Historic District is composed primarily of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century one- and two-story brick commercial buildings. As in the other towns which developed along the railway, the one- and two-story brick commercial buildings exhibit the popular varieties of brick ornamentation, including corbelled cornices, arched window and door openings, and recessed panels. The buildings originally functioned as general and specialty merchandise stores, banks, offices, and hotels and developed in response to the growing economy of the early twentieth century. The commercial historic district retains a high degree of integrity and continues to function as a downtown district for Siler City and the surrounding area.

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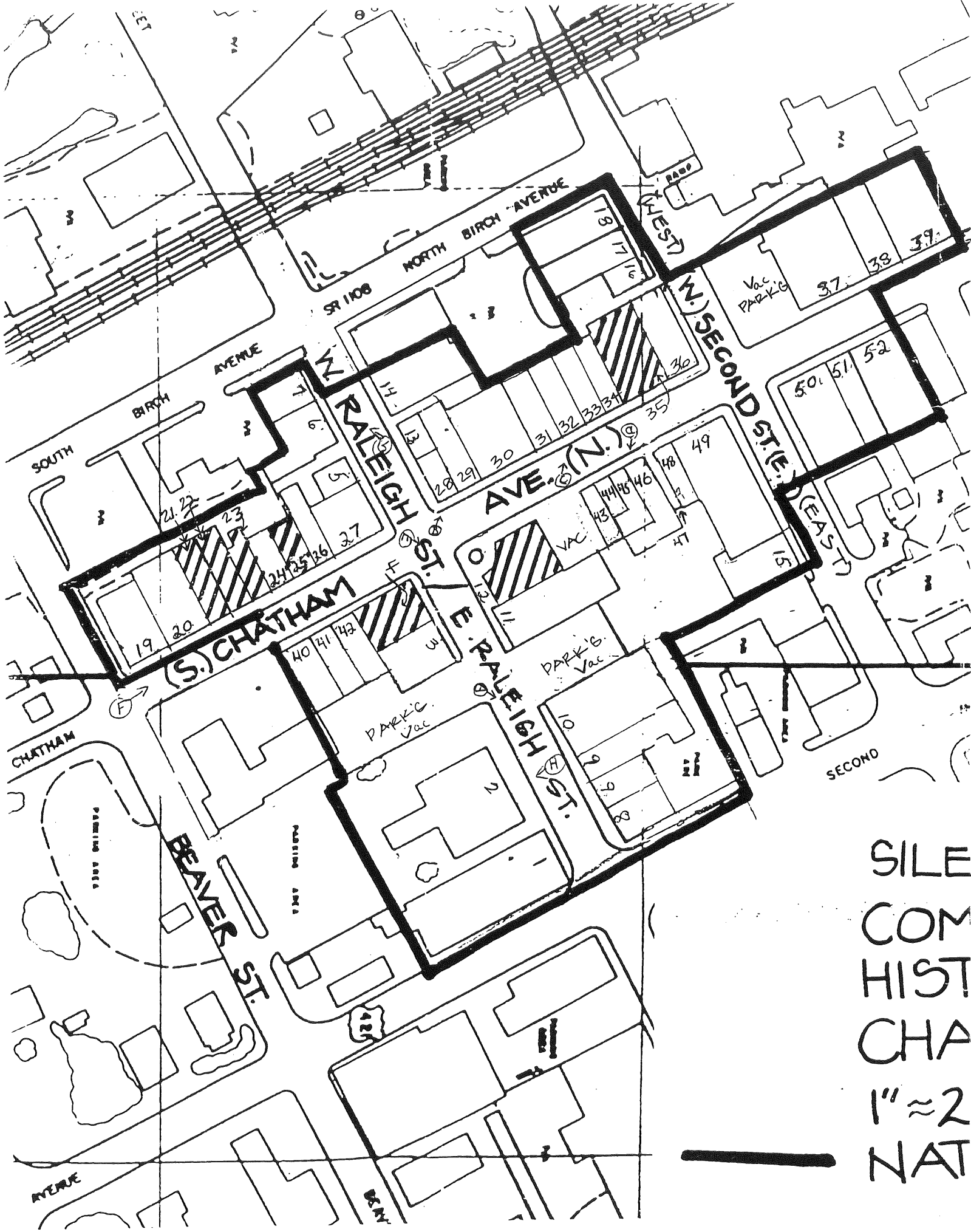
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Siler City Historic District are as shown by the accentuated line on the accompanying Siler City map (scale of 1 inch equals 200 feet).

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Siler City Historic District are drawn to include as much as possible the original commercial business district of the town, while eliminating non-contributing properties wherever possible.



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