

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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Historic Name: Roberts Building

Other Name/Site Number: City Cafe

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2. Location

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Street & Number: 216 E. Pilar

Not for Publication: N/A

City/town: Nacogdoches

State: TX County: Nacogdoches

Code: 347

Zip Code: 75961

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
1	_____ Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Nacogdoches Multiple-Property Nomination

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.

Signature of certifying official_____
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

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5. National Park Service Certification

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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 Keeper_____
Date of Action

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6. Function or Use

Historic: Commerce/Trade

Sub: Business

Current : Commerce/Trade

Sub: Business

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Other: One-Part Commercial Block

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation Brick
 walls Brick
 roof Unknown
 other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

 X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : _____

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: ca. 1904

Significant Dates: ca. 1904

Significant Person(s): Not Applicable

Cultural Affiliation: Not Applicable

Architect/Builder: Unknown

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

 X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Historic Context List of 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 # _____

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: less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	_____	B	_____
C	_____	D	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description:

Addition: OTS
Block: 23
Lot: 6

Boundary Justification:

Property includes area historically associated with building being nominated.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Ed Galloway/Research Assistant
Organization: Hardy-Heck-Moore
Street & Number: 2112 Rio Grande
City or Town: Austin

Date: June 1990
Telephone: 512-478-8014
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The Roberts Building is a 1-story commercial building that is classified as a one-part commercial block. It has a rectangular plan and, because it is on a lot that slopes sharply to the south, has a partial basement to the rear. The walls are of brick, although a shed-roofed addition on the rear is sheathed with metal siding. The building is modestly detailed; however, its most distinctive features are the segmental-arched openings on the front and side elevations. The building occupies a corner lot at the southwest corner of Pilar and Fredonia streets in Nacogdoches' central business district.

The front, which faces north onto Pilar Street, has a three-bay configuration. Each of the bays has double doors, although those in the outer bays are blocked by benches which prevent their use as entrances. Each bay has a fixed, two-light transom set within the segmental arch. the parapet, which repeats the three-part motif, has slightly inset panels.

Because the building occupies a corner lot, the east wall is exposed to the street and the include of the property, as well as the partial basement, is visible. Windows at the store level have the segmental arched openings that resemble those on the front; however, they have double-hung windows with 1/1 lights and wood sashes. The segmental arches are echoed in the partial basement. The rear two-thirds of the basement possibly may have a historic addition that, if it is not original, is sympathetic to the structure's design, detailing and materials. A frame shed addition was built on top of the

basement and is attached to the store. The addition has metal-covered siding.

The Roberts Building is in good condition, and the only insensitive alteration is the on the rear which mitigates its impact to the structure's overall historic character.

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The Roberts Building, one of the least-altered historic buildings fronting on the old Principal Square, is a noteworthy example of an early 20th century commercial building. Although several examples with similar detailing and architectural features survive in the downtown, few retain their historic integrity to such a high degree. Consequently, the Roberts Building is nominated to the National Register under Criterion C, and because it is indicative of local commercial expansion during the early 20th century, the structure is associated with *Community Planning and Development in Nacogdoches: 1830-1940*.

Ever since a formal town plan was established in 1779, land around the Principal Square or Public Square has traditionally been considered some of the most valuable property in Nacogdoches. Merchants erected their stores nearby to take advantage of the almost constant flow of people who were drawn to the square. After the arrival of the railroad in 1883, the central business district expanded primarily along Main Street; however, property around the square remained the most prestigious and important. In about 1904, the Roberts family erected this building on the site of the old homestead of John S. Roberts, a prominent figure in early Nacogdoches and a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Although the Roberts family was responsible for the building's construction, they apparently never used it themselves and instead leased it to others. Past tenants have included a grocery store, a warehouse, a plumbing shop, a barber

shop, and an automotive repair shop. The building is best known as the City Cafe, where reportedly Bonnie Parker worked as a waitress before taking up a life of crime with Clyde Barrow.

The building, which anchors the east corner of the block immediately south of the Principal or Public Square, is a finely crafted structure that has changed little since its construction in about 1904. Nacogdoches at one time had many similar buildings but almost all have had false facades applied to the storefronts or have had important architectural fabric removed.

