

The Monuments of Main Street



Allen's Landing and the Main Street Viaduct. Allen's Landing was the front door of Houston during the earliest decades of the city's existence. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center)



Houston National Bank Building. 202 Main Street. 1928. Hedrick and Gottlieb, architects. National Register of Historic Places, 1975. (Gerald Moorhead)



Union National Bank Building. 218 Main Street. 1912. Mauran, Russell and Crowell, architects. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center)



Commercial National Bank Building. 116-120 Main Street. 1904. Green and Svarz, architects. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center)



South Texas National Bank Building. 213 Main Street. 1910. C. D. Hill and Company, architects. Wings—1922. William Ward Watkin, architect. National Register of Historic Places, 1978. (Gerald Moorhead)



Sweeney, Coombs and Fredericks Building. 301 Main Street. 1889. George E. Dickey, architect. National Register of Historic Places, 1974. (Gerald Moorhead)



First National Bank Building. 201 Main Street. 1905, 1909, 1925. Sanguinet and Staats, architects. National Register nomination in preparation. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center)



Dumble Building. 217 Main Street. 1883 (left) and the B. A. Shepherd Building. 219 Main Street. 1883. George E. Dickey, architect. (right) (Gerald Moorhead)



Stuart Building. 304-308 Main Street. 1880. Middle bay altered in 1924 by A. C. Finn, architect, and again in 1937 by Lenard Gabert, architect. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center)

Main Street is a record of Houston's growth and development. Victorian street-fronts of extraordinary intensity, banking halls and office towers of classical grandeur, one of the city's first high-rise apartments, The Beaconsfield, and Houston's foremost Art Déco skyscraper, the Gulf Building, contribute to the sense of place which one experiences on Main Street, an unusual sensation in Houston, yet one that exists, or persists, nonetheless. Public recognition of this special character has been reluctant. However eight buildings on Main Street are presently listed in the National Register of Historic Places and nominations are in process for three more. This photo essay highlights the buildings and places which make Main Street special. Some are perhaps better known than others, but collectively they constitute a historical resource which has been too hastily

overlooked or dismissed, as if there were nothing that elements of the past could contribute toward making a self-consciously "new" city more amenable, more livable and more humane. After all, where else in Houston does one find such celebrated American architects of the past as Daniel H. Burnham (Scanlan Building) and Ralph Adams Cram (Trinity Church) toeing the same curblin as architectural celebrities of the present like Gordon Bunshaft (First City National Bank Building) or Stanley Tigerman (Knoll International)? Only on Main Street.



Scanlan Building. 405 Main Street. 1909. D. H. Burnham and Company, architects. National Register of Historic Places. 1981. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Courtesy of Houston Metropolitan Research Center)



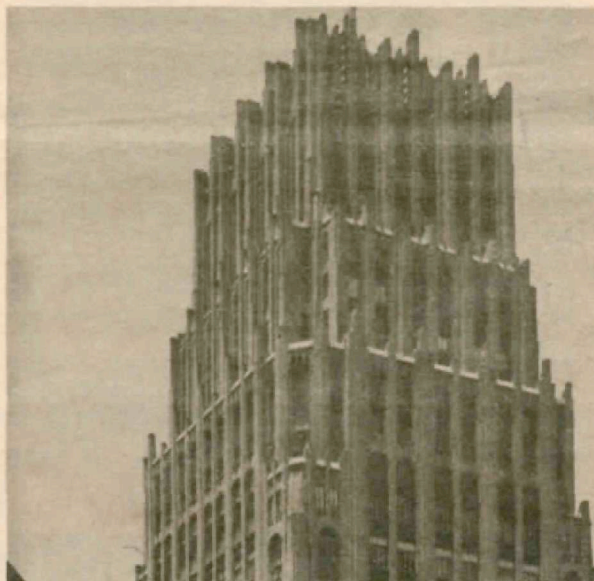
Kress Building. 705 Main Street. 1914. Seymour Burrell, architect. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Houston Metropolitan Research Center)



First Methodist Church. 1320 Main Street. 1910. Sanguinet and Staats and A. E. Barnes, architects. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Courtesy of Houston Metropolitan Research Center)



State National Bank Building. 412 Main Street. 1924. A. C. Finn, architect. National Register of Historic Places, 1982. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Courtesy of Houston Metropolitan Research Center)



Gulf Building. 710-724 Main Street. 1929. A. C. Finn, Kenneth Franzheim and J. E. R. Carpenter, architects. National Register of Historic Places, 1982. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Courtesy of Houston Metropolitan Research Center)



The Beaconsfield. 1700 Main Street. 1911. A. C. Pigg, architect. National Register nomination in preparation. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Courtesy of Houston Metropolitan Research Center)



Burns Building. 421 Main Street. 1883. E. J. Duhamel, architect. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Courtesy of Houston Metropolitan Research Center)



Gulf Building. Detail of Main Street entrance. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Courtesy of Houston Metropolitan Research Center)



Trinity Church. 3404 Main Street. 1919. Cram and Ferguson, architects. National Register nomination in preparation. (Paul Hester, Houston Architectural Survey. Courtesy of Houston Metropolitan Research Center)