NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #1 Sonoma Co., CA

# **DESCRIPTION**

The Petaluma Historic Commercial District gives a strong sense of the city's downtown at the end of World War II. It is especially notable for its collection of Italianate iron-front commercial buildings, although it contains well-executed examples of other architectural styles as well. The district contains 99 elements, all but three of which are buildings. The buildings, which were constructed during the past 140 years, are arrayed along Petaluma Boulevard and adjacent streets in downtown Petaluma. Nearly all are in retail use, though some have auxiliary uses as well. The district includes 64 elements that contribute to its historic character, 35 that do not contribute, and 14 empty parcels. The district's integrity is high due to the concentration of resources, the size and importance of the contributors, and the inconspicuousness of non-contributors.

Petaluma Boulevard forms the spine of the district. It extends north and south for more than three blocks, angling slightly on the north and more sharply on the south. Over half of the district's buildings front the street. The remaining buildings face one of three crossing or two parallel streets. A few structures have facades on both Petaluma Boulevard and one of the parallel streets. Only two buildings are located more than one block from Petaluma Boulevard. The district has two main topographical features, the Petaluma River on the east and the slope of the land, which rises noticeably from south to north and east to west.

Similarity of use helps to define the visual character of the district. Retailing provides the main use of nearly all the buildings in the district. About two-thirds are used exclusively to provide goods and services to retail

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #2 Sonoma Co., CA

customers. The rest mix retail use on the ground floor with offices or apartments above. The buildings are designed to attract customers on foot. Almost all extend to their lot lines on each side and front the sidewalk directly with no intervening set-backs. Most of the storefronts contain recessed entrances and flanking display windows. Some of the buildings along Water Street originally had industrial uses and were later converted to retailing.

Within the overall uniformity of the district, the individual buildings vary considerably. Most have only one story, but the prominent buildings reach three or four stories. Generally, rooflines are not conspicuous, because the roofs are flat or are hidden by parapets. The parapets run from plain and rectangular to segmental and highly decorated. Many types of siding are visible: cast iron, brick, stone, stucco, terra cotta, and board. Stucco is probably the most popular, especially on non-contributors. Detailing on contributing buildings varies from profuse to minimal. The most common motifs have classical inspiration and include bracketed cornices, dentil and belt courses, and pilasters.

Building design varies considerably. The district's most distinctive structures, its collection of multi-story, iron-clad buildings near the corner of Petaluma Boulevard and Western Avenue, display either the Italianate or Second Empire styles. Another group of buildings, often with brick siding and terra cotta ornamentation, is less elaborately classical in appearance. Several represent the Second Renaissance Revival. The district also has prominent examples of the Queen Anne, Mission Revival, Mediterranean Revival, Streamline, and International styles. More numerous than examples of any style are the buildings that are without

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #3
Sonoma Co., CA

stylistic pretensions but exemplify their construction periods through detailing. In general, the larger buildings exhibit designs in specific styles, while the smaller ones have no style.

Many buildings have suffered alterations over the years. The most frequent change is the replacement of the original storefront with a more modern treatment. Often this involves the use of aluminum framed windows instead of the original wood. Stucco siding over original board or brick is another alteration found on several buildings. About two dozen buildings, notably those in the 100-block of Kentucky Street, have lost all or nearly all of their original detailing.

The district's contributors (with one exception) retain historic materials and design elements above the first floor. Usually these are original, though some represent alterations made before 1945. Non-contributors are nearly always old buildings that have suffered severe alterations. Only six structures in the district date from after World War II. Contributors are larger and more conspicuous than non-contributors. Of the district's 34 multi-story buildings, 32 contribute to its historic character.

The district has major contributors distributed throughout. Three large buildings, originally warehouses, run along the Petaluma River between B Street and Western Avenue. The oldest of these, which dates from c. 1854, is constructed largely of stone. The iron-front buildings, with their profusion of classical detailing, are concentrated near the corner of Western and Petaluma Boulevard. They include several of three stories: the Masonic Building on the corner, the Odd Fellows Hall one parcel away on Petaluma Boulevard, and the Mutual Relief Building down the block to the

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #4
Sonoma Co., CA

west. The Opera House, on Kentucky near Washington Street, is the district's most profusely detailed iron-front building and the only one individually listed in the National Register. Other important structures are: the Herold Building, with its corner tower and bay windows; the American Trust Building, a carefully executed example of a classically designed bank from the 1920s; the Hotel Petaluma, the district's tallest building and the only one designed in the Mediterranean Revival style; and Couches, Etc., the three-story former department store that has a rounded corner and other features of the Streamline Moderne.

Areas of distinctly different character bound the district. To the north a scattering of recent commercial buildings continues on Petaluma Boulevard for about a mile, while a residential neighborhood begins along Kentucky. On the south is another small collection of new commercial structures. Newer buildings, notably a large parking garage between Western and Washington Street, also mark the western boundary. Further south is an area of non-commercial buildings, including the library and post office, both already listed in the National Register. On the east is the Petaluma River. The boundaries follow contiguous parcel lines and encompass nearly all of Petaluma's pre-1946 commercial buildings.

The district retains a high degree of integrity. Contributing to the feeling of a traditional downtown are the arrangement of the buildings, which are immediately contiguous and front the sidewalk, the predominant retail uses, and the retention of original design and fabric, especially above the storefronts. Despite some new construction and several substantial remodelings, the district has maintained its historic character.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #5
Sonoma Co., CA

# Detailed descriptions of the elements in the district follow.

13 Petaluma Blvd. S. (Victory Auto Sales)

Contributing Building — c. 1915/c.1925

The front elevation of this brick, stucco-sided, single-story automotive garage and warehouse has two sections, one with a gable roof masked by a stepped parapet, the other with a flat roof. Both have clay tiles at the cornice. Plywood covers the transoms. The building is an amalgamation of two previous structures (c. 1915), one of which faced 2nd Street, and a large c. 1925 addition, which sports the parapet in front and small-paned industrial windows in the rear. APN 008-065-02

301 B Street (Chevron Station)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1970

This one-story gas station is set back from the street by an asphalt parking lot. The building has a flat roof, metal siding and a flat-roofed canopy atop the pumps. It was constructed after the district's period of significance. APN 008-063-8 & 9

313-315 B Street (Tomasini Rex Hardware)

Five Contributing Buildings — c. 1870 - 1920

This is a conglomeration of one- and two-story wood-frame structures, the three largest of which (c. 1870) have gable roofs of corrugated metal and siding of horizontal board or corrugated metal. Also included one very small brick building (c. 1920) with arched door and window in the rear. The street elevations join the separate elements with stucco siding and parapets. In the rear is a large shed (c. 1870) with a gable roof, plain parapet, and large sliding door. APN 008-063-12

1-5 Petaluma Blvd. N., 312/314/316 B Street (Camera Corner)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1950

This one-story commercial building has six storefronts, all topped by a plain parapet and wide marquee. Siding materials include: stucco, corrugated panels, plate glass, and simulated stone. APN 008-053-09

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #6 Sonoma Co., CA

# 9-11 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Gossage-O'Neill building)

Contributing Building — 1903

This glazed brick two-story commercial building has two parallel street faces. Classical details include: corbelling above the second-story windows, corner pilasters with Ionic capitals, and an egg-and-dart cornice. The street level has been remodeled with brick veneer and a stucco marquee. APN 008-053-08

# 15-19 Petaluma Blvd. No. (McNear Building)

Contributing Building — 1911

This two-story brick commercial building has two parallel street faces. Its classical detailing includes: dentils and egg-and-dart trim at the cornices, capitals atop pilasters, and scrolls on the stepped parapet, which contains a name-and-date plaque. The trapezoidal plan counteracts a bend in the street. The entrance to the Mystic Theater in this building has an Art Deco- style glazed tile surfacing and neon marquee. Other storefronts have been modernized but retain original architraves. APN 008-053-07

# 21-23 Petaluma Blvd. No. (McNear Building)

Contributing Building — 1886

This High Victorian Italianate commercial building has cast iron fronts at both street faces. Each has a classical entablature with narrow, closely spaced arched windows below. Pilasters add to the vertical appearance. Other details are sculptured heads, flowers and filigree cresting. Lettering on the delicate castings states their manufacturer: "O'Connell & Lewis, Architectural Iron Work, 230-236 Steuart Street, San Francisco." The building fills a trapezoidal lot with no two sides parallel. APN 008-053-07

# 29-39 Petaluma Blvd. No. (LanMart building)

Contributing Building — 1911 (1876)

This two-story commercial building was designed in the Mission Revival style. The siding is stucco over brick. Typical of the style is the stepped and curved parapet

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #7 Sonoma Co., CA

with quatrefoil date plaque. The second story windows are unified by a tiled hood on rustic wood brackets. The pilasters on the first floor have banded capitals and applied geometric ornament. The arches between are a modern remodeling. The 1911 facade is itself a remodeling that unified two nineteenth century brick and stone buildings. APN 008-053-05

10-46 Kentucky Street (Gross Building)

Contributing Building — 1915

This one-story brick commercial building has a pedimental parapet with terra cotta coping and decorative plaques. Below are a clerestory band of multipane windows and a guyed marquee of steel and glass. At ground level are storefronts with recessed entrances and flanking display windows. APN 008-053-05

43-49 Petaluma Blvd. N., 7/9 Western Ave. (Masonic Building) Contributing Building — 1882

This three-story commercial and lodge building is of brick construction with cast iron details. The style is Italianate. Among the details are: a bracketed cornice, paneled pilasters with Ionic capitals, and belt courses between stories. Windows on the upper stories are tall and narrow, arched, and capped with keystones. The arches are circular on the third story and segmented on the second. The Masonic insignia is featured at center of parapet on each street face. The copper-clad clock tower, a 1934 replacement of the original, is topped by a weather vane with initial "G". Storefronts line the ground floor. The corner entry has hexagonal tile paving spelling "I & M Drug Co." The castings were done by the Industrial Iron Works, McCormick Lewis & Co. of San Francisco." APN 008-053-04

Southwest corner, Petaluma Blvd. N. and Western Avenue (W.C.T.U. Fountain) Contributing Object — 1891

This granite public water fountain is roughly cube-shaped. It has one step and is engraved with the message, "Total abstinence is the way to solve the alcohol problem".

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #8 Sonoma Co., CA

- 6 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Great Petaluma Mill)
- 3 Contributing Buildings c. 1854 c. 1903; restored and adapted 1979

This is a collection of three large warehouses that have been restored and adapted for retail shops and restaurant use. The largest (c. 1854), which sides B Street, is primarily of stone construction, while the others (c. 1880 and 1903) are of brick. The height is generally two stories, although there are taller sections. Small recent additions have been placed on the front and rear. APN 008-054-05

16 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Old Post Office)

Contributing Building — 1920

This wide one-story brick building has a large center bay and three flanking bays on each side. The center bay is curved to follow bend in Petaluma Boulevard. Classical detailing is used throughout and includes cylindrical stone columns in center section and brick pilasters on flanking wings, all with Ionic capitals. A panel atop the main entrance announces the building's original use: "U. S. Post Office." Above are a terra cotta medallion and a flagpole. Adjacent storefronts retain their original configurations. The architect was Brainerd Jones of Petaluma. APN 008-054-04

34 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Maclay Building)

Contributing Building — 1918

This brick commercial building has one story. Centered atop the front elevation is a small pedimental parapet. Detailing is largely limited to simple terra cotta medallions, rosettes, and parapet coping. A band of multi-paned clerestory windows divides the facade horizontally. Below is a guyed steel marquee with rosette detailing. At ground level are four storefronts, each with center entrance and flanking display windows. APN 008-054-01

101 Petaluma Blvd. No. (American Trust Building)

Contributing Building — 1926

This two-story bank building is clad in "Grana-Tex," terra cotta simulating granite. Detailing is classical and includes a formal entablature with crested cornice, triglyph

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Petaluma Historic Commercial District Page #9 Sonoma Co., CA

frieze and wide, plain architrave. Above is a roof flagpole flanked by eagles. Windows are long and narrow and capped by a ornamented hood. Architects were Hyman & Appleton of San Francisco. APN 006-281-11

107-113 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Odd Fellows Hall)

Contributing Building — 1871/1877, 1926

This three-story commercial building and social hall has cast iron facing over brick construction. The style is Second Empire; J.B. Brooche was the architect. Pedimented dormers with arched windows line the third story. Below is a prominent cornice with bracketed frieze below. On the second story is a row of arched windows separated by pairs of pilasters. The first story has been altered with modern brick veneer, plate glass windows, and a stucco and metal marquee. A nearly identical addition, with a flat roof behind the mansard, was added on the north in 1926. APN 006-281-12

115 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Keig's Shoes)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1880

This brick commercial building has a stone foundation and one story. Its original features are obscured by a modern stucco and brick veneer. The same business has been operating at this location for over one hundred years. APN 006-281-13

119 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Marin Outdoors/Penney's)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1885

This brick commercial building has two stories, and a flat roof behind a parapet. The cast iron pilasters at each end of facade, manufactured by "McCormick Iron, S.F.", are the only original features to have escaped a stucco-and-ceramic-tile facade remodeling done ca. 1960. APN 006-281-14

125 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Music Coop)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1950

This one-story commercial building has brick and stucco siding and a curved chrome marquee. It was constructed after the district's period of significance. APN 006-281-15

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #10 Sonoma Co., CA

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133 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Putnam Plaza)

Non-contributing site — 1987

This is a parcel-sized city park with a bronze plaque dedicated to Mayor Helen Putnam and a cobblestone fountain. APN 006-281-39

139 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Perry's Delicatessen)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1960

This one-story commercial building has stucco siding, used brick "wainscot," and a concrete shingle visors over plate glass windows. The building was constructed after the district's period of significance. APN 006-281-37

141 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Upscale Downtown Bakery)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1880

This single story commercial building has been remodeled with new windows and a siding of stucco and decorative aggregate. It has a plain parapet and shallow marquee. A bakery has been operating at this location for over seventy-five years. The building, however, no longer reflects the district's period of significance. APN 006-281-18

145 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Phoenix Block)

Contributing Building — c. 1920

This brick commercial building has one story. Its flat roof is hidden behind a parapet with terra cotta coping, name plaque, and cartouche. Terra cotta is used in a belt course and display window trim. The storefronts have been thoroughly altered. It is possible that the current facade was placed over a much older building ca. 1920. APN 006-281-20

155-157 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Gazette building)

Contributing Building — c. 1880

This one-story commercial building has a cast iron front over brick construction. Detailing includes: a paneled and bracketed frieze, rusticated quoins, and "dropped-

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #11
Sonoma Co., CA

shoulder" arched clerestory windows. A single fluted column divides the two storefronts, which have been altered. APN 006-281-21

159 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Aaron's Furniture)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1950

This one-story commercial building has stucco siding, plate glass windows with simulated stone base, and a stucco marquee. The building was constructed after the district's period of significance. APN 006-281-30

171 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Simone's Clocks)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1975

This one-story commercial building has concrete block siding and large display windows. The building, which has a thoroughly modern design, was constructed after the district's period of significance. APN 006-281-26

199 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Sonoma County Bank/Petaluma Savings Bank)

Contributing Building — 1926

This two-story bank building is a small-scale example of the Second Renaissance Revival. It is sided in "Grana-Tex," terra cotta that simulates rusticated granite. It has a rectangular plan with curved corner at the street intersection. It has a balustraded parapet, ornamented entablature, tall arched openings with decorative keystones, and bronze doors and windows. APN 006-281-27

100 Petaluma Blvd No.

Non-contributing Building — 1991

This three-story office and retail building has stucco siding and a flat roof. The modern design features: bays and balconies turned 45 degrees to main building axis, arched fixed transoms on the first story, arch detailing below the cornice, and steel pipe railings. The building was constructed after the district's period of significance. APN 006-282-23

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Fige #12 = Page #12 = Sonoma Co., CA

106 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Gale's Central Club)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1925

This one-story commercial building has stucco siding with a veneer of simulated stone. Its corrugated metal gable roof is hidden behind a parapet with pressed metal cornice. Although the rear entrance is unaltered, the main elevation of the building no longer appears as it did during the district's period of significance. APN 006-282-03

108 Petaluma Blvd. No. (River Place)

Contributing Building — c. 1880

This two-story brick building has stucco siding. Original detailing disappeared in a c. 1940 remodeling. Remaining now are only pilasters between front second-story windows. The first floor facing is wood paneled and detailed for a Victorian effect. In the rear is a one-story addition with corrugated metal gable roof. APN 006-282-04

110 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Senter Building)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1880

This single story wood-frame commercial building has a false front with a stepped parapet and bracketed cornice. A wood awning tops the twin storefronts. The building's current appearance reflects a rehabilitation completed in 1987. APN 006-282-05

114 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Moreda's Sporting Goods)

Contributing Building - c. 1870

This one-story brick commercial building has a flat roof hidden behind a parapet with recessed panels in the brickwork. The clerestory window band has been filled in. At ground level are two storefronts with recessed entrances and flanking display windows. APN 006-282-20

120 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Bluestone Main) Contributing Building — c. 1860

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #13
Sonoma Co., CA

This commercial building has one story. The construction is primarily of brick, although its north wall is of early random coursed stone. The foundation is also stone. The building has a stepped parapet with decorative coping and recessed brickwork panels. Below is a band of clerestory windows. At ground level are pressed copper moldings around the door and display windows and a cast-iron column at center of facade, which provides support for a recessed entry. APN 006-282-06

132 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Steiger Building)

Contributing Building — 1885

This two-story brick commercial building has a cast iron facade. A stepped parapet hides the flat roof. The parapet features a full entablature with bracketed cornice and paneled frieze. The cast iron detailing is very elaborate and includes: fluted Ionic pilasters, a cornice with dentils delineating the second story windows, and intricate floral and leaf decoration in the cornice paneling and corner pilasters. Simulated stone facing, a ca. 1960 alteration, surrounds first-story display windows. The rear portion has one story, brick siding and a corrugated metal gable roof. The building originally housed the Steiger family gun and sporting goods business. APN 006-282-07

132 Petaluma Blvd. No. (rear)

Contributing Building — c. 1885

This brick building is roughly the same size as the one in front. It has one story, a gable roof, and arched windows. Its arched doorway faces Water Street. APN 006-282-07

134 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Brick House)

Contributing Building — c. 1886

This one-story commercial building has a cast iron facade over brick construction. The prominent cornice rests atop a paneled and bracketed frieze. The street level facade features slender freestanding columns flanking the recessed entry and substantial corner pilasters with ornate detailing of men's faces, festoons, and Corinthian capitals. APN 006-282-08

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #14 Sonoma Co., CA

136 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Salvation Army) who and additional designation and Contributing Building — c. 1880

This one-story commercial building has a cast-iron facade over brick. The pressed metal cornice has wreaths and a broken parapet. The beaded cast-iron pilasters were manufactured by "McCormick Bros, SF Cal." The storefront is topped by a guyed steel marquee with egg-and-dart molding. Below the display windows is banded ceramic tile with pierced tile vents. APN 006-282-09

140 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Fourth Street Cutters)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1880

Cast iron pilasters are the only original features visible on this single-story, stucco-faced brick commercial building. It is too altered to contribute to the character of the district. APN 006-282-10

144 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Comforts of Home)

Non-contributing Building — 1871

This one-story brick commercial building has stucco siding and a ca. 1960 storefront. Cast iron pilasters remain from the building's original appearance. They have a plaque: "Aetna Iron Works, 18 SF 71". The building is too altered to contribute to the character of the district. APN 006-282-11

148 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Chelsea Antiques)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1900

This stucco-faced brick one-story commercial building no longer displays any of its original features. Its ca. 1970 appearance does not contribute to the character of the district. APN 006-282-12

150 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Chelsea Antiques)

Contributing Building - c. 1910

This small, granite-faced commercial building retains its ca. 1910 storefront. Above is a recent, plain parapet. APN 006-282-12

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #15 Sonoma Co., CA

# 152 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Riverside Antiques)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1880

This one- story brick commercial building has a vertically grooved plywood siding false front and a ca. 1950 storefront with recessed entry and flanking display windows. Visible original features include slender cast iron pilasters and a cornice with end brackets. APN 006-282-13

#### 154 Petaluma Blvd. No.

Non-contributing Building — c. 1880

Vertically grooved plywood siding covers the front of this one-story brick commercial building. The storefront, with simulated stone bulkhead and planter beneath display windows, dates from ca. 1965. Visible original features are limited to slender cast iron pilaster. APN 006-282-14

# 156-166 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Cafe Passport/Salon D)

Contributing Building — c. 1875/1910

This brick two-story commercial building joins two earlier structures. The simple ca. 1910 facade is of brick, which is painted below a belt course separating the two stories. It has a simple pressed metal cornice molding below the plain parapet. Second-story windows have shallow elliptical structural arches. One of the two storefronts retains its ca. appearance. Remaining from the nineteenth century are slender cast iron pilasters at street level. APN 006-282-15/006-282-16

# 170 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Wickersham Building)

Contributing Building — c. 1910

This two-story commercial building, which represents a simplified version of the Second Renaissance Revival, has a facade of glazed brick. It has a stepped parapet with dentiled cornice and bracketed frieze below. Between the stories is an Ionic style terra cotta cornice. The storefront has been altered but retains lavender prism glass transoms. APN 006-282-17

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #16 Sonoma Co., CA

172 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Goodwill)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1880

This stucco-faced one-story brick false-front commercial building retains almost nothing of its historic appearance. The exceptions are cast iron pilasters by "McCormick Bros, SF, Cal". APN 006-282-18

200 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Soberanes Monument)

Non-contributing Object — c. 1970

This granite monument topped with a bronze statue commemorates Bill Soberanes, a local newspaper columnist and civic personality who founded the world wrist-wrestling championship. APN 006-284-19

208 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Fino)

Contributing Building - c. 1870

This Italianate one-story brick commercial building has a cast- iron front, stone foundation, concrete block west side wall, bracketed false-front cornice, and slender pilasters. Recently installed windows detract from the historic appearance. APN 006-284-25

216 Petaluma Blvd. No. (vacant)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1920

This single-story commercial building has a stucco-sided false front. The storefront retains some streamline features, including a curved and banded chrome marquee, display window surrounds, and cylindrical columns. APN 006-284-35

218 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Models & More)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1860

This brick one-story commercial building has a stepped parapet with terra cotta coping and cornice. The siding is vertically grooved plywood. The display windows have been altered, but the central entrance retains its historic appearance. APN 006-284-

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #17 : Sonoma Co., CA

226 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Bar Guadalajara)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1860

This brick one-story commercial building has a stone foundation. Its roof is masked by a straight parapet shared with the structure on the north. The street elevation is sided in brick and plywood veneers. The storefront has been seriously altered since 1950. APN 006-284-08

228 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Playa Azul)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1860

This brick one-story commercial building has a stone foundation. Its roof is masked by a straight parapet shared with the structure on the north. The street elevation is sided in brick and stucco. The storefront has been seriously altered since 1950. APN 006-284-08

221A Water Street (Petaluma Alano Club)

Contributing Building - c. 1885

This two-story building, once a warehouse for the hardware store in front (226 Petaluma Blvd. No.), has two stories, a gable roof, and corrugated metal siding. The storefront facing Water Street has been modernized.

221B Water Street

Contributing Building — c. 1885

This two-story brick building was once a tin shop. It has a flat roof and arched windows.

246/252 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Petaluma Muffler)

Contributing Building — c. 1915

This brick one-story commercial building has a flat roof, slightly raised pediment, and a stone foundation. The storefront has three bays, one with its original appearance. In the rear are several additions with corrugated metal siding. The architect was Brainerd Jones. APN 006-284-18

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #18 Sonoma Co., CA

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250 Water Street

Contributing Building — c. 1920

This small one-story building is at the rear of 246/252 Petaluma Blvd. No. It has a wood frame, corrugated metal siding, a gable roof, and small-paned industrial windows. APN 006-284-18

256 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Kickers)

Contributing Building — c. 1910

This former feed store has one story, stucco over brick siding, a stepped parapet with gable roof behind, and a concrete foundation with brick "wainscot" above. The facade consists of stout pilasters separating entries and display windows, with shorter pilaster supporting transoms over the display windows. All pilasters have relief lattice pattern in lieu of capitals. APN 006-284-36

260 Water Street (Athletic Edge)

Contributing Building — c. 1910

This large two-story building, once a feed warehouse, has a gable roof with granary tower on top. The siding is corrugated metal. A concrete loading dock faces Water Street. APN 006-284-36

260 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Petaluma Collective)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1900

This brick commercial building has one story. The front elevation is sided in stucco and topped by a flat parapet. The current appearance dates from a c. 1955 remodeling. APN 006-284-14

264 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Katie's Collectables)

Contributing Building — c. 1918

This one-story brick building was once an auto repair shop. Its front elevation has three bays. The center bay has a pointed parapet with a large opening beneath the apex. The side bays have shallow stepped parapets with plain cornices. The bay on

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #19 Sonoma Co., CA

the north retains its original garage opening, while the others have altered doors and windows. APN 006-163-31

300-304 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Antique Market Place)

Contributing Building — c. 1925

This brick building has one story in the front and two in the rear. The front elevation is topped with a parapet that is flat except for two pointed steps with medallions below. Two identical storefronts have recessed entries and flanking display windows. Transoms are filled in. A guyed awning extends the width of the elevation. A cinder-block wall faces the empty lot on the north. APN 006-163-01

101 Western Avenue (Great Western Bank)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1970

This brick building has a flat roof and protruding walls. Its contemporary design makes no attempt to blend in with the district. APN 008-051-24

25 Western Avenue (Mutual Relief Building)

Contributing Building — 1885

This Italianate commercial building has three stories. The siding is cast iron and stucco over brick; the casting were by "Pendergast's Foundry, San Francisco." Notable features include: truncated hip roof, bracketed cornices with pediments, arched windows, pedimented window caps, paneled pilasters on second and third stories, Ionic columns and pilasters at first story. Painted on the rear of this building is a distinctive Coca-Cola sign featuring a yellow chick. APN 008-053-01

19 Western Avenue (Andresen's)

Contributing Building — 1885

This two-story Italianate commercial building has cast-iron siding over brick. The front elevation has a bracketed cornice and heavily molded window casings. The first floor has been altered. APN 008-053-02

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

#### 15 Western Avenue

Contributing Building — c. 1881

This brick Italianate commercial building has two stories clad in cast iron. Important features include: a bracketed cornice with panels and dentils, rusticated quoins, segmental arch windows, and a suspended steel marquee. The storefront retains some of its historic fabric. APN 008-053-03

10 Western Avenue (Linch Building)

Contributing Building — c. 1890/1918

This three-story brick commercial building has a bracketed and dentiled cornice and another dental course atop the first story. A suspended steel marquee tops the storefront, which has been altered. APN 006-281-02

24 Western Avenue (Prince Building)

Contributing Building — c. 1910

This two-story commercial building is sided in glazed brick with terra cotta trim. A stepped cornice is attached to a plain parapet. Centered on the first story is a doorway topped by a steel marquee. The storefront on the right retains some of its original features. APN 006-281-01

19-25 Kentucky Street (Schluckebier Trust Building)

Contributing Building — 1915

This one-story brick building has a flat roof and plain parapet. The front elevation is sided in stucco and topped by a shallow tiled canopy with exposed purlins and an egg-and-dart course. Vertical pilaster-like bands divide the elevation into four storefronts, each with recessed, tile-floored entries and flanking display windows. Three are capped with small-paned lavender prism glass transoms. A guyed awning extends across the elevation. APN 008-051-09

101 Kentucky Street (Couches Etc.)
Contributing Building — c. 1938

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #21
Sonoma Co., CA

This three-story streamline commercial building has stucco siding and a plain parapet and a horizontal band below. The building's main corner is curved and includes a two-story curved multi-pane window and a curved cantilevered marquee on the first story. The storefront has a corner entrance and display windows on both street elevations. APN 006-363-20

111-113 Kentucky Street (Air-Sea Travel/Home Town Realty)

Contributing Building — c. 1900

This one-story brick commercial building has a flat roof, dentiled cornice and stucco siding. The storefront was modernized ca. 1955. APN 006-363-19

117-121 Kentucky Street (Gervasoni Building)

Contributing Building — c. 1900

This one-story brick commercial building has a flat roof behind a paneled, stepped parapet. The cornice below is lined with dentils. The first story is divided into three storefronts, which have undergone varying kinds of alterations. APN 006-363-18

127 Kentucky Street (Peoples Building)

Contributing Building — c. 1900

This one-story brick commercial building has a flat roof and stepped parapet. The dentiled cornice below matches the one on the building to the south. A suspended steel marquee tops two of the three storefronts, which have been altered to varying degrees. APN 006-363-17

133 Kentucky Street (Schluckebier & Gwinn Building)

Contributing Building — c. 1895

This two-story brick commercial building displays Second Renaissance Revival details on its front elevation. These include: ornamented parapet, dentiled cornice, paneled frieze, pilasters, and arched windows and doorway. The second story windows have intricate fanlight muntins in the upper sash. The arched entry has marble steps and

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #22

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a mosaic tile floor with the initials "S & G." The adjacent storefront has been altered. APN 006-363-16

137 Kentucky Street the dress probable in the probable of the

Contributing Building — c. 1910

This one-story brick commercial building has a curvilinear stepped parapet faced with glazed tile and topped by Spanish tile coping. Two of the three storefronts, which are covered by a suspended steel marquee, retain much of their historic appearance. APN 006-363-08

141-143 Kentucky Street (Regency Lamps)

Pagana La Sei Akara

Non-contributing Building — c. 1910

This one-story stucco-sided brick commercial building has lost all of its original detailing. APN 006-363-15

145 Kentucky Street (Opera House)

Contributing Building — c. 1870/1901

This 1870 brick two-story commercial building was remodeled by architect Brainerd Jones in 1901. The front elevation has brick, wood, cast iron, and pressed sheet metal siding and an elaborate stepped parapet. The first story has fluted cast iron pilasters, typical for buildings of this age in the area. The second story has an ornately ornamented pressed-metal facade over wood framing which features wreaths, swags, rosettes, scrolls, and paired Ionic colonettes on paneled plinths. The storefront has been altered. APN 006-363-14

153 Kentucky Street (Copperfield's Books)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1910/1930 growned by the contributing Building in the contribution of the contrib

This single-story commercial building has stucco and brick siding and a shallow stainless steel marquee. No historic fabric remains on the front elevation. APN 006-363-13

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #23 Sonoma Co., CA

159 Kentucky Street (Gwinn Building)

Contributing Building — c. 1910

This brick commercial building has two stories. Its gable roof is hidden behind a pedimental stepped parapet with a recessed name panel ("Gwinn"). The second-story windows are grouped in threes with transoms, in the Chicago style, and accented by terra cotta cartouches between. Below are clerestory windows, a steel and glass marquee with rosettes, and altered storefronts. APN 006-363-12

161 Kentucky Street (Herold Building/Canepa Block)

Contributing Building — 1899

This Queen Anne brick commercial building has two stories and a flat roof. Detailing includes: paneled cast iron pilasters and lintels, numerous slanted bays on both street faces and one on the alley side of the second story, a pressed metal cornice and frieze, and elliptically arched minor windows. The building is distinguished by the rounded corner tower on the second story, which is topped by a conical sheet metal roof with massive finial. The storefronts have a historic appearance. APN 006-363-11

108 Kentucky Street (The Trellis Group, Inc.)

Contributing Building — c. 1915

This one-story commercial building is sided in glazed brick with terra cotta trim to match the Prince Building adjacent. The flat roof is hidden behind a plain parapet. The storefront has been altered with modern brick veneer and aluminum windows. APN 006-281-03

110 Kentucky Street (The Bicycle Factory)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1970

This recent one-story commercial building has modern brick siding at street level, a flat roof behind parapet, and a steel street canopy on tubular steel columns. APN 006-281-04

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #24
Sonoma Co., CA

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120 Kentucky Street (Bee's Houseware)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1855/1970

This one-story commercial building has a plain parapet fronting a flat roof, a wide expanse of flat, unadorned stucco, an aluminum marquee atop aluminum windows, and a simulated stone base.

APN 006-281-29

122 Kentucky Street (KCO Children's Wear)

Non-contributing Building — 1988

This one-and-a-half story commercial building has a flat roof behind a parapet,, brick and stucco siding, and heavy metal sided display windows and store entrances. Cast iron pilasters, c. 1870, have been applied to the facade. APN 006-281-28

126-130 Kentucky Street (Final Touch)

Contributing Building - c. 1915

This one-story commercial building has brick siding with terra cotta trim and a flat roof behind a banded parapet with merlon-like corner extensions. The entry retains its original recessed doorway and tile siding. The major alteration is a steel street canopy on tubular steel columns. APN 006-281-19

136 Kentucky Street (Ott's)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1965

This one-story commercial building has stucco and brick siding, a flat roof behind a plain parapet, aluminum-sided display windows, and a steel street canopy. APN 006-281-36

140 Kentucky Street (Mattei Bros.)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1965

This wide one-story commercial building has a flat roof behind a parapet, stucco siding, aluminum display windows, and a steel street canopy on tubular steel columns. Of interest is the fact that there has been a Mattei Bros. clothing store on this block of Kentucky Street for over seventy-five years. APN 006-281-34

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #25

## 146-152 Kentucky Street

Non-contributing Building — c. 1965

This one-story concrete-block commercial building has a plain parapet and stucco siding. Multiple storefronts have various facings: ceramic tile, exposed aggregate, wood paneling, and plastic panels. Covering them all is a steel street canopy on tubular steel columns. APN 006-281-07

# 21 Washington Street (WestAmerica Bank)

Non-contributing Building — c. 1925

This small one-story brick commercial building has stucco siding. It appearance dates from c. 1960, when the front elevation was remodeled. APN 006-281-10

# 25 Washington Street (WestAmerica Bank)

Contributing Building — c. 1925

This one-story brick commercial building has a flat parapet with terra cotta detail. The storefront has been changed. APN 006-281-09

# 33 Washington Street (WestAmerica Bank)

Contributing Building — c. 1925

This one-story stucco-sided commercial building has stepped parapets on both street faces. Between display windows are Deco style low-relief pilasters that do not extend to the cornice. APN 006-281-08

# 100 Washington Street (Hotel Petaluma)

Contributing Building — 1923

This four-story hotel has rough troweled stucco siding and a U-shape plan at upper three stories. The design is taken from the Mediterranean Revival and includes a tile roof, wide beaded eaves on carved medallions, and multi-pane casement windows in a regular and symmetrical arrangement. The primary entrance is distinguished by a massive, curved molded pediment. Other doors and windows on the first floor have

n modernized. APN 006-275-23

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Research Ling Building -- c 1968

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #26

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120 Washington Street (Mike's Glass)

Contributing Building — c. 1925

Formerly Hotel Petaluma parking garage, this one-story brick commercial building with simple stepped parapet, cornice with dentils and medallions. The storefront includes a clerestory band and recessed entrance. The adjacent large garage door is a replacement. APN 006-275-13

122-124 Washington Street (Volpi's)

Contributing Building — c. 1925

This one-story brick commercial building has bi-colored brick decorative detailing in the parapet and at side lintels. A cornice with dentils extends along both street faces. The storefront includes lavender prism glass in a clerestory band and recessed entrances with tile siding. APN 006-275-12

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APN 006-281-24		APN 006-284-32
APN 006-281-25		APN 006-284-29
APN 006-282-21		APN 006-284-10

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #27
Sonoma Co., CA

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

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The Petaluma Historic Commercial District represents the development of commerce in the city from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the Second World War. It also provides a diverse and well designed collection of commercial buildings, the architectural importance of which is unmatched in Sonoma County. Although the district has changed its appearance somewhat since 1945, it retains a high degree of architectural integrity and maintains its associations to the historic period.

Commercial activity in the downtown area began even before the founding of the town in 1852. In the half-century before that, the area passed from the control of the Petaluma Indians to that of the Sonoma Mission. It then became the subject of conflicting land grants. After the start of the Gold Rush, a few white settlers trickled in, drawn by the access that the Petaluma River provided to markets in San Francisco. By the end of 1851 the number of new inhabitants grew large enough to warrant laying out the town. A plat was drawn up in 1852, and residents began erecting woodframe buildings, both residential and commercial. By the end of the year the town had three hotels, several stores and a number of warehouses.

Petaluma and its commercial district grew rapidly in the 1850s. The town became the main shipping point for the surrounding agricultural region, which specialized in grains and dairy products. San Francisco, reached by steamship in five hours, provided a ready market for all that the area produced. Petaluma's port became one of the busiest in the state. The local population grew to about 1,500 by the end of the decade. Stores began to specialize; a bank, a newspaper office, and several fraternal halls

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #28 Sonoma Co., CA

appeared. Some new buildings were of stone or brick construction and gave the district a more substantial and permanent appearance. The town, which had grown to be the largest in Sonoma county, incorporated in 1858.

The district quickly differentiated itself from the town's other sections. Industrial activity, reflected in such structures as warehouses and processing plants, arose primarily to the east on the other side of the river. The main residential area, meanwhile, grew up to the west.

Prosperity continued for more than two decades. Petaluma's population roughly doubled between 1860 and 1880. Commercial buildings from the 1850s gave way to larger and more ornate structures. Although Petaluma organized a volunteer fire department in 1856, the threat of fire remained serious. One approach to fire-proofing was the application of cast-iron facades to brick buildings. Although iron proved unreliable as a flame-retardant, it furnished an easy way to decorate commercial structures. Cast in San Francisco, iron fronts appeared in Petaluma in the 1870s and 1880s. With their Italianate designs, they gave the downtown an appearance of classical formality. The authoritative guide to architecture in northern California has singled out the group along Western Avenue. "This row of Italianate iron fronts," it asserts, "is really unmatched in California architecture."

Business in Petaluma slowed during the 1890s as the markets for California grain diminished and the country underwent a major economic depression. Only a few new buildings went up downtown. As the national economy improved at the turn of the century, the future of commerce in Petaluma

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #29 Sonoma Co., CA

depended on a revival of local agriculture. The new "crop" turned out to be chickens. Two Petaluma men had invented the first workable incubator in 1879, but the boom in chicken hatcheries did not begin until after 1900. Poultry-raising soon dominated the Petaluma Valley. Reflecting the growing number of chicken ranchers, Petaluma's population more than doubled between 1900 and 1930.

The downtown business district grew dramatically. Over three dozen new buildings went up, many of which replaced structures from the 1860s and 1870s. Kentucky Street became a commercial thoroughfare that rivaled Petaluma Boulevard. The construction of new feed warehouses along Water Street responded to the chicken boom. The coming of the automobile led to the arrival of several service stations and auto showrooms. The new buildings were generally of brick construction and used classical detailing in a variety of styles that were popular throughout California in the period.

Petaluma remained the "Chicken Capital of the World" until the end of the Second World War. Prices for chickens and eggs, however, dropped drastically during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The city lost population, and business downtown stagnated. Only one major commercial building, a modernistic department store, was constructed there during the decade. The war boosted demand and prices, but shortages throughout the civilian economy prevented the construction of new downtown buildings.

Suburbanization limited construction downtown after the war. New housing east of the river spurred commercial building in that area. This

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #30 Sonoma Co., CA

trend intensified in 1956 when U.S. Highway 101 became a freeway and was rerouted east of downtown. Only about a dozen commercial buildings went up downtown in the 50 years after the war. A less expensive approach to entice shoppers — remodeling — also attracted local business leaders. As a result, roughly 20 structures took on a different and less ornate appearance than they had before 1946.

The district's period of significance includes the time during which the developments discussed above occurred and from which resources remain. The opening date of 1854 represents the construction of the district's earliest remaining building. The closing date, fifty years ago in 1945, marks the high point of the downtown's economic importance and the end of its domination of local commercial architecture. The district continues to function as a center of commerce and to attract some new buildings. So the date also indicates that developments of the historic period have continued to the present time but have no exceptional significance. The district reflects the period through a large collection of contributing buildings that retain their architectural integrity and were constructed between 1854 and 1945.

The district retains historic and architectural cohesiveness in several ways. First, it contains a high proportion of contributing buildings, with roughly two-thirds of the total falling in this category. Second, as a group, contributors are larger and more conspicuous than non-contributors. Further, the contributors, although constructed during a 90-year period, usually share two important characteristics. They extend to the parcel lines in the front and on the sides, and they have storefronts with recessed entrances and flanking display windows. In addition, because many non-

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #31 Sonoma Co., CA

contributors share these attributes, the district retains an overall coherence that is greater than might be expected through an analysis of its components. District boundaries are much as they were in 1945, especially in the sense that the commercial area is clearly bordered by industrial and residential sections on the east and west, respectively. Also, the streets have maintained their original uses, irregular pattern and (except for a short block of Washington) original widths. As a result, all buildings face a street rather than, for example, a mall or parking lot. Anyone visiting the district (whether as driver or pedestrian) must confront it in the same manner as visitors did 50 years ago. Finally, despite the disappearance of "big ticket" stores and the arrival of trendier uses (restaurants, upscale shops, antique stores), the district has retained its feeling of a functioning downtown.

Some aspects of the district intrude upon its historic character. A number of buildings, although they still fit downtown, have lost so much of their original detailing that they no longer convey their historic associations. A couple new buildings make no attempt to fit into the district. In addition, several contributors have undergone storefront modifications out of keeping with their original designs. These intrusions, however, do not undermine the district's architectural integrity.

The architectural importance of the district is clear when compared with commercial areas of other cities in Sonoma County. Several of the county's other business districts have been functioning for a century or more. The oldest is the Sonoma Plaza, a National Historic Landmark. It is primarily known for structures from California's Mexican period, however, and has few later buildings of architectural importance. The

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #32
Sonoma Co., CA

downtown area of Santa Rosa, which is larger than Petaluma's, has lost much of its historic character through new construction and earthquake damage. The city's Railroad Square district, now on the National Register, is limited to one era of construction. The commercial areas of Healdsburg, Sebastopol, and Cloverdale, while dating from the nineteenth century, are much smaller than the one in Petaluma and contain far fewer buildings of architectural distinction.

The Petaluma Historic Commercial District is significant historically and architecturally. It maintains its association with the city's commercial development from the 1850s to the 1940s. No other area of the city was nearly as important in commerce during the period. As a comparison with other commercial areas reveals, the district is also Sonoma County's most architecturally prominent collection of commercial buildings.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Page #33 Sonoma Co., CA

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_10 \_\_ Page \_\_34 \_\_\_

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5,	10	531880	4231690
6.	10	531940	4231540
7.	10	531710	4231440
8.	10	531470	4231480

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Additional Documentation Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Sonoma Co., CA

# **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Views of the photographs are shown on the attached photo key map.

Photographer: Petaluma Photography Club

Date of photographs: May 1993

Location of original negatives: Heritage Homes of Petaluma, 416 G Street,

Petaluma, CA 94952

Photo No. 1

6 N. Petaluma Blvd., view from east

Photo No. 2

N. Petaluma Blvd., west side 00 block (south part), view from east

Photo No. 3

313-15 B St., view from west

Photo No. 4

4th Street, east side, view from south

Photo No. 5

N. Petaluma Blvd., west side 00 block (north part), view from southeast

Photo No. 6

SW corner, N. Petaluma Blvd. and Western Ave., view from north

Photo No. 7

N. Petaluma Blvd., west side 100 block, view from southeast

Photo No. 8

N. Petaluma Blvd., east side 100 block (south part), view from south

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Additional Documentation
Petaluma Historic Commercial District

Sonoma Co., CA

Photo No. 9

N. Petaluma Blvd., west side 100 block, view from south

Photo No. 10

Washington St., south side, between N. Petaluma Blvd. and Kentucky St., view from northeast

Photo No. 11

N. Petaluma Blvd., west side 100 block, view from northwest

Photo No. 12

N. Petaluma Blvd., east side 200 block (south part), view from south

Photo No. 13

100 Washington St., view from east

Photo No. 14

SW corner, Kentucky and Washington Streets, view from north

Photo No. 15

Kentucky St., west side 100 block (north part), view from southeast

Photo No. 16

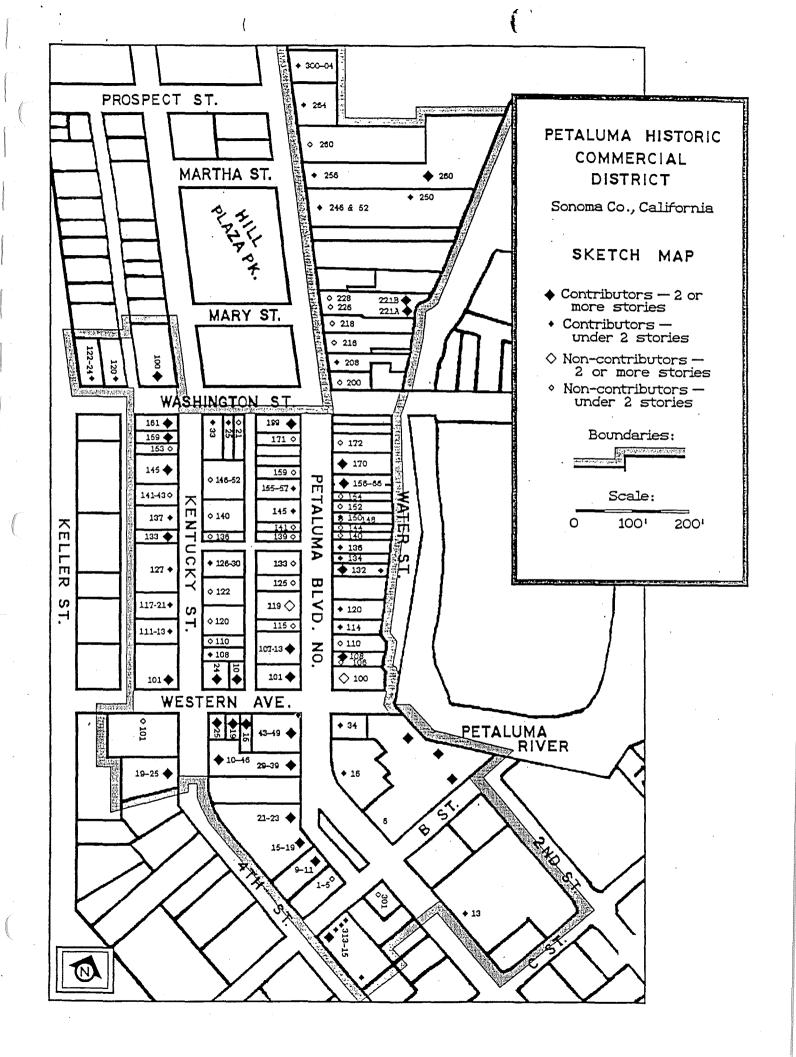
101 Kentucky St., view from southeast

Photo No. 17

SE corner, Kentucky and Western Streets, view from west

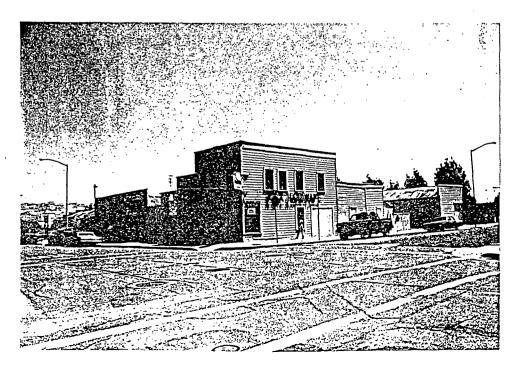
Photo 18

WCTU Fountain, SW corner, N. Petaluma Blvd. and Western Ave.





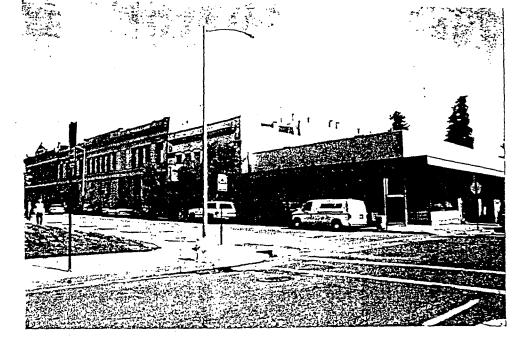


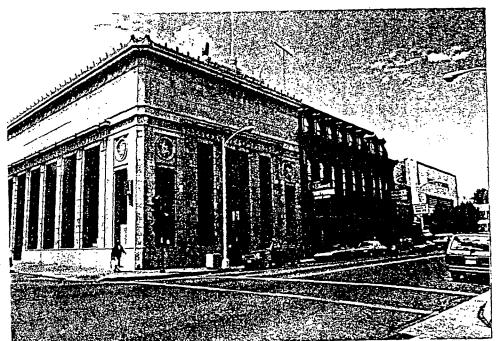


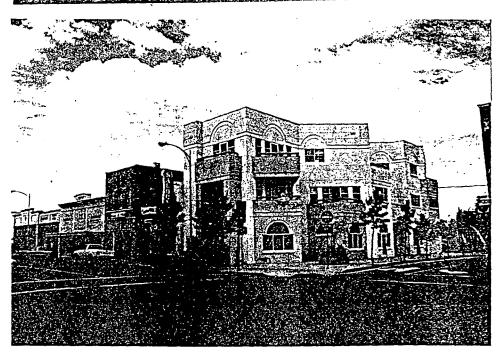










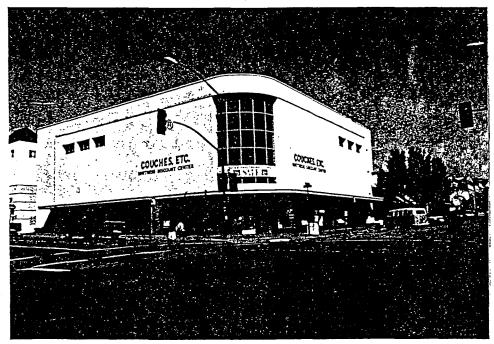


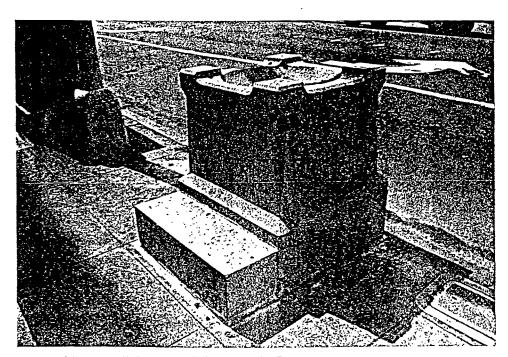












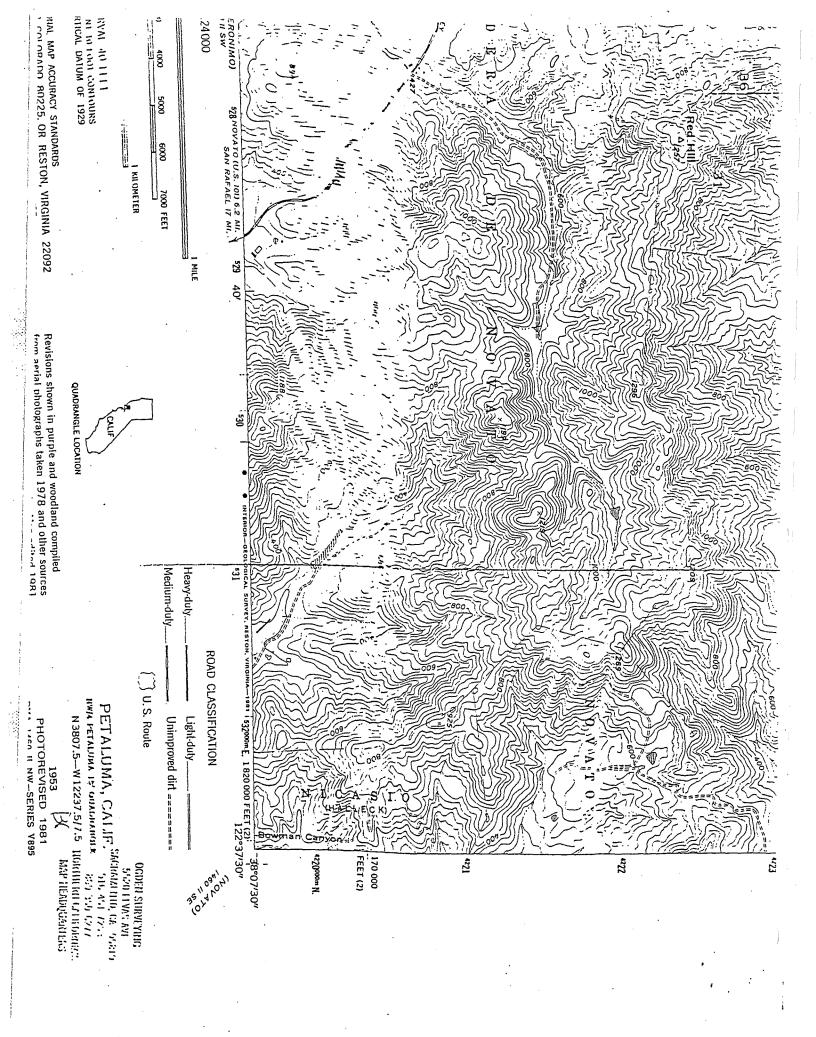
NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 8-86)	OMB No. 1024-0018
United States Department of the Interior	RECEIVED
National Park Service	NOV 0 7 1994
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACE REGISTRATION FORM	to the second
1. Name of Property	
historic name: Petaluma Historic Commerc	ial District
other name/site number: N/A	
,	
2. Location	
street & number: Petaluma Boulevard and intersec	ting streets between B and Prospect Streets
	not for publication: N/A
city/town: Petaluma	vicinity: <u>N/A</u>
state: <u>CA</u> county: <u>Sonoma</u>	code: <u>097</u> zip code: <u>94952</u>
3. Classification	
Ownership of Property: private, public-local	
Category of Property: district	
Number of Resources within Property:	
Contributing Noncontributing	
63       33 buildings         0       1 sites         0       0 structures         1       1 objects         64       35 Total	
Number of contributing resources previously listen	d in the National Register. 1 (Old Petaluma Opera House)

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Fe	deral Agency Certification		
X nomina properties in in 36 CFR P See continu	nated authority under the National Historic Presention request for determination of eligible the National Register of Historic Places and molecular 60. In my opinion, the property xmeet uation short	pility meets the documentation states the procedural and professional	andards for registering requirements set forth
State or Federal	nia Office of Historic Preservateral agency and bureau  on, the property meets does not metinuation sheet.		
	commenting or other official Date		
	al Park Service Certification		
entere Se detern Se detern remov	tify that this property is:  d in the National Register continuation sheet.  nined eligible for the National Register continuation sheet.  nined not eligible for the Natonal Register  red from the National Register		
	(explain):	Signature of Keeper	Date of Action
6. Function	on or Use		
	COMMERCE COMMERCE SOCIAL COMMERCE COMMERCE	Sub: specialty store warehouse meeting hall Sub: specialty store business	

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	
X See continuation sheet.	
Previous documentation on file (NPS):	
_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 6 _ 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 X Other— Specify Repository: Heritage Homes of Petaluma	
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property: 17.38	
UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone	ne Easting Northing
A B D	
x See continuation sheet.	
Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.  The boundary is shown as the shaded line on the accom-	panying sketch map.
Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.  The boundary includes the historic resources and their is	mmediate setting.
11. Form Prepared By	
Name/Title: <u>Donald S. Napoli</u>	
Organization:	Date: November 2, 1994
Street & Number: 1614 26th Street	Telephone: (916) 455-4541
City or Town: Sacramento	State: CA ZTP: 95816



## Corrections to National Register Nomination Form Pages 7 & 8

Information provided by Albert Hopkins, of the Petaluma Historical Museum:

- The Great Petaluma Mill located at 6 Petaluma Blvd. North was built in 1861/62, not 1854
- The Gross Building (10-46 Kentucky Street) was built in 1930 not 1915.

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