

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Abilene Commercial Historic District (Boundary Increase for the Fulwiler Building and the Horace O. Wooten Grocery Co. Warehouse)
Other name/site number: NA
Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Resources in Abilene, Texas

2. Location

Street & number: 159 Walnut Street and 101 Walnut Street
City or town: Abilene State: Texas County: Taylor
Not for publication: NA Vicinity: NA

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this (X 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 (X meets does not meet) the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: X A B X C D

Signature of certifying official / Title: Mark Wolfe, State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: 3/27/23
Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting or other official
Date
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
entered in the National Register
determined eligible for the National Register
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register
other, explain:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Abilene Commercial Historic District (Boundary Increase for 159 and 101 Walnut Street), Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

Category of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 1 (*Wooten, Horace O., Grocery Company Warehouse, NR 1992*)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: Commerce/Trade: business; Industry: manufacturing, warehouse

Current Functions: Commerce/Trade; Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements: Commercial Style

Principal Exterior Materials: Brick, Stone, Concrete

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 6 through 8)

Abilene Commercial Historic District (Boundary Increase for 159 and 101 Walnut Street), Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C (original district nomination); A, C (these properties)

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Commerce, Architecture (original); Commerce, Architecture (these properties)

Period of Significance: 1890-1939 (original nomination); 1906-1939 (Wooten Grocery and Fulwiler)

Significant Dates: Wooten:1906,1912 ; Fulwiler: 1922, 1925

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: NA

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 9 through 14)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets 15-17)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- prelim. determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. (*Fulwiler Part 1 approved 11-14-19*)
- 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 (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than 1 acre

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

1. 32.450071° -99.731541°
2. 32.450030° -99.731064°
3. 32.449800° -99.731085°
4. 32.449271° -99.731251°
5. 32.449301° -99.731625°

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary increase includes two buildings on the east side of Walnut Street between its intersection with N 2nd St and N 1st St to the north and south, respectively. Fulwiler Building: OT ABILENE TIF #1, BLOCK 5, LOT 16-17-18.
Wooten Grocery Warehouse: OT ABILENE TIF #1, BLOCK 5, LOT 12 TO 15

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes all lots and property historically associated with the buildings.

11. Form Prepared By

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Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 18-21)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 22-27)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 28-34)

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Photograph Log

Fulwiler Building and Wooten Grocery Warehouse
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographed by Ellis Mumford-Russell & William Minter
December 2020; March 2021; August 2021

The photos in the nomination accurately reflect the current condition of the nominated properties.

Photo 1

Fulwiler Building, Primary (West) Elevation. View East. December 2020.

Photo 2

Fulwiler Building, Primary (West) and South Elevation. View Northeast. March 2021.

Photo 3

Fulwiler Building, South Elevation. View Northeast. March 2021.

Photo 4

Fulwiler Building, Rear (East) Elevation. View West. March 2021.

Photo 5

Fulwiler Building, Oblique, Rear (East) and North Elevations. View Southwest. March 2021.

Photo 6

Fulwiler Building, East Elevation showing replacement brick detail and color after 1925 fire. March 2021.

Photo 7

Fulwiler Building, First Floor Ceiling Detail. March 2021.

Photo 8

Fulwiler Building, Second Floor. View Northwest. March 2021.

Photo 9

Fulwiler Building, Third Floor. View Southwest. March 2021.

Photo 10

Wooten Grocery Warehouse, West and South Elevations. View Northeast. March 2021.

Photo 11

Wooten Grocery Warehouse, South Elevation. View North. March 2021.

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Abilene Commercial Historic District (Boundary Increase for 159 and 101 Walnut Street), Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

Narrative Description and the Goal of this Amendment

The purpose of this amendment is to increase the boundary of the Abilene Commercial Historic District (NRHP 1991) to include the following buildings: the Fulwiler Building (1922) at 159 Walnut St, and the currently individually-listed Horace O. Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse (1906; NRHP 1992) at 101 Walnut St as contributing resources. These buildings are located across N. 1st Street (to the north) from the Abilene Commercial Historic District (NRHP 1991) (Maps 3 and 4). The subject buildings reflect the commercial and industrial uses noted as prevalent in the multiple property form *Historic and Architectural Resources in Abilene, Texas* (NRIS 64500625).¹

The Abilene Commercial Historic District (NRHP 1991) has a period of significance from 1881-1939 and was listed at the local level of significance under Criterion A for Commerce as an example of the impact of commerce and transportation on the city's development. It was also listed at the local level of significance under Criterion C for Architecture as a collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings that exemplify American Movements and the Modern Movement.² Additionally, the Abilene Commercial Historic District encompasses "a cohesive collection of early Twentieth Century buildings" over a seven block area, ending across N. 1st Street from this proposed extension of the district.³ The buildings at 159 and 101 Walnut Street are situated in close proximity, and are similar in style, use, and development pattern, to the contributing buildings in the Abilene Commercial Historic District. Like the subject buildings on Walnut Street, the majority of buildings in the district were built in the tradition of late Nineteenth and early Twentieth century American Movements and the Modern Movement. And, like the nominated Walnut Street buildings, most buildings in the current Historic District originally functioned as commercial and/or industrial entities. The district is considered a remarkably intact historic area of downtown that includes a high concentration of commercial buildings. It is strongly associated with the city's early commercial development that reflects Abilene's dominance as a regional trade center.⁴

The Fulwiler Building and Horace O. Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse (hereafter abbreviated to Wooten Grocery Warehouse) reflect the styles exhibited in the Abilene Commercial Historic District. The Fulwiler Building, three stories tall, is an example of a two-part commercial block with the primary (west) elevation divided into three symmetrical bays. It is similar to another building constructed by William Fulwiler at 1125 N. 2nd Street (ca. 1919, NRHP Abilene Commercial Historic District 1991). The Wooten Grocery Warehouse at 101 Walnut (NRHP 1992) is a one-story brick building with regular fenestration along the two street facing elevations and its primary entrance situated at the southwest corner.

Location and Setting

The buildings are located at 101 and 159 Walnut Street in downtown Abilene, Texas, one block north of the Texas and Pacific Railroad (now Union Pacific System) tracks. Walnut Street is a historically important commercial street that leads north into downtown and is lined with local businesses housed in small and medium sized commercial buildings. The Abilene Commercial Historic District (NRHP 1991) is located two blocks to the west and a portion of the district is across N. 1st Street from the buildings. The U.S. Post Office and Federal Courthouse (NRHP 1992) is located two blocks northwest of the building and historic one- and two-part commercial blocks of various heights, surface parking lots and garages, and modern infill of 1970s and 1980s commercial construction characterize the area. The Horace Wooten

¹ David Moore, Ed Galloway and Ralph Newlan. *Historic and Architectural Resources in Abilene, Texas*, Multiple Property Submission Registration Form, National Register NRIS 64500625. <https://atlas.thc.texas.gov/NR/pdfs/64500625/64500625.pdf>.

² *Abilene Commercial Historic District, Abilene, Taylor County, Texas*, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. NRIS 91001811.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "Historic and Architectural Resources in Abilene, Taylor County Texas," 1991.

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Grocery Company Warehouse at 101 Walnut Street, individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP 1992), is included in the proposed extension of the Abilene Commercial Historic District.

The subject buildings are bounded by North First Street on the south, Walnut Street on the west, an alley to the east and the south lot line for 173 Walnut on the north. The buildings are flanked by concrete sidewalks at the south and west elevations. A concrete alley with power poles is at the east elevation and the north boundary is an asphalt and concrete parking lot. The buildings are built to the lot lines with concrete sidewalks and there are street trees along the west and south elevations. The building at 159 Walnut is a three-story masonry building with cast stone ornamentation, three bays and three entrances. The building located at 101 Walnut is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NR 1992) and is a one-story brick building with a flat roof.

Building Descriptions

Fulwiler Building, 159 Walnut

The 3-story Fulwiler Building is an example of the Chicago Commercial style with the primary (west) elevation divided into three symmetrical bays. It is similar to another building constructed by William Fulwiler located at 1125 N. 2nd Street and may be architect-designed (ca. 1919, *Abilene Commercial Historic District 1991*, Figures 1-3; 5). The exterior of the building is brick accented by cast stone and a cast stone parapet cap lining a flat roof. On the primary elevation, Each of the three bays contains a double entrance door and display glass at the first floor. Multi-pane transom windows top the display windows and entrances. Dividing the first and upper floors is a cast stone band. Each bay is framed by pilasters that have a cast stone cap that engages with the cast stone band between the first and second stories. The upper stories have four windows for each bay and under each set of windows is a cast stone sill with a decorative motif. Between each window is a graduated brick design and between each bay is a plain cast stone and brick emblem. Above the second-floor windows is another simple cast stone band that delineates the floors. The third floor was heavily damaged by a 1925 fire and was rebuilt with a slightly different color brick (Photo 6). The third-floor windows have the same cast stone sill and decorative motif and the graduated brick design between the bays. However, the third floor does not have the plain cast stone and brick emblem. A cast stone parapet with a small diamond detail tops the building. The original windows on the west elevation were wood one-over-one; these have been replaced. On the north, east, and south elevations, metal multi-light windows punctuate the building, and the cast concrete bands between the floors wrap the building. An elevator tower extends above the roofline at the southeast corner of the building. A small concrete loading dock is also located at this corner. Two loading doors, and a metal fire escape are located on the east elevation of the building.

Interior

The interior of the building exhibits the industrial use of the building as a manufacturing facility. The first floor was originally divided into three spaces with a tile wall separating each area. It, like the upper stories, now consists of one large open space punctuated by concrete columns. The first floor retains some historic finishes including sections of plaster on walls and pressed tin on the ceiling; the upper floors have exposed brick walls and wood beam ceilings. All stories retain hardwood floors. The freight elevator is in the southeast corner of the building and a set of stairs to the upper floors is located at the northwest corner. On the upper floors, various pipes are suspended from the ceiling and are adjacent to the columns (Photographs 8-9).

Alterations

The building has received minor alterations to the exterior. A 1925 fire resulted in brick replacement (Photo 6). Outside of the Period of Significance, the main changes have been to the entrances, storefront, and windows on the primary

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elevation. The storefront display and entrance on the primary (west) elevation has been altered and a new first floor display and entrance configuration has been installed. The building originally had transom windows which are covered over beneath a shingle and wood awning. Historically, the first floor had three bays of large display windows with a double entrance door on the southern end of the west elevation and two single doors in the north and central bays of large display windows on this elevation. The building retains the original openings for the windows, however the original one-over-one wood windows on the primary elevation were replaced with aluminum windows. The interior is relatively intact with the spaces retaining their original configuration and materials.

Horace O. Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse 101 Walnut Street (NRHP 1992)

Occupying a corner lot at the intersection of Walnut and North First street, the Horace Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse is a one-story load masonry commercial building with a concealed flat roof. The foundation and exterior walls are brick. The building has a straightforward design with restrained ornamentation. The primary entrance is located at the southwest corner of the building and is topped by a historic canopy with a clay tile roof. The architecture of the Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse is further detailed in the individual listing (NRHP 1992).

Each of the contributing buildings has had some modifications, mainly the replacement of windows and displays, but overall, they display a high degree of integrity. The Fulwiler Building retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, as it has not been moved and is still surrounded by commercial buildings conveying the historic commercial and industrial character of downtown Abilene and the Abilene Commercial Historic District (NRHP 1991). The Fulwiler Building also retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship through the retention of its original commercial block form and massing, as well as the retention of brick, cast stone, and historic window openings on the exterior and the retention of interior configuration and finishes.

The Wooten Grocery Warehouse similarly retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, as it has not been moved and is still surrounded by commercial buildings conveying the historic commercial and industrial character of downtown Abilene and the Abilene Commercial Historic District (NRHP 1991). It retains integrity of design, workmanship, and materials through its original form and massing, masonry walls, and historic awning and maintains integrity with the original openings and materials evident. The architectural integrity of the Wooten Grocery Warehouse is further explored in its individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places.⁵

The two buildings each maintain a high degree of integrity: they are in their original location and setting in downtown Abilene; their design, materials and workmanship are still evident on the exterior and interior of the buildings; and the feeling and association of the buildings to their history as retail/commercial and industrial structures is still evident.

⁵ David Moore, "Horace O. Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse, Abilene, Taylor County, Texas National Register of Historic Places Registration Form", 1992, NRIS 92000238.

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Statement of Significance

The proposed boundary increase of the Abilene Commercial Historic District includes two buildings: the Fulwiler Building and the Horace O. Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse. Both are associated with the growth of downtown and the city as a whole. The buildings are eligible at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Commerce. Abilene was a regional business center for northwest Texas and Taylor County and these buildings housed commercial enterprises that were important in the northwest region of Texas. Additionally, these buildings are associated with local businessmen Horace Wooten and William J. Fulwiler, who contributed to the commercial development of the city. William J. Fulwiler and Horace Wooten were associated with the development of several buildings in downtown Abilene including ones in the Abilene Commercial Historic District. The Horace O. Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse (henceforth referred to as Wooten Grocery Warehouse) has already been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP 1992). The buildings are also significant under Criterion C for Architecture, with the Fulwiler as a local example of early Twentieth Century commercial buildings influenced by the Chicago School of Architecture; and with the Wooten Grocery Warehouse as a well-crafted local example of warehouse architecture.⁶

The boundary justification for the addition of these buildings is that they are located adjacent to the current historic district and are buildings of similar age, use, and building form to the already contributing buildings. The Fulwiler Building and Wooten Grocery Warehouse retain sufficient integrity for inclusion in the existing District. Both buildings are excellent examples of early Twentieth century commercial architecture and are strongly associated with the city's early commercial development. As such, they reflect Abilene's dominance as a regional trade center. The building north of the Fulwiler Building at 173 Walnut Street occupies the rest of the block, it has been altered and is not included in this nomination. Other parcels of land between North 1st and North 2nd Streets on the west side of Walnut Street are not included because they are vacant and/or parking lots.

Historic Context: Twentieth Century Commercial Development in Downtown Abilene⁷

At the turn of the Twentieth century, Abilene was a regional transportation hub for northwest Texas, and economic activity spurred by the railroad laid the foundation for the commercial development of downtown. The Texas and Pacific Railroad, completed in 1881, bisected the central business district and delivered a steady flow of people and goods to and from the city. By 1900, the north side prevailed as the city's primary retail and commercial center with one- and two-story brick buildings that reflected Abilene's growing economy. Commerce, education, light manufacturing, and service industries attracted new residents. The population rose from 3,194 in 1890 to 10,274 in 1920. The buildings in the Abilene Commercial Historic District, like the Windsor Hotel (1890), as well as the subject Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse (1906, NR 1992), are representative of the city's first wave of growth.

With the discovery of oil in neighboring counties, Abilene experienced rapid growth and development in the 1920s that transformed the city skyline. Oil revenues, the city's strategic location, and its efficient transportation system attracted more people and new businesses to Abilene. Construction of the Bankhead Highway also expanded trade capabilities and the local tourism industry. In a ten-year period, the population increased 125% from 10,274 in 1920 to 23,175 in 1930. Leading businessmen including William Fulwiler and Horace O. Wooten, as well as J.M. Radford, George L. Paxton, and W.E. Swenson, capitalized on the economic boom in the mid-1920s as they embarked on an aggressive building campaign that resulted in new "high rise" buildings and modernized storefronts aimed to attract retail and oil industry companies to downtown Abilene. In 1926, the city recorded record-setting figures in local buildings with more than four million dollars spent in new construction. This building boom continued until 1929.

⁶ John C. Poppeliers and S. Allen Chambers, Jr, *What Style Is It?* Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2003, pp. 100-105.

⁷ Adapted from *Abilene Commercial Historic District*, 8-1 through 8-3; *Abilene Commercial Historic District*, 7-2; *Historic and Architectural Resources in Abilene*, Texas, E-1 through E-19 (Railroads).

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By 1930, Abilene's business district reflected the city's dominance as a regional trade center that resulted from its established rail transportation system, modern highway development, and healthy oil revenues. A pattern of commercial development emerged in the mid-1920s whereby local businessmen capitalized on fiscal optimism by financing new building construction that attracted state and national companies, like chain retailers, to West Texas. Prominent local architects designed handsome multi-story hotels, theaters, retail stores, and office buildings that transformed the city skyline. Abilene businessman and booster J.M. Radford, alone, erected forty commercial buildings in the city.⁸

Although the Great Depression stifled Abilene's commercial development in the early 1930s, the city held its position as the region's largest and most important commercial center. Abilene's strong economy initially staved off the effects of the Great Depression until 1932, the height of the fiscal crisis. In Texas, California, and Oklahoma, overproduction tanked the price of oil, and widespread drought stunted the agricultural economy. Nationwide economic reverses stifled commercial development in Abilene, which was dependent on West Texas agriculture and oil industries. Most contributing buildings in Abilene Commercial Historic District reflect the mid-1920s era of building activity, but the Abilene Reporter-News noted the city's "imposing skyline" continued to develop, albeit slowly, during the Great Depression.⁹ A steady decline in annual commercial construction began in 1929 after the national market collapse, and federal relief programs funded most new construction in the early 1930s. The city showed record lows in building figures for 1933.¹⁰ The U.S. Post Office and Federal Building (1935) and secondary Wooten Building location (1929) were among the few contributing resources in the Abilene Commercial Historic District built in the Depression era.

A tremendous boost to Abilene came in 1940 with the establishment of Camp Barkeley that brought 60,000 soldiers to the military base eight miles from town. It reinvigorated the local economy which grew as businesses catered to stationed troops, their families and army contractors. Dyess Air Force Base, built in 1956, was another principal factor in Abilene's Post-War boom as the local population swelled to more than 90,000 by 1960. However, commercial development following suburban growth through the 1970s and 1980s led to long-time businesses in downtown Abilene, either closing or abandoning their locations in the central business district.

Criterion A: Commerce

The subject buildings are associated with the commercial development of the city of Abilene. They represent the commercial growth of downtown Abilene during the 1920s and 1930s. The Wooten Grocery Warehouse, located at 101 Walnut St and constructed in 1906, is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Commerce for its association with one of Abilene's best known and most important commercial enterprises, the Horace O. Wooten Grocery Company.¹¹ Wooten's Grocery Company, along with two other wholesale grocery companies, helped to make Abilene an important wholesale and distribution center for West Texas. The Fulwiler Building at 159 Walnut was constructed in 1922 by a local businessman and developer, the eponymous W.J. Fulwiler. It housed a moving or transfer and storage company along with Swift Company, a meat distributor, and T.S. Langford and Sons Clothing Manufacturing. Both subject buildings are adjacent to the existing northern boundary of the Abilene Commercial Historic District (NRHP 1991). The buildings are in close proximity to the Paramount Theater, Wooten Hotel, O'Kelley Office Furniture, the Mims Building, and the Alexander Building, all contributing resources in the Abilene Commercial Historic District. The Period of Significance for the District is from 1890 to 1939.

⁸ "Radford Visioned a City Here, 40 Buildings Proof of Faith," *Abilene Reporter-News*, May 24, 1931.

⁹ "In Ten Years City of Abilene Builds Imposing Skyline," *Abilene Morning Reporter-News*, November 1, 1936.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ David Moore. "Horace O. Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse, Abilene, Taylor County, Texas National Register of Historic Places Registration Form," 1992, NRIS 92000238.

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According to the National Register nomination, the Abilene Commercial District includes a cohesive collection of early Twentieth century commercial buildings and encompasses approximately seven blocks in Abilene's downtown. The majority of buildings were built in the tradition of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth century American Movement and Modern Movement. Most of the buildings originally functioned as commercial entities. The District is considered a remarkably intact historic area of downtown that includes a high concentration of commercial buildings. The District reflects Abilene's dominance as a regional trade center based upon rail transportation and includes several of the city's most important commercial buildings.¹² As chronicled in these reports, the contributing buildings are excellent examples of early Twentieth century commercial architecture and are strongly associated with the city's early commercial development that reflects Abilene's dominance as a regional trade center. The Fulwiler Building and the Wooten Grocery Warehouse likewise embody this association with commercial development and Abilene's status as a major hub of regional trade.

Fulwiler Building at 159 Walnut St (1922)

William J. Fulwiler (1884-1961)

The Fulwiler Building was constructed by and named for William J. Fulwiler, a prominent businessman and developer in Abilene. He was born in Abilene to a family who were early settlers from Virginia who came to Texas in 1879 settled in Buffalo Gap. His father purchased original town lots in Abilene at the sale on March 15, 1881.¹³ Fulwiler began his career after he graduated from high school, forgoing a college education. He worked for an ice, light, and water company in Abilene as a bookkeeper. At twenty-four he started his first business as a wholesaler and retailer of meters, transformers, and other electrical equipment.¹⁴ His early career included owning a small power plant in Sweetwater, Texas. In 1911, he sold the power station and electrical company and purchased a Ford Motor Company franchise in Abilene.

In 1923, Fulwiler started the lucrative venture of handling finances for automobile sales. He sold the Ford franchise in 1934 but maintained ownership of Ford dealerships in Anson and Merkel, Texas; and Ventura, California, as well as an interest in Hughes Motor Company. Fulwiler became president of Security Investments which handled a large volume of automobile loans. He later became president of Abilene Life Insurance where he had previously served as a director for several years. In addition to the subject building at 159 Walnut St, Fulwiler also developed several buildings in downtown Abilene, including the dealership building on Chestnut Street, a building at 4th and Walnut Street (still extant), and the Morris building on N. 2nd Street. Fulwiler served as the president of the Chamber of Commerce and was a director of Citizens National Bank. He often worked with other noted citizens like H.O. Wooten to better Abilene.¹⁵ Fulwiler raised \$200,000 to found McMurray College in 1923, and when the college faced closure during the Great Depression, Fulwiler and H.O. Wooten donated money to keep it open. Fulwiler served on the Board of Trustees for the college from 1923 to 1956. After World War II, the Mayor asked Fulwiler to chair a committee to study Abilene's post-war needs.¹⁶

¹² David Moore, Ed Galloway and Ralph Newlan. "Historic and Architectural Resources in Abilene, Taylor County Texas National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form," 1991.

¹³ "Pioneer Abilene Businessman Dies," *Abilene Reporter News*, January 8, 1961, pp.1,12.

¹⁴ "Business Career of W.J. Fulwiler, President of Security Investments, Remarkable," *Abilene Reporter*, December 18, 1938, p.10.

¹⁵ "Pioneer Abilene Businessman Dies," *Abilene Reporter News*, January 8, 1961, pp.1,12. "Business Career of W.J. Fulwiler, President of Security Investment Firm, Remarkable," *Abilene Morning News*, December 18, 1938, p.10; "W.J. Fulwiler, Director of Abilene Life Insurance, from Its Founding 26 Years Ago, Is New President of Company," *Abilene Reporter News*, December 29, 1945, p.13; Advertisement "Citizens National Bank," *Abilene Daily Reporter*, September 18, 1921, p.15.

¹⁶ "Pioneer Abilene Businessman Dies," *Abilene Reporter News*, January 8, 1961, pp.1,12.

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Fulwiler purchased the lots for 159 Walnut in 1921 from Henry Sayles and, subsequently, purchased the lots for the neighboring building at 173 Walnut Street the next year.¹⁷ He initially was going to erect a one story building for tractors and implements at 159 Walnut Street but soon changed to a larger building.¹⁸ The building ended up being a three-story structure measuring 75 feet by 120 feet and costing \$30,000 to construct. He leased 159 Walnut to a variety of companies over the years including Swift Meat Company, Armour Meat Company, and Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company on the first floor; and T.S. Langford and Sons Garment Company, Abilene Shade and Awning, Fairy Form Lingerie, and Lemon and Sheperd Wholesale Confectioners Company on the upper floors. Fulwiler often used the building to house inventory for his various businesses; he was storing Ford cars in the building when a fire broke out in July of 1925, causing extensive damage to the building. A portion of the north wall collapsed, and the interior was badly damaged. It took all of the Abilene fire fighters and several volunteers to quell the fire.¹⁹ The building was rebuilt as can be seen by the brick type visible on the third floor.

Long-time lessors included the T.S. Lankford and Sons Company. They were a clothing manufacturer that had been in Abilene from 1926 to 1974; they also owned Fairy Form Lingerie. The Lankford Company employed 80 people and had 35 machines.²⁰ The company was one of four clothing manufacturers in Abilene. They made uniforms, overalls, coats, jackets and children's clothes that were sold across the country.²¹ The Fulwiler family owned the building until 1974.²²

Wooten Grocery Warehouse 101 Walnut (NRHP 1992)²³

Horace O. Wooten

The 1906 Horace O. Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse was constructed by and named for Horace O. Wooten, a prominent businessman in Abilene. Wooten, a resident of Taylor County before Abilene was established, originally was involved in the grain business but felt he could profit more as a wholesale grocer. Wooten recognized Abilene's great potential as a distribution center in the newly settled area of West Texas and he opened his own business on October 1, 1898, in a small building in the 100 block of Cypress. By 1906 the company had expanded so rapidly that Wooten erected the subject building, a sprawling brick building which eventually became the headquarters for his company, operating 14 branch offices in West Texas.

Most local warehouses, such as this one, were built in a period spanning Abilene's rise to significance as a wholesale center, from the 1900s to the 1930s. The majority stand in the downtown's eastern section. This warehouse is simple in form as its historic function would indicate, but exhibits decorative elements. The crowning element of this building is the patterned brickwork and detailing. A fire in 1912 gutted the interior of the building, but it was rebuilt and reopened in December of that same year. The successful and profitable operation of the Wooten Grocery Company enabled its founder to become one of Abilene's wealthiest and most influential men.

The firm occupied the building until the late 1950s.

¹⁷ "Real Estate Transfers," *Abilene Daily Reporter*, April 11, 1921, p. 3; "Three Lots Sell Here for \$16,000," *Abilene Daily Reporter*, May 17, 1922, p. 9. The article notes that Fulwiler purchased the lots but was not going to build on them.

¹⁸ "Fulwiler to Erect Big Brick Business House," *Abilene Reporter News*, April 2, 1922, p.11. "Three Lots Sell Here for \$16,000," *Abilene Daily Reporter*, May 17, 1922, p. 9. This article notes that the lots are adjacent to the new building Fulwiler is constructing.

¹⁹ "Three Story Building on Walnut Burned with Heavy Loss," *Abilene Daily Reporter*, July 10, 1925, pp. 1,3.

²⁰ "Pioneer Manufacturer at 67 Lankford Enters "New Lin,e" *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 3, 1929, p.31.

²¹ "Clothing Made Here Are Used Across the Nation," *Abilene Daily Reporter*, October 2, 1938, p.60.

²² "Lankford Building Sale Reported," *Abilene Reporter News*, April 4, 1974, p.87.

²³ The following is excerpted from: David Moore. "Horace O. Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse, Abilene, Taylor County, Texas National Register Nomination Form," 1992, NRIS 92000238.

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Criterion C: Architecture

The buildings are eligible under Criterion C for Architecture as examples of early Twentieth Century commercial structures. The Fulwiler building is an example of a commercial design influenced by the Early Twentieth Century American Movements: Commercial Style. The building's primary facade exhibits the characteristics of the Chicago Commercial style with restrained cast stone ornamentation. The Wooten Grocery Warehouse is a good example of warehouses in this time period.

Fulwiler Building 159 Walnut

The building is eligible under Criterion C for Architecture as an example of early Twentieth Century American Movements Commercial Style structure. While the architect for the building is unknown, Fulwiler did hire local architect David Castle for other projects.²⁴ Additionally, this building is remarkably similar to the Fulwiler Motor Building, also constructed by William Fulwiler, at 1125 N. 2nd, in the Abilene Commercial Historic District (NRHP 1991, Figures 1-3; 5), although the architect for that building is not known.

The building's primary facade exhibits the characteristics of the Commercial style with restrained cast stone ornamentation. It should be noted that the building resembles Fulwiler's Motor Company building at 1125 N. 2nd Street; the form and detailing are similar. Fulwiler used David Castle as the architect on the Electric Company building and for a gas station in Santa Fe, New Mexico. However, no evidence has been found that Castle designed the subject building.²⁵ The Fulwiler Building is similar to many of the commercial buildings in the Abilene Commercial Historic District (NRHP 1991); the buildings in the district range in size from one- to seven-stories, but most are two- and three-stories in height. Other architectural characteristics of the district's contributing resources include masonry construction; modest stylistic influences (Prairie School, Art Deco, Classical Revival) shown in decorative brick work, enriched parapets, and cornices; buildings that face east or west on primary north-south streets; and buildings with two-part commercial block composition.²⁶

The Fulwiler Building's commercial function is evident in its composition. The two-part commercial block is the most common composition for commercial buildings constructed from 1850-1950. According to Richard Longstreth in *Buildings of Main Street*, these buildings were typically two to four stories in height and separated into two distinct zones by a horizontal division on the exterior.²⁷ The exterior separation of the two zones generally reflected use on the interior. The lower floor, at street-level, fenestrated by large storefront windows, indicated public and commercial uses. Upper levels of two-part commercial blocks typically contained more private spaces, such as offices, storage, banquet halls, or hotel rooms. In the case of this building, the floors are divided by decorative cast stone bands between the first and second floors and the cast stone band above the second-floor windows. A differentiation is also shown by a cast stone band above the third-floor windows. These floors were used for light commercial manufacturing. The first floor primary elevation has three bays with wide display windows for the display areas. Transom windows provide additional light and a design feature for the building. On the second and third floors, the three bays are divided by pilasters and have four one-over-one windows. The cast stone elements are simple Prairie style embellishments. The south, east, and north elevations also have windows in a repeating pattern, denoting the need for light and ventilation for the factory uses in the building. In 1925, a fire started in the building which damaged the third floor, causing the upper portion to collapse. The third floor and north wall were rebuilt. (Photograph 10)

²⁴ David S. Castle Drawings, Fulwiler Electric Company <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph978404/>.

²⁵ David S. Castle Drawings, Fulwiler Electric Company <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph978404/>.

²⁶ National Register of Historic Places, Abilene Commercial Historic District, 8-1 through 8-3; Abilene Commercial Historic District, 7-2; Historic and Architectural Resources in Abilene, Texas, E-1 through E-19 (Railroads).

²⁷ Richard Longstreth, *Buildings of Main Street*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000, p. 24.

Abilene Commercial Historic District (Boundary Increase for 159 and 101 Walnut Street), Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

The Fulwiler Building retains a high degree of integrity, located at the original site and setting in downtown. The design, materials and workmanship are still evident on the building with the window and door pattern, cast stone ornamentation and original brick. The association and feeling of the building as a commercial space is evident by the large display windows, repeating window patterns on the secondary elevations and open interior space. It is built in the same tradition of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth century American Movements and Modern Movement as those in the Abilene Commercial District. The commercial and industrial function of the building with commercial and manufacturing spaces is also similar to those in the Abilene Commercial National Register Historic District which reflects Abilene's dominance as a regional trade center.

Wooten Grocery Warehouse 101 Walnut

The Horace O. Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse is a 1-story load bearing masonry commercial building with a concealed flat roof. The building exhibits only slight stylistic detailing. The foundation and exterior walls are brick. Occupying a corner lot at the intersection of Walnut and North First street in Abilene's central business district, the building retains much of its integrity.

On the south and west facades, window openings at the basement level are flat arched, and are shielded by ornate iron grillwork. Denticulated brick string courses extend across the south elevation and continue to the southwest corner to the primary, single door entrance. A continuous, corbeled brick cornice with a brick dentil course highlights these facades. Awnings cover the windows. A brick parapet on the southwest facade, capped by a brick coping, obscures the building's flat roof. A wood canopy, supported by metal poles, shades the concrete loading dock on the west elevation. Openings on this elevation have been expanded by the placement of a series of segmental arched clerestory windows. Modifications of door and window dressing have altered the appearance of the building.

Although the Wooten Grocery Warehouse has modified windows, the building still retains a high degree of integrity and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. The subsequent rehabilitation of the building has corrected some of the issues.

Conclusion

These buildings were previously not included in the original National Register nomination; however, they are similar in style and use to the buildings which populate the Abilene Commercial Historic District. The Wooten Grocery Warehouse at 101 Walnut St was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1992, one year after the historic district. The Fulwiler Building at 159 Walnut St is similar in style to the Fulwiler Motor Company Building at 1125 N. 2nd, a handsome Commercial Style building that is a contributing resource in the Abilene Commercial Historic District. These buildings complement those in the historic district, and both buildings were used for commercial / industrial purposes. The Fulwiler Building, constructed by prominent local businessman William Fulwiler, housed light manufacturing including the Lankford Clothing Company, a storage company, Swift, and Armour. The Wooten Grocery Warehouse, individually listed, was constructed by Horace Wooten who was also a prominent local businessman. For these reasons, the buildings are nominated (through a boundary increase) under Criterion A in the area of Commerce and under Criterion C for Architecture, both at the local level of significance. They are nominated as contributing buildings to the Abilene Commercial Historic District with a Period of Significance that spans from 1906, the year of construction for the Wooten Grocery Warehouse, to 1939, the end date of the district's Period of Significance on record. Due to their retention of architectural integrity and similarity to other contributing resources in appearance and function, the Fulwiler Building and Horace O. Wooten Grocery Company Warehouse are worthy of inclusion in the Abilene Commercial Historic District.

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— "Third Year in Abilene Finds Firm Growing." April 15, 1928, pp. 13; 25.

— "Grand Opening." April 15, 1928, p. 14.

— Advertisement. April 15, 1928, pp. 16-18.

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— “In Ten Years City of Abilene Builds Imposing Skyline,” November 1, 1936.

— “Abilene Among Big Ten Texas Cities,” April 15, p.13.

— “New Fulwiler Building on Walnut Street,” September 24, 1922, p. 49.

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— “Radford Visioned a City Here, 40 Buildings Proof of Faith,” May 24, 1931.

— “Business Career of W.J. Fulwiler, President of Security Investments, Remarkable.” *Abilene Reporter*, December 18, 1938, p.10.

— “Third Year in Abilene Finds Firm Growing,” April 15, p.13

— “Advertisements,” April 15, 1928, pp.16-17

— “Pioneer Abilene Businessman Dies,” January 8, 1961, pp.1,12

— “Business Career of W.J. Fulwiler, President of Security Investment Firm, Remarkable,” December 18, 1938, p.10

— “W.J. Fulwiler, Director of Abilene Life Insurance, from Its Founding 26 Years Ago, Is New President of Company.” December 29, 1945, p.13.

— Advertisement “Citizens National Bank.” *Abilene Daily Reporter*, September 18, 1921, p.15.

— “Pioneer Abilene Businessman Dies,” January 8, 1961, pp.1, 12

— “Radford Visioned a City Here, 40 Buildings Proof of Faith,” May 24, 1931.

— “In Ten Years City of Abilene Builds Imposing Skyline,” November 1, 1936.

— “Real Estate Transfers,” April 11, 1921, p. 3.

— “Three Lots Sell Here for \$16,000,” May 17, 1922, p. 9.

— “Fulwiler to Erect Big Brick Business House,” April 2, 1922, p.11.

— “Three Story Building on Walnut Burned with Heavy Loss,” July 10, 1925, pp. 1,3.

— “Pioneer Manufacturer at 67 Lankford Enters “New Line,” March 3, 1929, p.31

— “Clothing Made Here Are Used Across the Nation,” October 2, 1938, p.60

— “Lankford Building Sale Reported,” April 4, 1974, p.87

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- “J.M. Radford, 72, Wholesale Grocer is Dead in Abilene,” July 7, 1933.
- “Abilene Names Chamber Officials,” March 31, 1922.
- “State’s Wards to Eat Fort Worth Product,” July 5, 1905.
- “Wholesale Grocers to Discuss “Chains,” February 14, 1930.
- “Secretaries Plan Greater State Development Campaign,” November 12, 1913.
- “Issues an Injunction Against C and A,” March 25, 1910.
- “TC Directors Accept Allen’s Resignation,” April 10, 1912
- “Shallow Pool is Extended North,” May 19, 1921.

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Section 10: Geographical Data

Location Map (Google Earth, accessed June 2, 2022)

Nominated property in yellow; original NR district to the south in blue.



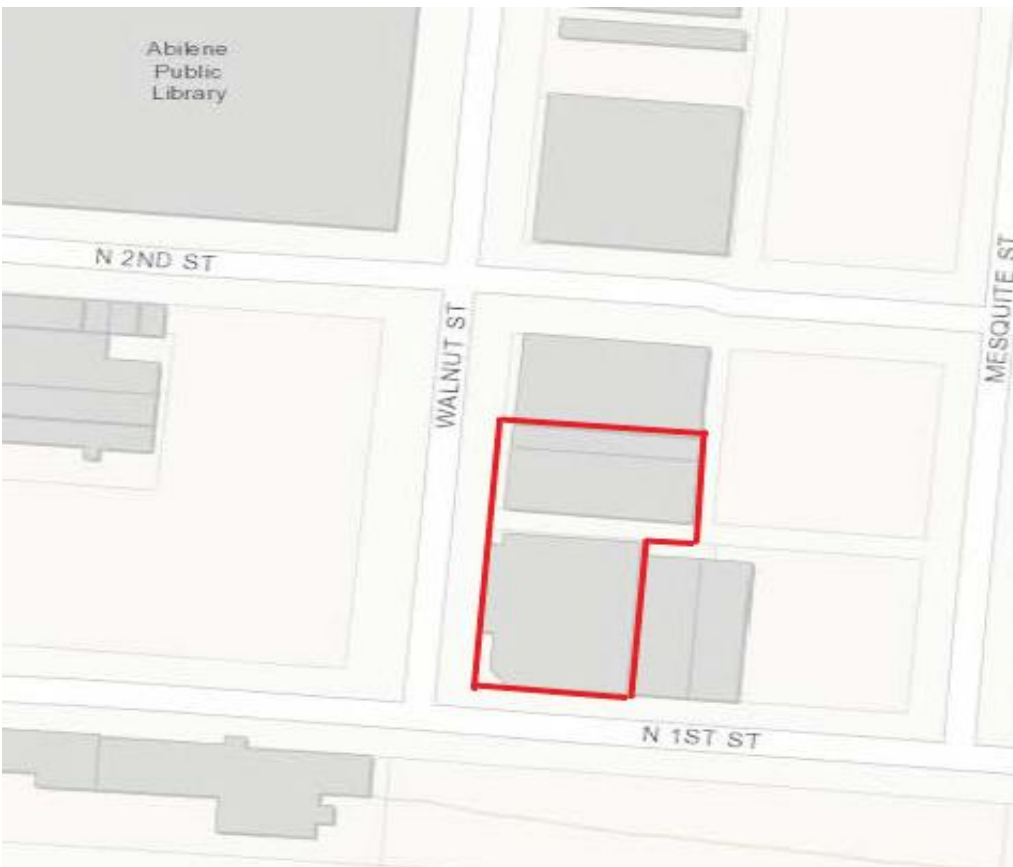
Abilene Commercial Historic District (Boundary Increase for 159 and 101 Walnut Street), Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

Appendix
Maps

Map 1. Taylor County, Texas is indicated in red on the map

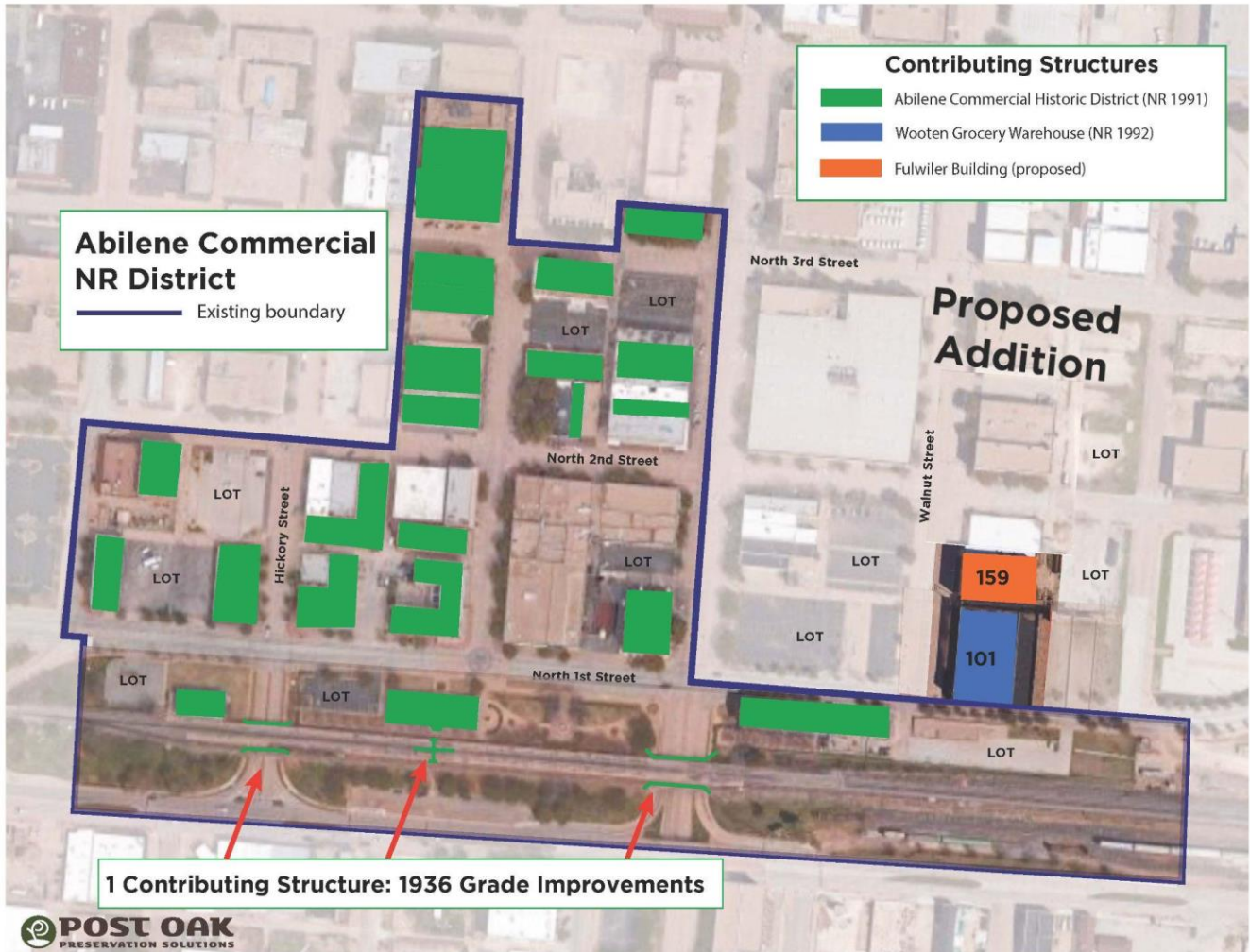


Map 2. Buildings outlined in red. Taylor County Appraisal District, Accessed February 8, 2022.



Abilene Commercial Historic District (Boundary Increase for 159 and 101 Walnut Street), Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

Map 3. Map of 101 Walnut (blue) and 159 Walnut (red) and adjacent National Register Historic District (blue). Google Maps, Accessed August 23, 2021.



Abilene Commercial Historic District (Boundary Increase for 159 and 101 Walnut Street), Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

Map 4. Detail Map of 101 Walnut (blue) and 159 Walnut (red) and adjacent National Register Historic District (blue). Google Maps, Accessed August 23, 2021.



Detail of Proposed Walnut Street Extension of Abilene Commercial District



Existing Boundary
Proposed Extension

Abilene Commercial Historic District (Boundary Increase for 159 and 101 Walnut Street), Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

Historic Photographs and Historic Maps

Fig. 1. Fulwiler Building, 159 Walnut, Abilene Morning Reporter, September 24, 1922, p.49

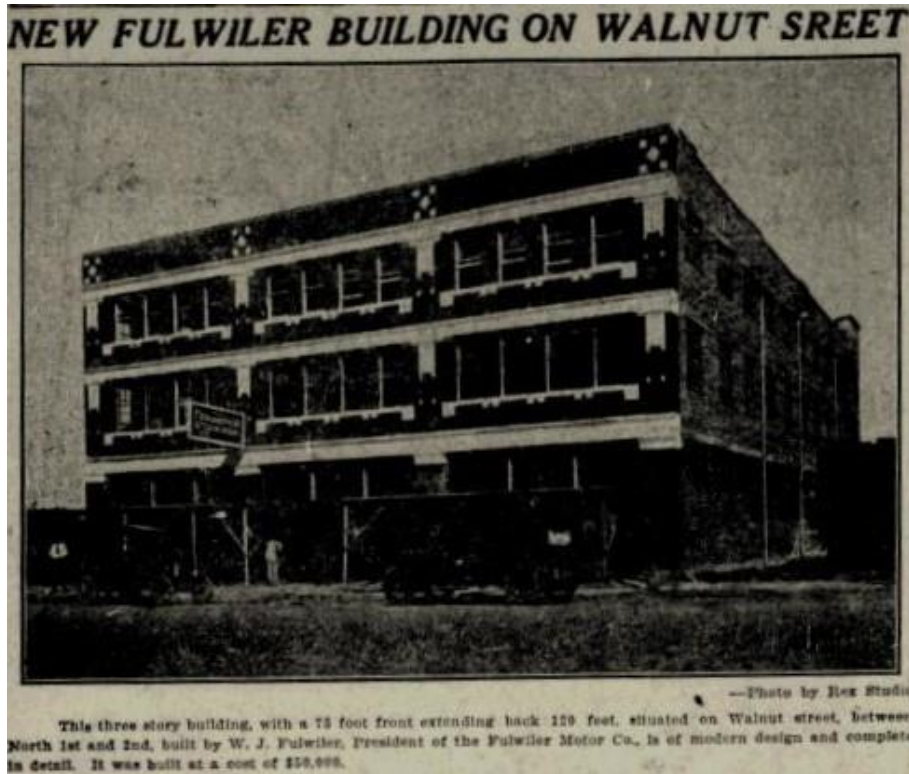


Fig. 2. Fulwiler Building ca. 1924 Courtesy Hardin-Simmons University Library.
<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph54730/m1/1/?q=Walnut>: accessed December 1, 2020), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>



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Fig. 3. Fulwiler Building 159 Walnut Street. Abilene Morning Reporter September 9, 1922, p.48.

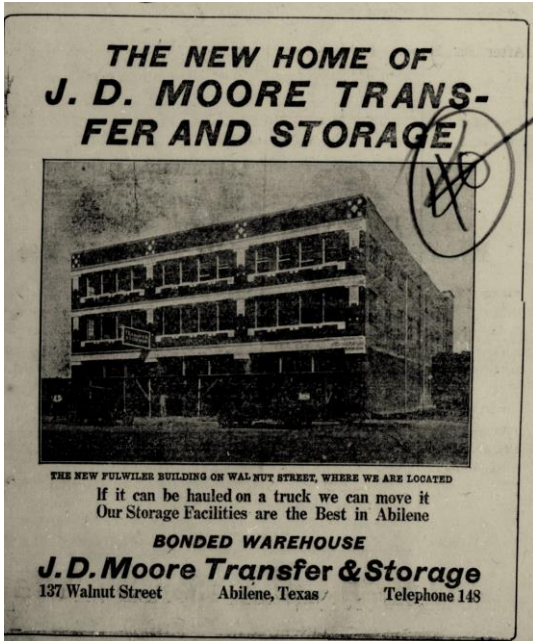
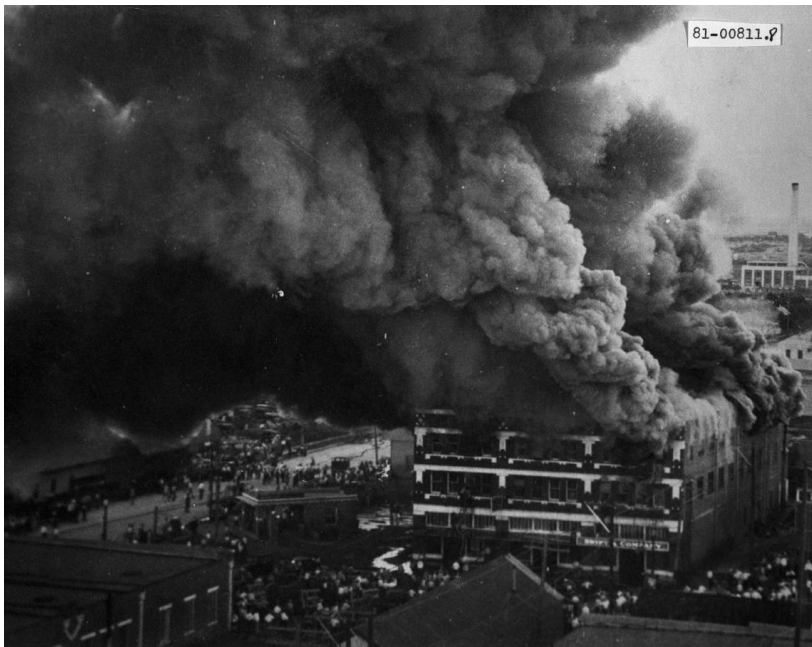


Fig. 4. Fulwiler Building 159 Walnut July 10, 1925. Courtesy of Hardin-Simmons University Library. (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph54730/m1/1/?q=Walnut>: accessed December 1, 2020), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>



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Fig. 5. Fulwiler Motor Company Abilene Morning Reporter, September 24, 1922, p.57



Fig. 6. Interior of Moore Storage and Transfer, 1st and 2nd floors Fulwiler Building ca. 1923, Courtesy Hardin-Simmons University Library.

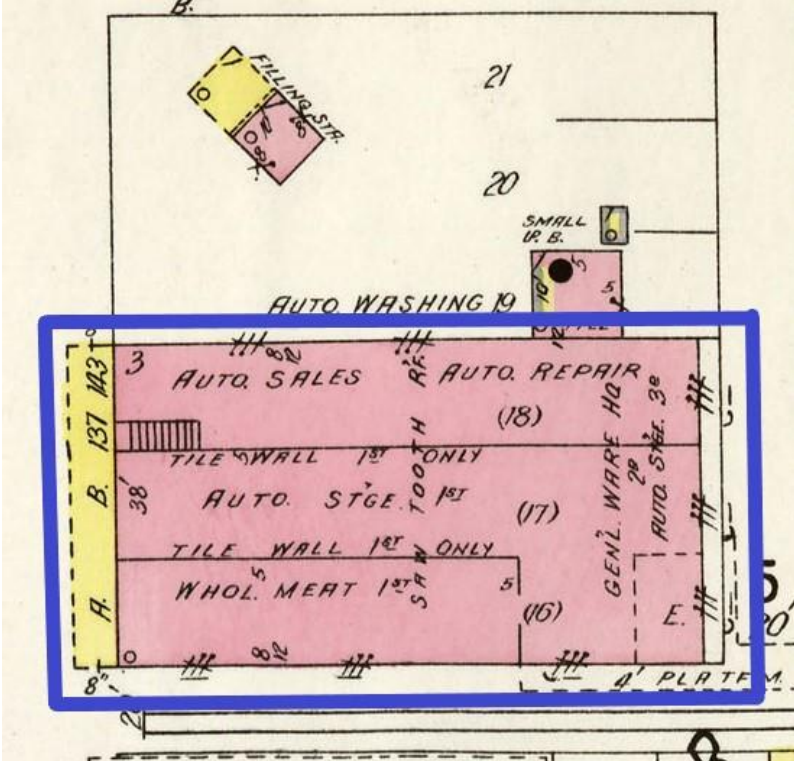


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Fig. 7. Wooten Warehouse, photograph, Date Unknown;
(<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1167017/m1/1/?q=%22Wooten%20Warehouse%22>: accessed February 17, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting McMurry University Library.



Fig. 8. 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing Fulwiler building, outlined in blue.



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Fig. 9. 1954 Sanborn Map showing Fulwiler Building at 159 Walnut, outlined in blue. 173 Walnut shown directly north.

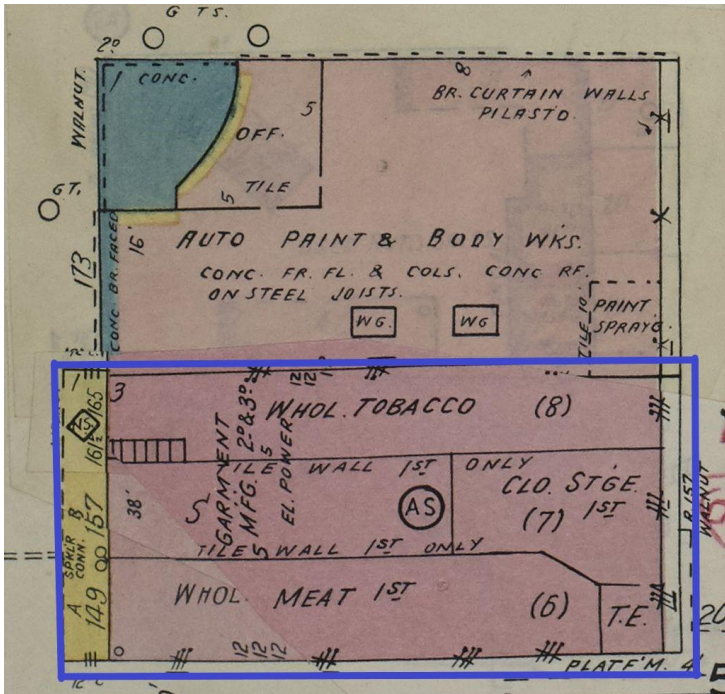
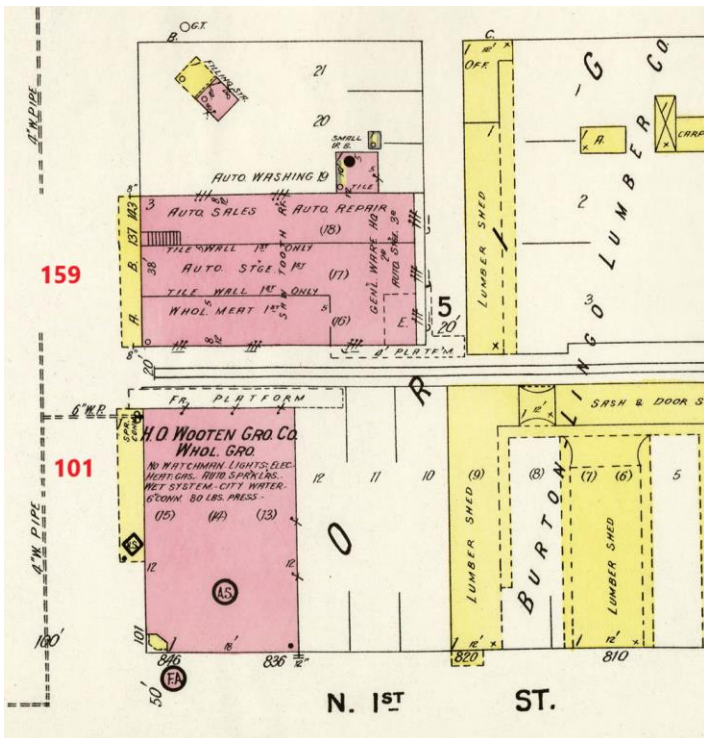
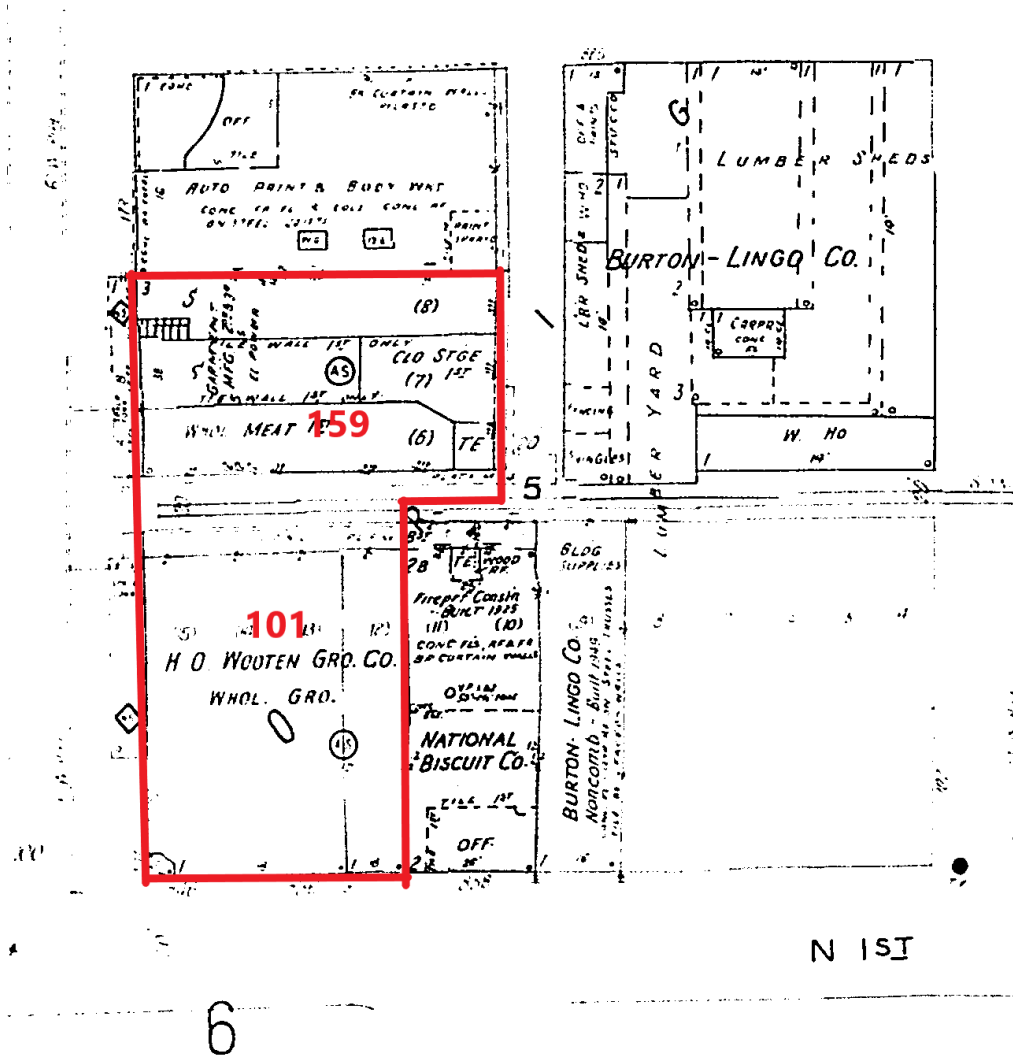


Fig. 10. 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, p. 12 with 101 and 159 Walnut



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Fig. 11.1954 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, p. 3 with 101 and 159 Walnut



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Photograph Log

Fulwiler Building and Wooten Grocery Warehouse
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

Photographed by Ellis Mumford-Russell & William Minter

Date Photographed: December 2020; March 2021; August 2021 (dates in captions)

Photo 1: Fulwiler Building (159 Walnut St), Primary (West) Elevation. View East. December 2020



Photo 2: Fulwiler Building (159 Walnut St), Primary (West) and South Elevation. View Northeast. December 2020.



Abilene Commercial Historic District (Boundary Increase for 159 and 101 Walnut Street), Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

Photo 3: Fulwiler Building (159 Walnut St), South Elevation. View Northeast. March 24, 2021.



Photo 4: Fulwiler Building (159 Walnut St), Rear (East) Elevation. View West. March 24, 2021

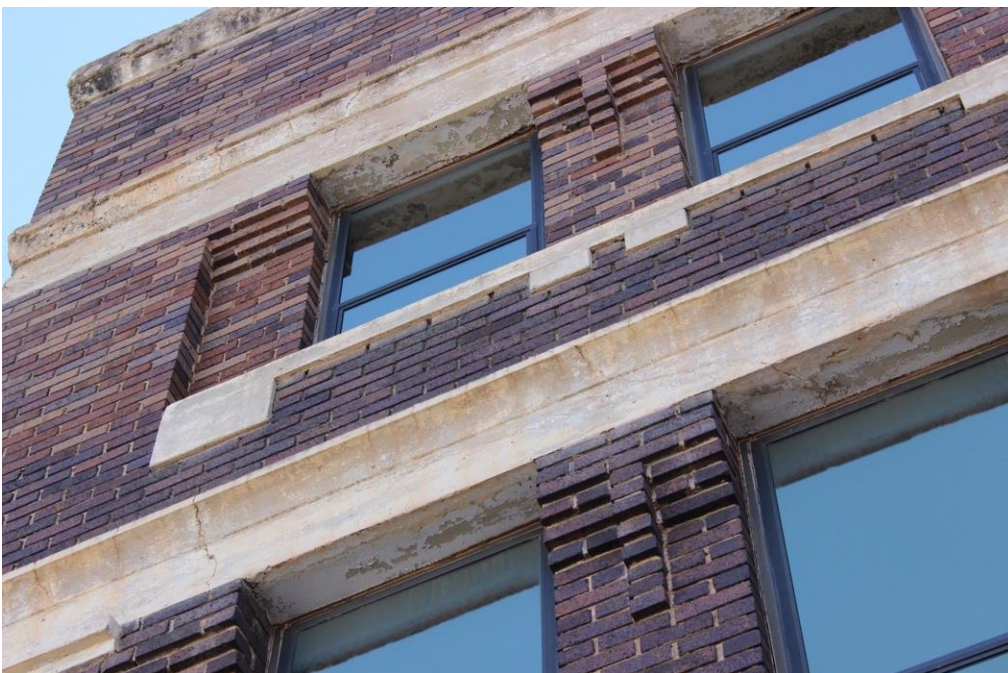


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Photo 5: Fulwiler Building (159 Walnut St), Oblique, Rear (East) and North Elevations. View Southwest. March 24, 2021.



Photo 6: Fulwiler Building (159 Walnut St), East Elevation showing replacement brick detail and color after 1925 fire. March 24, 2021.



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Photo 7: Fulwiler Building (159 Walnut St), First Floor Ceiling Detail. March 24, 2021.



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Photo 8: Fulwiler Building (159 Walnut St), Second Floor. View Northwest. March 24, 2021.



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Photo 9: Fulwiler Building (159 Walnut St), Third Floor. View Southwest. March 24, 2021.



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Photo 10: Wooten Grocery Warehouse (101 Walnut St), West and South Elevations. View Northeast. August 23, 2021.



Photo 11: Wooten Grocery Warehouse (101 Walnut St), South Elevation. View North. August 23, 2021.



- end -