

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bank of Minden (1901) is a single story brick Romanesque Revival commercial building located in downtown Minden. Despite the loss of the original interior, the bank retains its National Register eligibility.

The interior of the Bank of Minden is largely open and has virtually no historic features remaining. The building's significance rests entirely upon its richly articulated facade. This consists of variegated green glazed bricks laid up in a great round arch resting upon cream colored terra-cotta pedestals. Each spandrel is ornamented with a terra-cotta oeil-de-boeuf motif containing a bas relief pelican. The spandrel area is set off by an ornamental terra-cotta band, a feature reminiscent of the work of Louis Sullivan. The band features intricate cartouche panels and four-petal Tudor rose blocks at the corners. The facade is surmounted by a modillion cornice and a parapet. Inside the arch is an entrance vestibule with a tiled dado and a plate glass commercial doorway. The doorway transom has panels of glass cut with garland motifs. The doorway also features a four-tier cornice with egg and dart molding and dentils. A particularly interesting feature of the bank is that it still retains its original street clock. This was restored recently and is in full working order.

Assessment of Integrity:

As previously mentioned, virtually nothing historic remains on the bank interior. However, this should not be regarded as an integrity issue because the building's architectural significance rests entirely upon its facade.

Specific dates 1901
Builder/Architect Builder: Bank of Minden

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion C

The Bank of Minden is locally significant in the area of architecture as a very superior example from among a limited number of historic commercial buildings in Webster Parish.

The Louisiana Comprehensive Historic Structures Survey has identified 432 buildings in Webster Parish that are fifty years old or older. Being a large rural parish, Webster is mainly characterized by residences and outbuildings. In fact, the survey identified only seventeen historic masonry commercial buildings in the entire parish, all of which appear to date from c.1900-c.1935. Virtually all of these are fairly plain masonry buildings with ornamentation confined to shaped parapets, brick panels, and a few instances of shallow arched windows. In fact, the Bank of Minden and the Bank of Webster (N.R.) are the only two commercial buildings in the parish with sufficient architectural distinction to merit individual listing in the National Register. The Bank of Minden, with its grand Romanesque Revival arched entrance and elaborate detailing, is in sharp contrast to the rest of the parish's fairly typical historic commercial buildings. In addition, it is the only one to feature such exceptionally fine materials as glazed brick, terra-cotta, and ornamentally cut sheets of plate glass.

Major Bibliographical References

Louisiana Historic Structures Survey, Webster Parish.