

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Bank of Addis is a small boxy one story brick building constructed in 1920. It stands facing the railroad tracks which mark the West Baton Rouge Parish community's once thriving commercial and governmental district. Despite some changes and additions, the structure retains its National Register eligibility.

The facade of the building's original section features 1) a single bay entrance porch, 2) a double door with a transom, 3) two sets of paired windows surmounted by flat arch lintels constructed of brick, 4) cast concrete quoins, window sills, and voussoirs (the latter displaying bas relief foliage designs), 5) a corbelled brick cornice, and 6) a stepped parapet featuring cast concrete panels and a cast concrete coping. On the interior, only the bank's vault survives from the historic period. Its door is highlighted by a surround featuring cast acanthus leaves and beaded molding.

The building has undergone the following alterations since its construction:

- 1) the installation of a gabled roof above the formerly flat roof behind the parapet. The gable hides two scroll-like ornaments which connect the parapet's higher central bay to the lower bays on each side.
- 2) the construction of a two-story addition at the structure's rear. This addition was completed in separate stages, with the structural clay tile lower story seeing completion several years before the frame second story was added.
- 3) the replacement of the original square cast concrete porch pillars with round metal columns.
- 4) the replacement of the original doors and the installation of screen doors on the facade.
- 5) the replacement of the bank's original sign (painted on the parapet's central panel) with one recognizing the building's later use as a post office, and the painting of the words "Hebert Building" on one side elevation. This sign reflects the building's actual ownership at the time it served as the community's post office.
- 6) the virtual gutting of the interior.

Although the change in roofline is regrettable, the Bank of Addis retains sufficient integrity to justify its recognition by the National Register. Most of the facade's important elements remain intact, and the rear addition hardly shows from the front. As a result, any person from the historic period could not fail to recognize the building. Finally, the change in signage is itself historic. As the only surviving building from Addis' historic commercial district, the Bank of Addis is a strong candidate for National Register listing.

Significant dates	1920-c.1930
Architect/Builder	unknown
Criterion A	

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

The Bank of Addis is locally significant in the area of commerce because it is the only building which survives from the community's historic central business district. Its period of significance spans from 1920, the date of construction, until c.1930, when it ceased being used for commercial purposes.

The town of Addis was founded in 1881 or 1882, during the final phase of construction of the Texas and Pacific Railroad's line between New Orleans and Texas. This route was part of the company's transcontinental network designed to connect the East and West coasts via a southern route. First called Baton Rouge Junction, the community was created as a division point for the railroad. Citizens changed the village's name to Addis sometime between 1908 and 1910 to honor the railroad official who instigated an important period of growth.

J. W. Addis served Superintendent of Motive Power and Rolling Stock for the Texas and Pacific. It was this man who convinced the company to build a depot, hotel, round house, coal chute, water tank, and cinder pit at Baton Rouge Junction in 1904. Once these facilities were completed, the community experienced a new spurt of growth which led to its incorporation in 1915. By 1920, it was thriving and supported several business establishments. In addition to the railroad's properties, these businesses included two hotels, four general stores, a meat market, drug store, fruit stand, saloon and dance hall, pool hall, bakery, cotton gin, syrup mill, an ice storage company, and the Bank of Addis. Thus, Addis was the commercial hub which served the numerous railroad employees stationed there as well as the sugar cane growers who populated the surrounding countryside. This commercial preeminence lasted until after World War II.

The bank itself was chartered in 1919 and apparently erected its new building the following year. (The property was purchased in February 1920, and the bank is shown in a photo dated 1921.) It continued in operation as the Bank of Addis until 1925, when its officers had the business' charter amended to create the Port Allen Bank and Trust Company. The facility in Addis then operated until about 1930 as the Trust Company's Addis Branch. After that, the building apparently remained vacant until 1936, when Joseph H. Hebert purchased it and converted it into a post office. It served in this capacity for almost 42 years.

Today the once thriving Addis central business district exists only in photographs and the memories of long-time residents. With the exception of the bank building, all of the town's historic commercial structures have disappeared. As the only survivor, the Bank of Addis is a significant reminder of the village's one-time important commercial role.

### **Major Bibliographical References**

Kellough, Elizabeth and Mayeux, Leona, Chronicles of West Baton Rouge (Baton Rouge: West Baton Rouge Bicentennial Commission, 1979).

"Historical Profile of the Town of Addis," in National Register file.

Windshield survey of Addis by National Register Staff.

Historic Photos of buildings in Addis central business district.

Photo of Bank of Addis dated 1921.