

## 1202/1204 Main Street



### Historical Overview

The first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century ushered in significant change to the 1200 block of Main Street, including the construction of 1202-1204 Main Street, which according to the Columbia City Directory, occurred during 1906. At its completion by 1907, 1202-1204 Main Street physically connected 1206-1208 Main Street (ca. 1903) to its north with 1200 Main Street, a two-story masonry building built between 1865-1872, then in use as the Trolley Transfer Station. For the first time since the fire of 1865 the entire east side of Main Street's 1200 block featured a unified streetscape of buildings.

Like most buildings within Columbia's commercial district during the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century the three-story structure at 1202-1204 Main Street came to house scores of businesses operating out of different portions of the structure. At first, Heyward's Pharmacy occupied 1202, the Palace Ice Cream Parlor at 1204, and the Woodward Hotel at 1202 ½. Heyward's Pharmacy had been joined by the P.O. Sub Station No. 2 by 1910 and continued there until the Central Drug store replaced it. The Woodward Hotel remained

in operation at 1202 ½ until the 1920s. However, 1204 catered to various businesses, including the Union Savings Bank in 1912 and the Masters Clothing Company in 1915. The Masters Clothing Company remained at 1204 for only a few years, as T.E. Epting had replaced it by 1920.<sup>1</sup>

The Central Drug Company remained at 1202 until the mid-1920s and 1202 ½ continued to house various businesses and offices. By 1925, the Central Drug Company had moved to 1204 and continued to operate at that address through the 1960s. By the 1930s, Carolina Sweets confectioners had opened at 1202 and remained there through the end of the decade. In the early 1930s, they shared their address with several insurance companies. By 1935, 1202a housed the Carolina Life Insurance Company and the South Carolina College of Music, while the Industrial Life and Health Insurance Company and the Farmers and Taxpayers League occupied 1202b. The Carolina Life Insurance Company and music studios remained at 1202a through the 1940s, but by 1940, the WCOS Radio operated out of 1202. The radio station remained at 1202 into the early 1950s.<sup>2</sup>

In 1953, the 1204 side of the building caught on fire. Perhaps as a result of the fire, 1204 ½, the upstairs portion of the north side of the structure, remained vacant into the 1960s. In 1950, 1202 ½ housed the Mellichamp Studios music teachers, but by 1960 it was vacant as well. By the mid-1950s, 1202 had



<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Coker, "The 1200 Block of Main Street; 1865-2005," unpublished manuscript, Historic Columbia Foundation Research Files, Columbia, SC, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Coker, "Main Street."

become occupied by the Post Military Company Inc., a general merchandise store, as well as several music studios. By the end of the decade, however, it had been replaced by the Columbia Pawn Shop, which persisted at 1202 through the 1970s.<sup>3</sup>

In the late 1960s, the Central Drug Company finally closed and was replaced by Dino's Sub Sandwich and Pizza Shop at 1204. By the mid-1970s this establishment had been replaced by H-H-O-T. The Capitol News Stand then replaced this business by 1980, and it continues to operate out of 1204. Since the early 1980s, various restaurants have operated out of 1202. Porky's BBQ was located there in the early 1980s, followed by Takin 5 Soup and Sandwich in the mid-1980s, the Dairy Bar in the early 1990s, Johnny's on Main in the late 1990s, and finally Cat and Cleaver, who continue to operate out of 1202. The second floor of the structure has been mostly vacant since the 1960s, except for the brief stint as the Coin Shop in the mid-1970s.<sup>4</sup>

Protected as a Level III local landmark 1202-1204 Main Street remains as one of the oldest remaining structures on the 1200 block of Main Street, notwithstanding the circa-1870 Brennen Building, located at 1210-1214 Main Street to its north. Meanwhile First Citizens Bank razed 1206-1208 Main Street in 1998 for the development of a parking lot. When viewed with its neighbor to the south, the Columbia Building skyscraper erected in 1913, 1202-1204 Main Street maintains the visual rhythm and character that once typified the capital city's central business district throughout the majority of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Architectural Overview**

Though appearing to be two independent structures, 1202-1204 Main Street in actuality is one three-story building featuring a split façade with different detail work. Its façade features seven bays, the central of which grants access to the building's upper floors. Both the northern and southern aspects of the façade experienced considerable alteration throughout the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A circa-1943 image depicting members of

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<sup>3</sup> Coker, "Main Street;" Columbia Fire Department Photo Archives, Columbia, SC, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Coker, "Main Street."

the Women's Army Corps (WAC) on parade illustrates the transformation 1202 Main Street's street-front experienced most likely in 1940 when WCOS began operating from that address. Original windows, most likely one-over-one paned like those found on 1204 Main Street, have been replaced with more modern casement style, metal-framed windows, and the entrance to 1202 Main Street has been updated with glass block detailing and some form of ceramic or glass tile, possibly Vitralite, applied over the elevation's original masonry finish, in an effort to effect Streamline Moderne architecture then en vogue. At the time of the 1943 photograph, 1204 Main Street had not been altered from its original appearance, and features such as the brick corbelling and decorative diamond patterned brick bond embellishments remain present, as does a decorative band separating the first and second stories. Today, both facades' quioning and the parapet on 1204 remain as reminders to the overall structure's early 20<sup>th</sup>-century detailing. However, such elements that have been lost over time may be reconstructed based on existing documentation.

