Tour Abbeville's historic buildings

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ABBEVILLE — If you're interested in older homes and buildings, good eating, and experiencing a bit of authentic Acadiana, Abbeville is a good place to spend a day.

It's a pretty town, known particularly for its seafood restaurants, but it's also a place where you can see historic old homes and businesses all in a compact area that can easily be visited on foot.

"Downtown Abbeville is very walkable," according to Allison Miller, Main Street manager. Charlene Beckett agrees. "The beauty of Abbeville is its serenity," she says. "It's a great place..."
Abbeville

If you want to spend the night, she says, there are three bed-and-breakfast choices in the downtown area.

According to the National Register of Historic Places, there are 119 buildings within a commercial historic district that was typical of pre-World War II Acadia, and is alongside a residential historic district that includes 19 late 19th century houses, including the magnificent Caldwell residence that has been recently and spectacularly renovated for public use for special events.

Also downtown are a picturesque courthouse, the St. Mary Magdalen Church and cemetery, Magdalen Square, and the Abbeville Cultural and Historic Museum and Art Gallery.

The commercial historical district is bounded by Concord, State, Lafayette and Jefferson streets. The residential historical district is bounded by West Oak, West State, and Cherry streets and the Vermilion River.

According to National Register documents, "Downtowns such as Abbeville's provided virtually all of the goods and services a person could need. General mercantile stores ... carried everything from clothing, to furniture, to patent medicine, to buggy harnesses."

Much of the downtown got a facelift in 1983, when much of the film The Blob was shot there.

About the residential district, the National Register comments, "The district is characterized by large lots and numerous mature trees. The Valcourt Coulee meanders through the area adding to its pastoral character. Despite the generous lot setbacks and the many trees, the district is fairly cohesive and it is possible to take in many houses in a single view."

Submitted photo

The front porch of the Caldwell House welcomes visitors.

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The Caldwell House's master suite is exquisitely decorated.