

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

EXP. 12/31/84

For NPS use only
received **DEC 27 1982**
date entered

1. Name

historic Mechanics' Bank and Trust Company Building

and/or common City and County Bank

2. Location

street & number 612 South Gay Street N/A not for publication

city, town Knoxville N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state Tennessee code 047 county Knox code 093

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Ron Cunningham, et al

street & number 612 South Gay Street

city, town Knoxville N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37917

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registrar of Deeds, City-County Building

street & number 400 Main Street

city, town Knoxville state Tennessee 37902

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Knoxville, Fifty Landmarks has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records Knoxville Heritage, Incorporated

city, town Knoxville state Tennessee

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Mechanics' Bank and Trust Company Building, located on the main street of the central business district of Knoxville, Tennessee is a brick and stone banking and office building with five stories plus mezzanine and basement. Designed in a derivative version of the Second Renaissance Revival in an Italian mode, the front facade is highly sculptured East Tennessee marble. A rectangle in plan, the building was originally constructed in 1907 with three stories. In 1923 an additional two stories were very sensitively and carefully added. While there have been some alterations to the facade, the quality of the original design has not been lost. The main floor banking lobby still contains some original marble and plaster work. The office floors have been much altered over the years. The building is located in a densely developed area of Knoxville. The immediate surroundings include other structures of compatible age and character. The building retains its architectural integrity.

The building is located in a densely developed area at 612 South Gay Street, the main street of Knoxville's central business district. Located in the middle of the block with the facade directly adjacent to the sidewalk, the building both benefits from and contributes to an environs containing other significant buildings. A mid-block alley, directly adjacent to the side of the building, helps provide visual definition, causing the building to stand out. The building also has a high sense of visual presence due to the immediately adjacent buildings on either side being two stories in height. Yet the narrow width and overall scale of the building does not overpower these adjoining structures.

The original portion of the building was constructed in 1907 and was designed in a derivative version of the Second Renaissance Revival style. Originally there were three stories, mezzanine, and basement. The plan is a rectangle with the narrow dimension parallel to the street. The building is constructed of marble, brick, and reinforced concrete. An additional two stories added in 1923 used the same materials and plan, and followed the same design scheme. The roof is a flat composition roof. An elevator penthouse, a relatively recent addition, is visible from some angles. To date, no information concerning the architect or builder has been discovered.

The west facade, or front, faces Gay Street and is constructed of marble quarried in East Tennessee. The facade is organized into three bays: vertically, the base of main floor and mezzanine form one portion of the facade, and the upper four floors the remainder. A heavy cornice and entablature separates the two portions. The base is constructed of smooth marble with the horizontal joints deeply rusticated. The central bay, slightly recessed, is flanked on either side by semi-engaged smooth columns with Ionic capitals, running from a horizontal marble pedestal to the entablature. The main entryway, in the center, has a marble surround and a stylized flat pedimental hood, supported by console brackets at the mezzanine floor level, with the rustication turning to define the arch stones, and a heavy console bracket at the keystone. This window has a very fine curvilinear design in leaded beveled glass. The bays to either side of the central bay are defined by pilasters at each side formed by slightly projecting the rusticated marble. Each pilaster has an Ionic capital. In the center of each of these bays is a tall narrow window. In the upper portion of the facade, the center bay is also slightly recessed (a balustrade runs across in front of this recess at the second and again at the fourth floor levels; a similar balustrade is also directly above this bay at the roof level). A pair of vertical rectangular windows occurs at each floor level in this bay. The remaining bays, to each side of the center, have a single centered window at each floor level. At the roof level, a heavy cornice runs across the entire front. At each of the end bays this cornice is supported by a pair of heavy console brackets, flanking a bas relief cartouche. At the top of the middle bay recess, a second highly stylized cornice, supported by a single centered bracket, supports the roof cornice. Directly above this bracket is a sculptured arm and hammer, the symbol of the Mechanics' Bank. On top of the roof cornice,

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Mechanic's Bank and Trust Company Building
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above the end bays, is a solid balustrade, projected slightly from the center bay balustrade previously described. The decorative stone at the top of the building, including balustrades, cornice brackets, etc., was carefully removed from its original location on the top of the third floor and relocated to its present position in 1923. In the central bay, a decorative panel in the spandrel between the second and third floors was not duplicated at the spandrel between the fourth and fifth floors in the addition. In all other aspects, the front facade of the 1923 addition essentially exactly matches the 1907 portion. The original one over one sash windows have been replaced by aluminum framed windows, as has the front entry door. A metal and plastic sign extends over a portion of the entablature at the base, but is superficially attached.

The north facade is visible only from a very narrow manway. There are no interesting features. A clay tile parapet cap runs along the top of the wall which is made of red brick. A few windows occur at the fifth floor level. There is some evidence of other window openings that have been bricked up.

The east or rear facade is also of red brick. Organized in three bays, the center bay is solid brick with no openings. Each end bay has one window at each level, although several of these have been bricked. The southern bay also has one doorway into the basement level.

The south facade, facing the alley, is constructed of a buff brick up to the third floor level. The 1923 addition has red brick above this point. Slightly corbeled brick string courses occur between the mezzanine and second floors, between the third and fourth floors, and at the roof level. A metal fire escape is attached approximately in the middle, extending from the fifth floor to the mezzanine level. Windows occur at the fourth and fifth floor levels. There is evidence of similar windows, now bricked, on the other levels. At the main floor level, large oversize multi-light metal windows exist. At the eastern end of the building, the slope of the alley allows two small window openings into the basement level.

The interiors of the main floor and mezzanine still have some original finishes remaining, but only in portions. The building entry foyer is smooth pink marble, has two round smooth marble columns flanking the entry into the banking lobby. The banking lobby has marble wainscoting remaining and heavily decorated plaster beams. Most of the interior features have been either covered or lost. The office floors have been remodeled several times and have no distinguishing features visible.

There are no outbuildings or dependancies associated with the building.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1907, 1923 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Nominated under criteria category "C"

The Mechanics' Bank and Trust Company Building, currently known as the City and County Bank, is an outstanding example of the Second Renaissance Revival style. The location of the building, as well as the high quality of the design, have caused the building to have an impact on the city's environment greater than the size of the building would ordinarily warrant. The building site has contained a financial institution since the 1870's. The present building has housed a number of financial institutions since its construction in 1907 as the main office of the Mechanics' Bank and Trust Company. The facade is especially significant for the high quality of the decorative elements, several of which are the best examples in the city from this period. The building is also noteworthy for the skill, sensitivity, and attention to detail used in adding two additional stories to the building in 1923. The interior of the building, while substantially altered, still contains several important features in marble and decorative plaster, especially in the foyer and banking lobby.

In 1907 the Mechanics' National Bank, organized in 1882, re-organized as the Mechanics' Bank and Trust Company. As a part of the re-organization, a new building was constructed at 612 South Gay Street. In 1922 the Mechanics' Bank merged with the Union National Bank and consolidated offices in another location. The building then became the home of the Bankers' Trust Company which added two floors to the building in 1923. The building has also housed the Commercial National Bank; the Commercial Branch of the Hamilton National Bank (United American Bank); and the City and County Bank, which continues to occupy the main floor.

The primary significance of the building derives from the high quality of the architectural design of the facade. Constructed of East Tennessee marble, the building is an exceptionally fine local example of the Second Renaissance Revival Style. Smaller buildings adjacent to it on either side, and the high quality of the design, have enabled the building to have a great impact on the city's environment. Its location on the city's main business street, in one of the historically busiest blocks, has also made it a landmark. The quality of the marble carving, especially the column capitals, brackets, cartouches, balustrades, and lintels are at least equal to any in the city. Of special curiosity is the carving of the arm and hammer at the top of the facade, the symbol of the Mechanics' Bank. The beveled leaded glass, above the entry door, in a beautiful curvilinear design, is very rare in commercial buildings in the city and is of the highest quality. It is the only known historic example of that size in the downtown area. While the office floor windows have lost their original sash, the overall impact of the design has not been greatly lessened. The overall quality of the original design was also recognized in 1923 when the building was expanded by two additional floors. The original decorative cornice work, balustrade, and other items were very carefully relocated to their new position and the additional building fabric constructed in keeping with the original design.

Currently the building houses a number of professional offices in addition to the bank. Rehabilitation work is ongoing as a part of a commercial condominium project.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Knoxville City Directories

Greater Knoxville Illustrated by American Illustration Co., c.1910.

Souvenir History of Knoxville by W.M. Goodman, 1908.

"The Mechanics Banks of Knoxville" by Dr. Charles P. White, 1976.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.5

Quadrangle name Knoxville, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	7	2	3	6	8	6	0	3	9	8	3	7	9	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification The property nominated is 145' x 32' as shown on Knox County property tax map 95 **I**. The property nominated is essentially the footprint of the building.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ronald E. Childress, Principal

organization Childress and Associates, Architects date September 18, 1982

street & number 524a South Gay Street, P.O. Box 2641 telephone (615) 523-1917

city or town Knoxville state Tennessee 37901

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Herbert L. Hays

date 12/15/82

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

[Signature]
Director of the National Register

Chief of Registration

