United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form





Type all entries	s—complete applical	ole sections		
1. Nam	1e			
historic	-Cumberland			
and/or common	Downtown Cumb	erland Historic Distr	ict	
2. Loca	ation Rom	ably land.	I by mucha	anie Bedford,
street & number	Multiple St	ghly framed, reets George,	and discrise	m S+6. 1/a not for publication
city, town	Cumberland	n/a vicinity of	congressional district	6th
state	MD	code ²⁴ county	Allegany	code 001
3. Clas	sification			······································
Category X district building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private _X_ both Public Acquisition in process being considere x_ not_applicab	yes: restricted yes: unrestricted	Present Use agriculture _X commercial educational entertainment _X government industrial military	museum x park x private residence x religious scientific x transportation other:
4. Own	er of Prop			
M	ultiple Owners (
name			,	
street & number				· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
city, town		vicinity of	state	
5. Loca	ation of Le	gal Descripti	on	
courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc.	Allegany County (Courthouse	4-7
street & number		30 Washington St	reet	
city, town		Cumberland	state	MD 21502
6. Rep	resentatio	n in Existing	Surveys	
Mar	yland Historical toric Sites Surve	Trust		iegible?yes _X_ no
date 1976			federalX_ sta	te county local
depository for su	urvey records	Maryland Eistorical : 21 State Circle	Trust	
city, town	Annap	olis	state	MD 21401

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
X excellent		_X unaltered	_X_ original site
_X: good +	ruins ruins	_X_ altered	moved date
_x_fair	unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Summary Description

The Downtown Cumberland Historic District is a group of approximately 107 commercial, religious and civic buildings within the city of Cumberland, a manufacturing and transportation center on the Potomac River in western Maryland. The downtown area comprises the city's principal business district and is located on the east side of Wills Creek, roughly bounded by the tracks of the Western Maryland Railroad on the west, and George Street on the east. Baltimore Street is the major street; the district extends approximately two blocks north and south of this street along George, Liberty, Centre, and Mechanic Streets. The district is a nearly intact example of a late nineteenth and twentieth century commercial center and is made up of three or more story brick buildings, which are for the most part unaltered. Only a few twentieth century infill buildings and parks disturb the architectural integrity of the district. Dates of construction for buildings in the district range from the 1860's to the 1930's, although the period of greatest building activity occurred during the thirty years after 1890. It was during this period that the major banks, department stores and civic buildings were constructed. No table buildings within the district include the Georgian Revival Public Safety Building, the Classical Revival City Hall Building, and the Bell Tower Building, all three of which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Also listed is

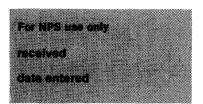
the B'er Chayim Synagogue, built in the 1860's.

Along Baltimore Street are several outstanding examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial architecture, among them the Liberty Trust and First National Bank buildings, the Rosenbaum's and Schwarzenbach's stores, and the block of smaller stores between 109-123 Baltimore Street.

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General Description

The Downtown Cumberland Historic District comprises the principal business district of Cumberland, which is the largest city and county seat of Allegany County. It is located on the east side of Wills Creek, roughly bounded by the tracks of the Western Maryland Railroad on the west and George Street on the east. Baltimore Street, which has recently been paved with brick and closed to vehicular traffic between George and Mechanic Streets, is the major street; the district extends approximately two blocks north and south of this street along George, Liberty, Centre and Mechanic Streets.

The dense collection of buildings, generally three or more stories tall, are larger in scale than those found in the other commercial areas of Cumberland. The predominant building material is brick, usually left unpainted, with stone, metal or wood reserved for use as decorative trim around doors, windows and along the cornices. The architectural integrity of these buildings is high, as exterior alterations have been largely confined to the street level entrances and signs; the upper stories of most buildings have remained virtually unchanged from their original date of construction. The district is therefore a nearly intact example of a late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial center.

Dates of construction for buildings in the district range from the 1860's to the 1930's, although the period of greatest building activity occurred during the thirty years after 1890. It was during this period that the major banks, department stores and civic buildings were constructed. A wide variety of architectural styles is found within the district, including Italianate, Romanesque, Beaux-Arts, Georgian Revival and Art Deco. Many of the buildings were designed by native Cumberland architects, among them George Sansbury, Wright Butler and Bruce Price, and reflect these men's personal tastes and flair, adding to the unique character of the district.

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Notable buildings within the district include the Georgian Revival Public Safety Building, the Classical Revival City Hall Building, and the Bell Tower Building, all three of which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Also listed is

the B'er Chayim Synagogue, built in the 1860's.

Along Baltimore Street are several outstanding examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial architecture, among them the Liberty Trust and First National Bank buildings, the Rosenbaum's and Schwarzenbach's stores, and the block of smaller stores between 109-123 Baltimore Street.

The commercial buildings in the district are most typically brick and are three or four stories high, two bays wide with a bracketed cornice. One of the earliest of these buildings is the McCleave Building at 63-69 Baltimore Street, designed before 1875 and one of only two Italianate style structures on Baltimore Street. Originally extending thirteen bays along the street, the present McCleave Building is a three story, six bay wide flat roofed brick building with a bracketed cornice and bracketed architraves above the 9/9 sash windows. It is unaltered except for the first floor entrance.

The other surviving Italianate commercial building on Baltimore Street is located on the southeast corner of Centre Street and dates from the early 1870's. The three story brick building extends five bays along Baltimore Street and twelve bays along Centre Street. The upper level windows have ornate cast—iron segmental arched label moulds. The dentilled cornice and the star medallions below the cornice are also distinctive features.

A typical building on Baltimore Street is the Peskins store (#45), built in 1893 originally as the YMCA. It is a five story, five bay wide brick building with rusticated stone trim with Romanesque details. More distinctive is the building at 80-84 Baltimore Street, designed by the local architect George Sansbury in 1911. Originally the Washington Hotel and Lunchroom, it is a three story brick structure with elaborate classically

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inspired white glazed brick trim. The orginal shop front, part of which remains, has a fluted cornice decorated with egg and dart molding. The second and third floors have two sets of windows; the windows on the third floor are arched, giving the entire upper level the appearance of a double arcade. The third floor arches have ornamental surrounds with scroll keystones, and the bracketed cornice of glazed brick is topped with a bas relief sculptured panel ornamented with swags and wreaths.

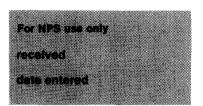
Distinctive fenestration sets each building apart from its neighbor. Often, the third story windows are arched, double windows, or combined with the windows of the second story to form a giant two story window. A good example of the last mentioned feature is seen at 115 Baltimore Street, in which the two story window is arched, the arch being supported by brick pilasters with molded brick capitals. A rounded strip of brick molding runs along the outside of the arch and on either side of it are two molded brick cartouches. The building has a heavy projecting wood cornice above an entablature of notched bricks.

The building at 123 Baltimore Street is a three story, four bay wide structure with arched windows on the third floor. Above these run three arched courses of narrow-width cut brick, surmounted by a raised brick arch moulding. The building, which dates from 1895, has an unusual mansard roof, as well as a large circular window surmounted by a globe finial and flanked by two wooden scrolls centered in the middle of the cornice.

The use of different colored bricks is a particularly distinctive feature of the facades of several buildings in Cumberland. The building at 138 Baltimore Street, originally built as the McMullen Brothers' Department Store, still retains portions of its white enameled brick facade with brick egg and dart moulding. White enameled brick was manufactured by Andrew Ramsay in nearby Mount Savage, Maryland from the mid-1890s until the mid 1920s. Good examples of the use of yellow glazed brick are seen on the facades of the Goodwill Building on North Liberty Street, as well as 50-54 and 110-118 Baltimore Street, while the First National Bank building at 71 Baltimore Street and an office at 21 Pershing Street are notable for the orange colored brick which was used.

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Several large turn-of-the-century banks, hotels, and department stores are concentrated in a two block area along Baltimore Street; these are among the tallest and most architecturally significant buildings in Cumberland. The oldest of these is the First National Bank designed in the late 1880's for the Second National Bank at 71-73 Baltimore Street. The architect for this building was Bruce Price, desinger of the Hotel Frontenac in Quebec, as well as, the parish house for Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Cumberland. Stylistically, the bank represents a mixture of Romanesque and Byzantine influences. Built of orange colored brick with brownstone trim, it is two and one half stories tall with a gabled tile roof. The Baltimore Street facade has a Romanesque doorway to the east and a semicircular bay, also with a tile roof, to the west. Particularly outstanding are the brownstone cornice above the entrance, which is carved in a floral design, and the seated brownstone lions on each of the pilasters. A brick panel surrounded by carved brick, also in a floral pattern, appears at the second story of the gable facade.

The Liberty Trust Bank building at the corner of Centre and Baltimore Streets was designed by the Cumberland architect Wright Butler in 1901. The six story bank is built of red brick with stone trim. Above the street level with its classical doorway, are four levels of 1/1 double hung wooden sash windows arranged in single and multiple groupings. Flat bricks and rusticated belt courses ornament the window groupings for each floor. The sixth floor is topped by a large dropped cornice, above which runs a row of oculus windows; both features are often found in buildings designed by Butler. The Centre Street corner of the building is rounded above the first floor level.

The Fort Cumberland Hotel, at the northwest corner of Baltimore and Liberty Streets is a six story fire-proof brick hotel built in 1917. The classically inspired stone ornamentation and the belt courses between the fifth and sixth floors are significant features. Especially distinctive, however, are the dentilled stone cornice and the frieze of carved panels

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and triglyphs. Clusters of flowers drop from the triglyphs flanking the upper level windows. This is one of only a few hotel buildings remaining from the era when Cumberland was an important railroad center.

The two department store buildings, Rosenbaum's at 118 Baltimore Street, and Schwarzenbach's at 128 Baltimore Street were built within approximately ten years of each other in the early twentieth century. The three story Rosenbaum building incorporates a number of Renaissance details and has three large arcades with three sided bay windows above the modern street level shop front. The arcades have rusticated stone surrounds with carved human heads on the keystones, and between each arch is a large circular moulded brick medallion. The building is topped by a massive bracketed cornice with a lion's head sculpture centered above each bracket.

The Schwarzenbach building was designed by the architect Wright Butler in 1911 and is a late example of Beau Arts classical architecture. The bold mansard roof, sculpted brackets and the segmentally pedimented dormers are elements especially influenced by the popular style which orginated in France.

The Romanesque style, characterized by round arched windows, rusticated stone and heavy details, was employed in the design of several buildings in the district. A good example is the former Gross Bros. Department Store at 42-46 Baltimore Street, a three story brick building with large two-story windows on the second and third floors. Piers with stone capitals in a leaf motif separate the arches and there are two medallions with sculpted satyr's heads between the third story arches. Also notable is the heavy cornice with four cylindrical pendants which are rusticated in an exaggerated sawtoothed manner.

The architect George Sansbury designed several buildings in the downtown area during the 1920's which illustrate the early phases of the Art Moderne or Art Deco style. Foremost of these is the former Embassy Theatre at 49 Baltimore Street, a three story masonry building with modernistic fluted pilasters and neon finials. The store at 61 Baltimore

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Street is less imposing, but exhibits typical Art Deco fenestration and decorative features.

Another significant example of this style is seen at the Spear's Jewelry store at 64 Baltimore Street. The store has retained its original cut glass lettered windows, stepped storefront windows flanking the recessed entrance, and much of the streamlined interior. The department store at 110-118 Baltimore Street is a significant brick example although few decorative features are still apparent.

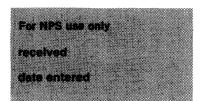
Most of the buildings along Liberty, Centre and Mechanic Streets are smaller in scale than those found along Baltimore Street. Two outstanding buildings are the Beaux Arts style building at 16 Liberty Street and the later 1921 building at 101 South Centre Street designed by architect George Sansbury. The former, designed by the architect of Rosenbaum's Department Store, J.S. Seibert, is a two story brick building with a heavily bracketed cornice topped with a balustrade. The most notable feature is the off-set second story, three-sided bay window contained within a large keystoned arch. The building on Centre Street is a narrow two story grey-brick structure with a tile roof, modillioned cornice, scalloped entrance marquee and rounded corner with a stamped metal inset. Both buildings are noted for their decorative stained glass windows.

Also by Sansbury is the building constructed in 1911 for the Cumberland Office Supply Company and still occupied by the same company. In virtually intact condition, the building has retained its original sign set in stained glass below the storefront cornice. The false facade, blind brick detailing and dropped cornice are typical of early twentieth century commercial architecture in Cumberland.

Of the few religious buildings still standing in the downtown area, the B'er Chayim Synagogue on South Centre Street is the oldest and most architecturally significant. Built between 1865 and 1867, it is built on a Greek temple form with brick pilasters and a modillioned cornice.

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Among the notable features of the facade are the brick label molds above the windows and the stained glass windows.

The area just north of Frederick Street has been the site of city government buildings for more than a century. The Bell Tower building is the oldest of these and was built in the 1880's to serve as the police headquarters and city jail. This unusual structure is a two story three bay wide brick building with a tray roof surmounted by a small square belfry. Flat jigsawn woodwork in a floral pattern decorates the cornice above each window and there are semicircular wooden brackets with jigsawn designs on them below the second story cornice.

The Public Safety Building at 19 Frederick Street is the best example of Georgian Revival architecture in Allegany County. Built between 1909-1904, it is a three story brick building with stone trim built on a stone basement. Across four bays of the Frederick Street facade is a classical composition of engaged Ionic columns below a full classical pediment with plain frieze. A stone balustrade runs along the flat roof and there are quoins composed of alternating strips of brick and stone.

The present City Hall was built in 1911 to replace the nineteenth century City Hall and Academy of Fine Arts which stood on this site until destroyed by fire in 1910. Designed by the architectural firm of Holmboe and Lafferty, the City Hall is a two story Classical Revival building of masonry construction built on a high base. Two pairs of fluted Doric pilasters frame the main entry and the arched second story window. A classical stone balustrade runs along the top of the flat roof, interrupted at the center of each facade by a stone panel; the panel on the front facade is inscribed with the date 1911. The City Hall was originally planned with a large two story dome but objections concerning the anticipated cost forced the abandonment of this feature.

Unlike the other two civic buildings, the City Hall has retained much of its original interior appearance. No table features include the

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stained glass windows, the interior murals painted in 1911, depicting the military life of George Washington, and the two story marbleized metal columns which support the plain domed ceiling.

The three civic buildings just described are individually listed in the National Register.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries were drawn to include the highest concentration of significant buildings, and those which are compatible in regards to building material, scale and period of construction. In appearance, the district forms a tight concentration of buildings surrounded by recent highway development, parking lots, and incompatible buildings.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 X 1800–1899 X 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture architecture art commerce communications		g landscape architectur law literature military music	e religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater _X transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	c. 1860-c.1930	Builder/Architect M	Multiple architects (se	ee text)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: A & C

Significance Summary

The Downtown Cumberland Historic District gains its significance from both its architecture and the history of its commercial development as reflected in the representative structures. The virtually intact, late nineteenth to early twentieth century buildings comprising the district, range in style from Greek Revival to Art Moderne. They include some of the best examples of these styles in western Maryland and in some cases, the state. National, state and locally significant architects, including Bruce Price, Wright Butler, George Flack Sansbury, John S. Seibert, Holmboe and Lafferty, and Hodgens and Hills, all have buildings represented in the district. Commercially, the district includes a broad range of types, including theatres, large department stores, small specialty shops, hotels, and a railroad station, reflecting the economic prominence of Cumberland at the turn of the century as a manufacturing, transportation and coal shipping center.

History and Support

Cumberland, incorporated in 1787, grew around the site of Fort Cumberland, a fortress built during the French and Indian War. Early development of the town centered along present day Greene and Washington Streets. In 1798, Thomas Beall, one of the charter city commissioners, extended the town boundaries to include the present day downtown district of Baltimore, Mechanic and Centre Streets. 1

Harry Stegmaier Jr. et.al., Allegany County - A History, (Parsons, WVA: McLain Printing Co., 1976), p. 82.

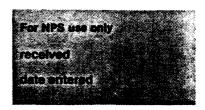
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Its subsequent growth as a commercial and manufacturing center resulted from its strategic location as a transportation center and the parallel development of the vast coal deposits in the nearby Georges Creek valley, 11 miles west. Several transporation projects centered around Cumberland, beginning with navigational improvements made to the Potomac River in the 1780s. The National Road, the first federally funded public works project, was begun in Cumberland in 1811, reaching Wheeling, West Virginia in 1818.

Railroads and the interdependent coal industry had the most profound effect on the growth of Cumberland. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, begun in Baltimore in 1828, reached Cumberland in 1842. Spur lines were quickly constructed into the Georges Creek coal region by 1844. Other major competitors, including the Pennsylvania Railroad of Maryland, Western Maryland Railway and the West Virginia Central & Pittsburgh Railroad, were introduced in the second half of the 19th century.

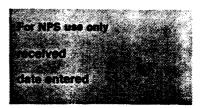
The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, completed to Cumberland in 1850, was also a major coal shipper and stimulus to the economy.

Other manufacturing industries grew, including rolling mills, iron and steel works breweries, glassworks and planning mills. By the mid 19th century Cumberland was the second largest manufacturing center in the state; a position supplanted by Hagerstown in c. 1915. Its growing population and economic prosperity during that period supported a wide variety of commercial and cultural interests represented in the surviving buildings located in the downtown district. The architecture of the district reflects the desire of Cumberland merchants to portray an important, sophisticated and knowledgeable image that was very up-to-date. Some of the architects responsible for this outstanding collection of buildings, include the nationally known 19th century architect, Bruce Price; German born, John S. Seibert; Wright Butler and George Flack Sansbury, two prolific early 20th century local architects, and the early 20th century firms of Holmboe and Lafferty of Baltimore and Hodgens and Hills of Philadelphia.

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Bruce Price, born in Cumberland in 1845, is best known for the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec. He studied architecture in Baltimore and Europe, and after short tenures in both Baltimore and Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, he established a practice in New York City in 1877. In the late 1880s, Price designed the Second National Bank, (present day First National Bank), one of the most architecturally significant buildings located in the district.

John S. Seibert, a native of Germany, was born in 1864 and graduated in 1886 from Lehigh University with a degree in Civil Engineering.

After practicing architecture for several years in Bethlehem and Allentown, Pennsylvania and in Washington, D.C., Seibert moved his office to Cumberland where he undertook both commercial and residential work.

His most outstanding local work is the department store building he designed at 118 Baltimore Street for the Rosenbaum family. The building at #16 N. Liberty St., built for J. Phillip Roman in 1901, is another outstanding example of his work.

The architectural work of Wright Butler is of major importance to the architectural heritage and character of Cumberland. A son of one of the city's foremost furniture manufacturers, H. Kennedy Butler, the younger Butler is believed to have studied architecture at the Maryland Institute in Baltimore for about three years before opening an office in Cumberland in 1891. His first major commission was the imposing Romanesque Revival Allegany County Courthouse on Prospect Square in the Washington Street area. Incredibly prolific in the number of designs he supplied in his hometown, Butler left his mark in almost every section of the city in both commercial and residential buildings. Within the district, some notable buildings

Land and Community Associates, Architectural and Historic Survey of the City of Cumberland, Maryland, (Charlottesville, Virginia: Land and Community Associates, 1976), p. 9.

³Ibid., p. 11.

⁴Ibid., p. 10.

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designed by Butler include the 1911 Schwarzenbach store, presently occupied by Graffs at 128-132 Baltimore Street, the 1907 Liberty Trust Bank at #81 Baltimore Street and the 1903 Stein Building, presently occupied by Clark's Camera Store at #58 N. Centre Street.

George Flack Sansbury, the major architectural contemporary of Wright Butler, was an 1896 graduate of the Maryland Institute. First employed in the office of local architect, Herman Schneider, Sansbury opened his own office in 1900. In addition to designing a number of houses on Washington Street in Cumberland, he is responsible for several commercial buildings in the district. They include: the 1911 COSCO Building at #17 N. Liberty Street, the 1904 Little Jewelers at #111-113 Baltimore Street, the 1911 Washington Hotel and Lunchroom, meeting place for Cumberland's cultural elite, at #80-84 Baltimore Street, and the building at #101 S. Centre Street built for Dr. William L. Burns in 1921. Sansbury also remodeled both of Seibert's most outstanding buildings, the Rosenbaum Store and #16 N. Liberty Street in 1913 and 1924, respectively.

The Baltimore architectural firm of Holmboe and Lafferty designed several buildings in Cumberland, among them the City Hall in 1911. This building, already listed in the National Register, is significant for its intact interior detail.

The best example of Art Moderne/Deco in the district is the Embassy Theatre, presently occupied by Warhoffs, at #49-53 Baltimore Street. It was designed in 1931 by the Philadelphia firm of Hodgens and Hills.

⁵ Ibid., p. 11

