

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received SEP 20 1985
date entered 11-1-85

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

1. Name

historic Loewenstein & Sons Hardware Building

and/or common Loewenstein Building/Rite Aid Building

2. Location

street & number 223-225 Capitol Street

not for publication

city, town Charleston vicinity of

state West Virginia code 54 county Kanawha code 039

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input 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"/> N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" 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 Rite Aid Corporation c/o Lou Berkley (212 962 6680)

street & number 225 Broadway 39th Floor

city, town New York vicinity of state New York 10007

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kanawha County Courthouse

street & number 407 Virginia Street East

city, town Charleston state WV 25301

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Downtown Charleston, WV has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 24 September 84 federal state county local

depository for survey records Charleston Regional Chamber of Commerce and Development

city, town Charleston state WV 25301

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

ERECTED IN 1900-01, the five-story pressed brick building features eclectic late Victorian and classical details. The 48' X 120' building is distinguished by a central bay of oriel windows on its Capitol Street (SE) facade. Palladian windows are located on both sides of this central bay on the fifth floor. Stylized label moldings and intricate cornice details are used extensively, as are jack arches, keystones and stone sills on second, third and fourth floor windows. Street front arcading is echoed on the side (NE) elevation (Photo no.s 1-5).

A brick cornice (Photo #6) consists of a series of small arches atop five courses of corbelling. Masonary turrets are used to interrupt the cornice pattern and to turn outside corners. An updated limestone coping serves to crown the cornice. The entire composition is articulated by use of painted brick which contrasts with that of the exterior walls. A portion of the original cornice was removed sometime between 1927 and 1930. In addition, the remaining turrets are shortened versions of the original elements and several courses of corbeled brick appear to have been removed from three perimeter walls (refer to Figure A).

The street level facade (SE) has been repeatedly remodeled and modernized by the building's tenants. It now consists of bronze corrugated metal sheathing and large plate glass windows (Photo #7). Original details included brick dentils, elaborate cornice, transoms, low-profile spandrel panels, two recessed entries and double doors (refer to Figures B and C). All elements were generally typical of a turn-of-the-century storefront. Most of the original elements are believed to be concealed under the existing metal facade. Plans have been prepared to replace the missing window and door elements.

Nearly 35,000 square feet of floor space is contained in the bearing-wall brick structure. Ten summer beams run the full length of the building, each spanning approximately twelve feet, perched atop huge timber posts (Photo #8). 2X12 and 2X14 joists are used throughout the building (Photo #9), each spanning approximately twenty-four feet. This configuration creates broad expanses of uninterrupted space.

An original freight elevator has been removed from the building, although the cable-drive/spring tension mechanism remains intact mounted on the fourth floor ceiling (Photo #10). The elevator shaft was abandoned sometime prior to 1930, and has since been dismantled and floor openings closed. Plans drafted by the S.S. Kresge Company (circa 1930) included "future development" of an elevator in the rear (NW) corner of the building. The proposal was never implemented.

Second floor partitions were constructed in 1937, and later revised in 1945. These included a lunch room, coat room and toilets (Figure F). These improvements remain, and are in good condition. Third, fourth and fifth floors are open and undeveloped, having remained unoccupied for most of the past 85 years. The building is in very good condition and is an excellent candidate for rehabilitation and reuse.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates constructed 1900-01 **Builder/Architect** Yost & Packard, Architects (Columbus, OH)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

THE LOEWENSTEIN BUILDING is a historically significant site in the commercial and industrial development of the City of Charleston, Kanawha Valley and southern West Virginia. In addition, the building was designed by the architectural partnership of Yost and Packard; well known for their influence on the practice of architecture in the State of West Virginia. It is the only known commercial building designed by this team in the state. Approximately 90 percent of all exterior walls remain unaltered from their original construction in 1900-1901. The building has excellent potential for rehabilitation and reuse. Plans have already been prepared to restore original design elements.

Introduction

During the late 1800's, the City of Charleston was rapidly developing as a commercial/industrial/government center. Front Street, along the riverfront, had served as the main business district for nearly 70 years. In the early 1870's, however, businesses began to locate along Capitol and Summers Streets (Figures G and H). During the next 30 years, commercial development slowly moved northward along the two main streets. The Loewenstein Building was an integral part of this commercial/industrial expansion, and played a key role in both the local and regional economy. That same site remains today at the heart of the city's traditional Central Business District, and at the center of a much larger regional market that boasts a population of 500,000.

Loewenstein & Sons, Inc.

Solomon M. Loewenstein was born in 1834 somewhere near Berlin, Germany. He came to America in 1860, locating near Columbus, Ohio, where he served in the 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry of the Union Army. He learned the trade of saddlery prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, a skill which he would later capitalize upon.

The 23rd Ohio was stationed at Fort Scammon (in the Kanawha Valley), where Solomon worked as a harness maker. Apparently, the majority of his four-year military stint was spent in the Charleston area. It was during this period that Solomon Loewenstein was befriended by some of the very few Jewish families then living in the valley. These friendships no doubt influenced the young Loewenstein's actions subsequent to his discharge from the military.

In 1865, having completed his military service, Solomon returned to Charleston, WV, to open a harness shop. Now 30 years old, he soon married a girl from Cincinnati, Ohio, with whom he raised five sons. Some twenty-five years later, he took his two-elder sons, Lewis and Moses into partnership, forming a wholesale/retail hardware, harness and saddlery business. For approximately 10 years, "Loewenstein & Sons, Inc." was operated on Front Street (later Kanawha Street and now Kanawha Boulevard), with a receiving warehouse located across the Kanawha River adjacent to the existing C&O Railroad Terminal. Raw materials were shipped into town via river barge and rail.

(cont'd.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Marshall, Paul D., Historical and Architectural Survey - Downtown Charleston, West Virginia, Charleston Regional Chamber of Commerce and Development, Charleston, WV, September 1984.

Personal Interview with Stanley Loewenstein, 5 July 85.

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 0.13 acre

Quadrangle name Charleston West (WV)

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7	4	4	4	5	4	0	4	2	4	4	6	8	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

Inclusive of Lot No.'s 3 and 4 measuring 120 ft. deep, 48' wide, and situated at the S.E. corner of Fife and Capitol Streets.

(see attached survey plat map)

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

state n/a code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gregory K. Lipscomb, AICP Senior Planner

organization City of Charleston date 12JULY85

street & number 501 Virginia Street East telephone (304)348 8020

city or town Charleston state West Virginia 25301

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer date September 11, 1985

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hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Patrick Andrews
for Keeper of the National Register

date 11/1/85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Loewenstein & Sons then purchased the property on the southwest corner of Fife and Capitol Streets from the trustee of the Julia A. Fife estate on April 21, 1900. On that site they quickly erected a five-story pressed brick building to house their thriving business.

The majority of their harness and saddlery customers were industrial users. Mine ponies, oil field crews and timber operations throughout the entire region were dependent upon proper harnesses and rigging to perform their work. Products of "Loewenstein & Sons" were used to haul pipe, trees and coal, all of which played major roles in the local economy. The southern coal fields, in particular, relied on such Charleston businesses to supply needed goods and services.

In 1903, Lewis died and Solomon and Moses continued the business until both died in 1909. Abe, Ike and Joe Loewenstein, the surviving sons of Solomon, succeeded their father and continued to run "Loewenstein & Sons, Inc." for many years thereafter. Joe Loewenstein served as president of the family business, Abe as vice-president and Ike as secretary. The latter brother also served as president of Charleston National Bank.

In 1933, Ike Loewenstein died, leaving Charleston National Bank without a chief executive officer. The Great Depression caused the general public to be somewhat distrustful of banking institutions. Bank officials feared that depositors would disassociate themselves with CNB after the death of Ike Loewenstein. In order to provide continuity and sooth community concerns, another "Loewenstein" (Joe) was selcted to serve as President. The selection proved to be appropriate. Charleston National survived the post-depression years without serious incident.

Despite their involvement in a variety of community activities, the Loewenstein brothers remained most closely involved with their family business. The mainstay product lines remained hardware, harnesses, Studebaker wagons and buggies, but the brothers were quick to introduce new "high-tech" products, such as home refrigerators.

During the mid-1920's, the S. S. Kresge Company was anxious to open a new store in the City of Charleston. They were determined to secure a Capitol Street address, but there were no storefronts or building lots available. Although the Loewenstein brothers had no intentions of dissolving their 37-year-old family business, they agreed to lease their Capitol Street building to the Kresge Co. and relocate Loewenstein & Sons. Kresge proposed a lucrative 99-year lease for the use of the 5-story building, an offer that the business-minded Loewensteins could not refuse. Loewenstein & Sons erected a new industrial building just around the corner at 810-812 Quarrier Street (known today as the L & S Building). The old Charleston wholesaler continued to operate until 1966, when it was sold to outside interests.

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The "Loewenstein Holding Company" was created to own and manage the Capitol Street property. Kresge operated a variety department store on the site from 1927 to 1971. The store was one of the "Jupiter" series, which featured items priced at 5¢ - 10¢ - \$1.00. After closing, Kresge subleased the building to Rite Aid Pharmacies, Inc. for the remainder of their lease period (until 2026).

Rite Aid operated a discount pharmacy on the street level for several years. The second floor was subleased, but the upper floors were rarely used. Most recently, the building has been vacated by Rite Aid and remains completely unused. This former tenant later purchased the building from the Loewenstein Holding Company in 1985.

A limited partnership, Fife Street Apartments, Limited, was formed in early 1985 to assume ownership of the building and sponsor its redevelopment and reuse. Ironically, representatives for the new developers hail from southeast Ohio, as did Solomon Loewenstein. The developers propose to use the upper floors, which have remained predominately unoccupied for the past 85 years, as residential space for up to 30 units.

ARCHITECTURE AND ARCHITECTS

The Loewenstein Building is a well preserved and unique example of classical and late Victorian architecture used in a commercial application. The pressed and molded brick building is distinguished by its' arcading, oriel windows, splayed lintels, ogee arches, label molding and pressed tin details. No other building in the City of Charleston combines these elements in a similar manner. A detailed description of the architectural elements is included in Item No. 7 - Description.

The Columbus, Ohio architectural partnership of "Yost and Packard" designed the Loewenstein Building in early 1900. Joseph Warren Yost (1849 - 1923) and Frank L. Packard were responsible for several buildings throughout the State of West Virginia, including Marion County Courthouse and several private residences. Frank Packard designed the Clay County Courthouse, Clay, WV- but it remains unclear whether Yost provided assistance in that project. The partnership also designed the addition to the Ohio State Capitol Building in the late 1890's. The Loewenstein Building is the only known commercial project designed by Yost and Packard. Their partnership (1891-1901) was terminated shortly after completion of this Capitol Street building.

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Wodehouse, Lawrence, American Architects from the Civil War to the First World War,
Pratt Institute, Gale Research Company, Detroit, Michigan, 1976.

Personal Interview with Rodney Collins, Architectural Historian, 9July85, 16July85.

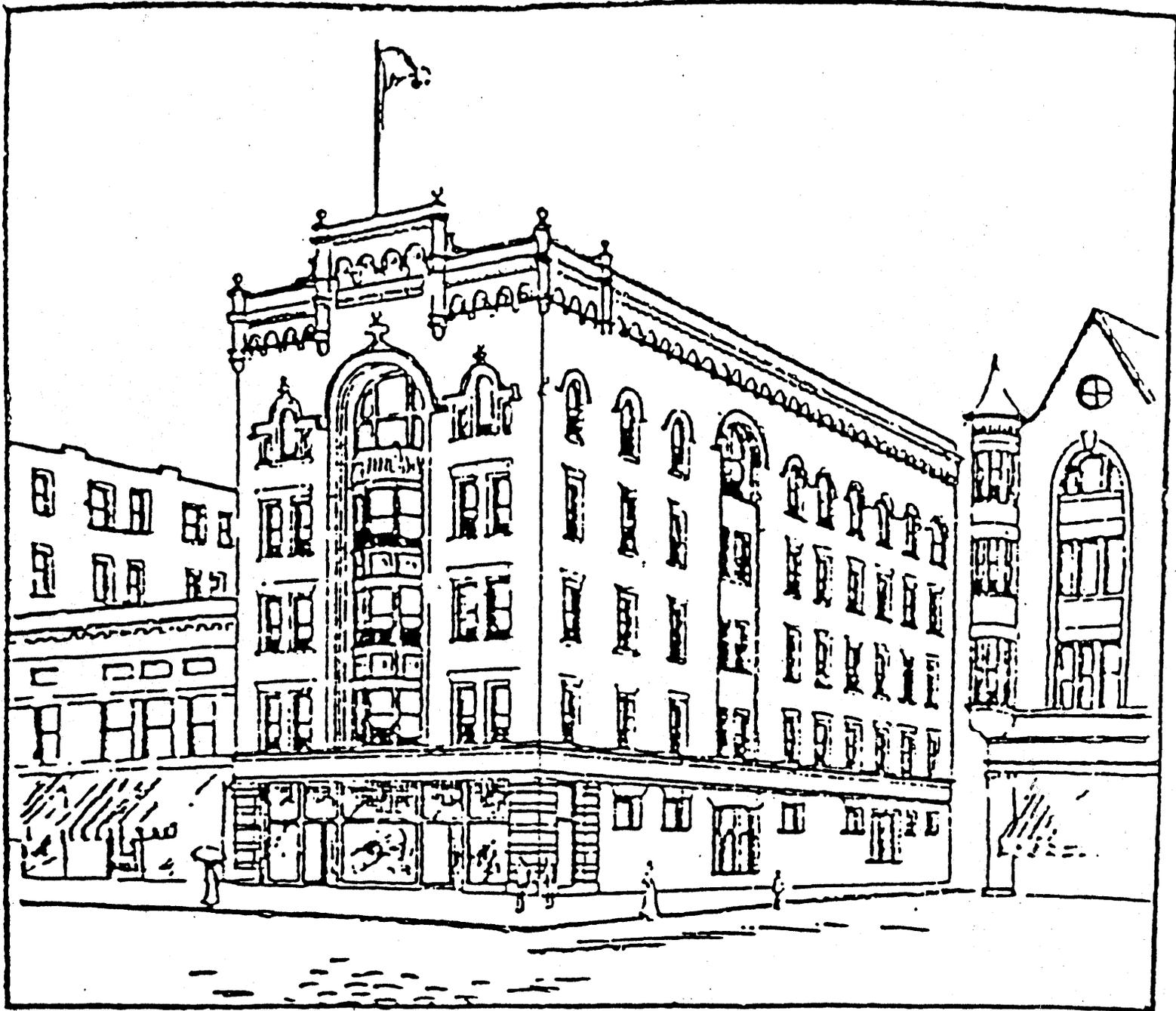


FIGURE A - Loewenstein Building (1901)

