MULTIPLE RESOURCES OF ANNISTON

CALHOUN COUNTY, ALABAMA

Historic name: Common name:	Bank of Anniston Couch's Jewelers	Owner:	Kirkland W. Leonard Trust SouthTrust Bank of Calhoun County P. O. Box 1000
Address:	1005 Noble Street		Anniston, Alabama 35202
Acreage:	less than one acre	UTM:	16/608540/3724550
Verbal Boundary:			Block 1, Lot 2, beginning at a of Noble Street a distance of 50

point on the east boundary line of Noble Street a distance of 50 feet north of the northeast intersection of Noble Street with Tenth Street, thence north along the east boundary of Noble Street a distance of 27 feet to a point, thence east at a right angle a distance of 100 feet to a point, thence south parallel with Noble Street a distance of 27 feet, thence west at a right angle to Noble Street a distance of 100 feet to the point of beginning.

Architectural Design: Neo-Classical

Date of Construction: 1888

Statement of Significance:

Criterion A - Commerce

The Bank of Anniston is significant for its association with the early commercial development of the city of Anniston. The building originally housed one of the first banks in the city and after its subsequent failure in 1898 was occupied by various commercial establishments. The building is also one of a very small group of commercial buildings on Noble Street to survive the rigorous attempt at modernization of the downtown area that has persisted since the late 1940s.

Criterion C - Architecture

The Bank of Anniston is significant as a notable example, in Anniston, of a small Victorian neoclassical commercial building particularly distinguished by the use of stone ornamentation.

Description:

The small, two-story commercial building is located on the east side of Noble Street between Tenth and Eleventh Streets in the midst of the central business district. The distinguishing element of the building is its stone facade, unique in that all other original facades on Noble Street are brick.

The first floor was modernized in a stylized classical motif in 1967. On the second floor are two large arched windows incorporating fanlights. These are defined by stone voussoirs accented by oversized raised keystones. The facade is articulated by rough-cut pilasters with composite capitals, carrying an entablature enriched with bead-and reel astragal molding. Unusually ornate modillions support the galvanized iron breakfront cornice, which is incorporated into a central pediment flanked by a stone parapet. Inside, the ground floor has been modernized but the second floor is largely unaltered.

Historical Summary:

During the boom year of 1887, J. R. Draper, W. G. Ledbetter, and C. D. Woodruff organized the Bank of Anniston with a capital stock of \$100,000. They constructed the elaborate stone-and-brick structure and occupied it from 1888 until the bank failed in 1898 because of non-revenue-yielding real estate capital stock. The bank's failure resulted in a lengthy period of litigation pitting the creditors against the depositors.

The Anniston Banking and Loan Association occupied the first floor thereafter for a few years while upstairs was Sanders, Swann, and Company. Maximilian B. Wellborn served as president of the loan company. He also was a president of the First National Bank and later served as one of the first governors of the Federal Reserve Bank. At the time of the interior renovation in the late 1960s, the tellers' cages were still intact on the southside of the building.

The structure housed a cotton exchange and then an insurance office between periods of being vacant until the 1920s when C. D. Boutwell's Mercantile Company took over the space. In the early 1930s Western Union Telegraph Company became the occupant until 1953, then a clothing store until 1967 when Couch's Jeweler's rented it. A variety of groups met on the second floor before 1967, including the Odd Fellows and Alcoholics Anonymous. Today Couch's Jewelry repair, business office and storage are found upstairs.

The building stands today as both a monument to and a remnant of the model city's standard of architectural excellence in the exuberant late 1880s.

