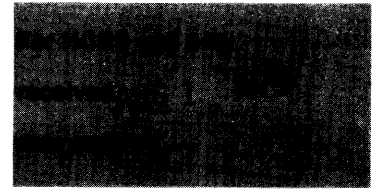


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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



1. Name

historic Holston National Bank

and/or common Hamilton National Bank

2. Location

street & number 531 South Gay Street _____ not for publication

city, town Knoxville _____ vicinity of congressional district Second

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

4. Owner of Property

name United American Bank

street & number United American Plaza

city, town Knoxville _____ vicinity of state Tennessee 37902

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Knox County Courthouse, Register of Deeds Office

street & number Main Avenue

city, town Knoxville _____ state Tennessee 37902

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Knoxville Heritage Historic Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 _____ federal _____ state _____ county local

depository for survey records Knoxville Heritage, Inc. P.O. Box 1746

city, town Knoxville _____ state Tennessee 37901

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 Holston National Bank is a fourteen story office building located on a 50 by 140 foot lot on the west corner of South Gay Street and Clinch Avenue in downtown Knoxville. When it was constructed in 1913, the building had only twelve stories, but two additional stories, which house the penthouse, were added ca. 1928. Designed in the Neo-Classical Revival style, most of the decorative elements utilize the Greek Ionic order. Located on a busy street corner, the two elevations which face South Gay Street and Clinch Avenue are sheathed in marble for the first three floors; the walls of the remaining floors are covered with a buff yellow brick which extends around to all four sides.

The South Gay Street facade (northeast elevation) is divided into two major parts: the first two floors form a typical columned temple porch, which supports a stylized second expanded architrave that includes the third floor. This elevation has a relatively narrow, recessed panel, framed by marble pilasters, which contains the evenly spaced engaged Ionic columns; the pilasters on each edge and the engaged columns divide the wall into three bays. The center bay contains the main entrance, an overscaled, framed and pedimented opening; the flanking bays each contain oversized, rectangular windows, and above these are smaller windows, which increase the sense of height of that portion of the elevation. The larger windows are framed with marble rosettes which resemble those on the Erechtheion in Athens. The normal architrave and cornice support an expanded second architrave which contains the third floor with small windows and paired pilasters.

The Clinch Avenue facade (southeast elevation) has a long row of Ionic pilasters, flanked on each end by balancing bays which contain openings. These bays are defined by plain pilasters that support a full entablature with a frieze containing triglyphs and metopes ornamented with paterae. Each of the intermediate bays has a window which occupies three-fourths of the space; the remaining one-fourth has an elaborate metal ventilation grill. The brick portions of both facades are divided into bays by brick pilasters which correspond to those on the first three floors. Each bay contains regularly spaced windows.

The heavy metal cornice was relocated to its present position ca. 1928, when the additional floors were added; however, the sculptural decoration, apparently acroterions, was later removed from the top edge of the cornice.

The major differences between the original appearance and the present include the windows in the added two stories which are larger than the original as they completely fill the panel from pilaster to pilaster. The original window frames have, in some instances, been replaced with newer ones; and the addition of air conditioning units necessitated the cutting of rectangular openings under many of the windows. On the ground floor, it is assumed that the present glass block panels on the southeast elevation replaced earlier windows, although to date no verification of this has been discovered; entry doors have also been modernized. Generally, the exterior maintains its original architectural appearance.

The interior of the building has several important features. The entry and elevator lobby has a barrel vaulted ceiling with heavy plaster rosettes that have recently been carefully repaired; the vault is supported by a frieze decorated with triglyphs, metopes, and paterae; the remaining surfaces are polished marble. The elevator doors are richly decorated brass with fine, delicate engraving. The banking lobby was originally of marble with Greek and Art Deco motifs. Most of this was lost in 1977 in a renovation of the bank lobby; however, the rail around the staircase to the lower vault lobby, as well as the staircase itself, vault lobby, and support elements appear to be original. The design of this work is very

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED	AUG 1 1979
DATE ENTERED	OCT 2 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

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fine; the hand rails, vault security doors, ventilation grills, and other elements are exceptional. The office floors are generally undistinguished and are in various states of renovation.

A heavily sculptured frieze is found between the eleventh and twelfth floors on the northeast and southeast elevations. These walls are surmounted with a heavy cornice with an exceptionally large overhang.

An earlier architectural drawing of the building indicates that a predominantly Beaux-Arts style was proposed initially by the architect John Kevan Peebles. Most of the details of the earlier design were similar to those on the present building, except that the architect planned door and window openings of a Roman, rather than a Greek, design.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1912–13 **Builder/Architect** John Kevan Peebles

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Construction of the Holston National Bank began in 1912, and the bank officially opened for business on June 16, 1913. When completed, it was the tallest building in Knoxville, and remains today an easily distinguished landmark in the city's skyline. For many years it was the headquarters for Knoxville's largest financial institution.

John Kevan Peebles, a Norfolk, Virginia, architect designed the building. Together with his partner J.E.R. Carpenter, he designed Fayerweather Hall at the University of Virginia. He participated in the restoration of the Virginia State Capitol in 1902 and was the designer of several buildings at the 1907 Jamestown Exhibition. He was also responsible for the First National Bank of Roanoke, Virginia, and the Heard National Bank of Jacksonville, Florida. The Holston National Bank is the only known Tennessee building designed by Peebles.

The George Fuller Construction Company of New York built the bank. Marble work was executed by Fenton Construction Company, a Knoxville firm, and the Edgefield and Nashville Manufacturing Company of Nashville did the interior woodwork.

The Holston Bank merged with the Union Bank in 1928, and the building was renamed the Holston-Union. The Holston-Union failed; in 1931 the newly organized Hamilton National Bank took over the building giving it the name by which it is still known. In 1975, the Hamilton Bank was renamed the United American Bank (UAB) during 1977, the bank lobby was remodeled; in 1978, the UAB occupied its new headquarters building two blocks south on Gay Street, but still maintains a branch in the building.

The building's physical stature in the community was reinforced by the many prominent professionals and businesses that maintained offices there. The street corner where it was located became the busiest pedestrian corner in the city; the building in effect defined the center of downtown Knoxville.

Today it is the only high-rise structure in the city designed in the Neo-Classical Revival style; the richness of materials used both on the inside and exterior also make it unique for a private commercial building in this city; the quality of the design of the decoration also again makes it very unusual for a community which generally had been very austere in the design of its commercial buildings.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Joseph L. Herndon, "Architects in Tennessee until 1930. A Dictionary," an M.S. Thesis, Columbia University School of Architecture and Planning, New York, New York, May 1975.
 Knoxville City Directory, 1912 and 1913 editions.
 Knoxville Sentinel, June 13, 1913 and June 16, 1913.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .17

Quadrangle name Knoxville, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	7	2	3	6	8	2	0	3	9	8	3	7	3	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 nominated property is a city lot which measures approximately 50 feet by 140 feet and is described in Knox County Deed Book 567, pages 265 and 266, which is located in the Office of the Register of Deeds, Knox County Courthouse, Knoxville, TN. The property nominated is the entire tract owned by United American Bank.

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ronald E. Childress

organization Childress and Associates, Architects date May 10, 1979

street & number 524a 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Herbert L. Hager

Executive Director,
 title Tennessee Historical Commission

date July 26, 1979

For NCRS use only

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

Carol Shell 10-2-79
 Keeper of the National Register

W.H. Brown 8/1/79
 Chief of Registration