

PH0112062 5/1/73

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Connecticut
COUNTY:	Hartford
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
FEB 28 1973	

1. NAME
 COMMON NAME: City Hall - Monument District
 City Hall and Town Clerk's Office; Civil War Monument and Central Park
 AND/OR HISTORIC: Russwin Hotel, U.S. Post Office, Old New Britain National Bank; Monument

2. LOCATION
 STREET AND NUMBER: 13-35 West Main Street and Central Park
 CITY OR TOWN: New Britain
 STATE: Connecticut CODE: 09 COUNTY: Hartford CODE: 003

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

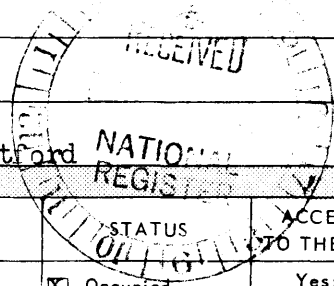
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
 OWNER'S NAME: City of New Britain
 STREET AND NUMBER:
 CITY OR TOWN: New Britain STATE: Connecticut CODE: 09

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
 COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
 City Hall, Town and City Clerk's Office
 STREET AND NUMBER:
 17 West Main Street
 CITY OR TOWN: New Britain STATE: Connecticut CODE: 09

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
 TITLE OF SURVEY:
 DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
 STREET AND NUMBER:
 CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Connecticut
 COUNTY: Hartford
 ENTRY NUMBER: FEB 28 1973
 DATE:

7. DESCRIPTION

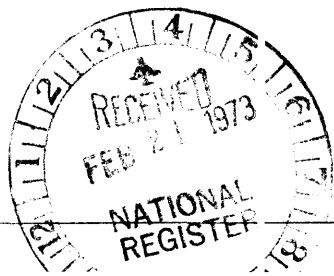
CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This nomination includes four structures: the three buildings of the City Hall complex on the north side of West Main Street and the Civil War Monument and the park it sits in, directly across from the City Hall complex, on the south side of the street. A separate description is supplied below for each of the four.

- a.) Russwin Hotel (City Hall): Originally built as a hotel in 1885, this building was later modified by the original architects, McKim, Meade, and White, for its present use as a city hall. Internal arrangements only were modified at that time, leaving the exterior intact. Designed in the manner of a Venetian palazzo, it is five stories high and is capped with a hipped roof of red pantiles. Four chimneys are extended above the roof. The five stories are grouped 2-2-1; the two downstairs floors are sheathed in coursed brownstone blocks, with no frames around the windows. The ground floor is behind a five-bay arcade, the second floor windows are flat-headed and 2-5-2. The third and fourth floors are grouped in a two-story arcade of red brick, with five bays on the central axis of the building separated by a wider pier from the two bays on each end of the facade. An intricate iron balcony is centered on the facade, at the third floor level and is carried on heavily carved consoles. The imposts and arch heads carry intricate florrate and geometric designs. The fifth floor is set off from the lower floors by an egg and dart molding and a band of ornament. The nine windows echo the rhythms of the arcade below.
- b.) Old New Britain National Bank Building: Since the 1920's this building has been incorporated into the City Hall complex as the offices of the Town and City Clerk. Built in 1860-61, this two-story romanesque style commercial building is of modest architectural pretention; its arched bays complement those of its larger neighbor, City Hall. The facade is of red brick with brownstone detailing.
- c.) Old Post Office Building: Built in 1871, this three story building boasts an impressive renaissance revival facade, with brownstone quions set against a smooth, light masonry facing. The second floor window frames are pedimented, and the third floor frames have segmentally arched projecting heads. The cornice has both dentils and modillions.
- d.) Civil War Monument and Park: Built in 1900, this monument is apparently of limestone. Constructed in the Beaux Arts Style, Ionic columns and pediments are the main elements of the four-sided structure. It is topped by a bronze, winged-victory statue.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



8. SIGNIFICANCE

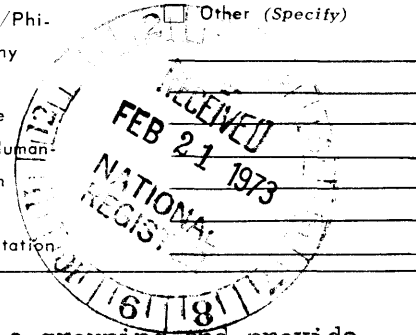
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **Russwin Hotel-1885; Bank Building-1860;**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate) **P.O. Building-1870; Monument-1900.**

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

These four structures and Central Park form a grouping and provide graphic testimony of the increasing affluence and cultural and architectural sophistication of the beginning New England city in the latter half of the 19th century.

Ten years before the first of these buildings was completed, New Britain was a small farming and mill community of about 3,000 people. At that time the village center was about half a mile away, where the Congregational Church and parsonage and some commercial buildings overlooked what was then the town green. By the time the National Bank Building was constructed in 1860-61, a railroad line and several small factories had been completed immediately to the north of the bank. The bank was the first financial institution in the young industrial community. During the next two and one half decades, as larger manufacturing establishments developed in the vicinity, the commercial center of the city shifted to the present downtown square and the city began its period of growth.

The Russwin Hotel Building is of special interest architecturally and historically because it was the only building designed solely by Joseph Morrill Wells, Stanford White's principal assistant.

Dr. Leland M. Roth of the Department of Art and History at Ohio State University, and an authority on the architecture of McKim, Meade and White, has prepared a brief statement on the significance of the building and its architect.

"...McKim once said that Wells was one of the greatest influences on their firm. More recently, major architectural historians such as Henry Russell Hitchcock and Vincent Scully have credited Wells with directing the course of McKim's and White's designs toward the example of the High Renaissance in Italy...The Russwin Hotel is particularly important because in this, the only building for which he was solely responsible, Wells was able to demonstrate exactly what he intended by following Renaissance models. The ornamental details are very crisp and carefully placed, but the overall design is firmly rooted in American sources and American hotel design. There is also a reference to the master American architect, Henry Hobson Richardson. The intricate rhythm of the

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

A Monograph of the Work of McKim, Meade, and White, 4 vols. 1914-20.
(now being republished)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

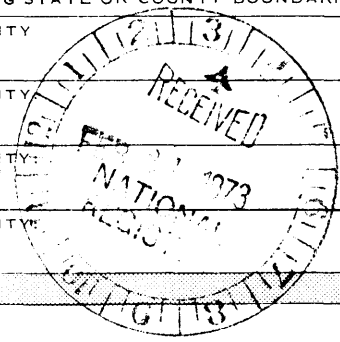
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	41°	40'	04"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	72°	46'	57"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

12/6/45
1/6/50
63

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: one acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Robert D. Yaro, Planner II

ORGANIZATION: New Britain City Plan Commission DATE: October 19, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: 27 West Main Street

CITY OR TOWN: New Britain STATE: Connecticut CODE: 09

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: [Signature]

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: February 14, 1973

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

[Signature]
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 2/28/73

ATTEST:
[Signature]
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 2-27-73

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Connecticut	
COUNTY Hartford	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

#8 Significance (continued)

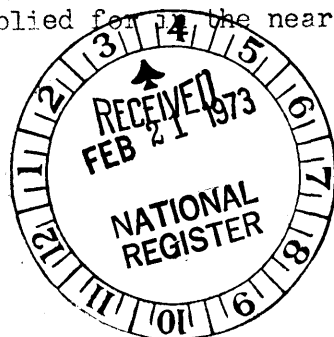
bays of the facade is without parallel for its subtlety and restrained complexity in the commercial architecture of the last half of the nineteenth century in the United States. Even McKim and White were not able to achieve quite so much with simple devices. Well's authorship of the design is well attested; in an article by C. Howard Walker, published in the Architectural Record in 1929, the design is credited to him and illustrated. "

"The Russwin Building is also important because of the way it dominates and controls the space before it. In this, the building acts very much like the Renaissance palazzo on which it is based, which gave meaning to their urban squares as well. The Russwin Hotel is very sensitive to the urban situation. This sense of authority is also why it makes such a splendid City Hall."

"The Russwin Hotel is also significant for the use of terra cotta on the exterior. This building is one of the small number designed in (the early 1880's) in which this material was extensively used. Up to this time terra cotta was believed to be too fragile for the rigorous North American climate, and only in the late 1870's and early 1880's did a few enterprising architects begin to use the material. Wells called for the standard strong red-colored terra cotta, matching the brick to it to create a unified design...Well's use of terra cotta was one of the most sensitive of this period. The building was illustrated in a historical survey of the use of the material in Architectural Record in 1892..."

Because of the historical significance of each structure in this group, as well as the historical relation of each structure to the others, it is important that recognition be given to this district, and imperative that its preservation be insured.

Work is beginning on the restoration of the interior and a grant will be applied for in the near future.



CITY OF NEW BRITAIN
CONNECTICUT



SCALE: 1" = 2700'

TOWN

TOWN OF SOUTHWINGTON



**LOCATION OF
PROPERTIES NOMINATED
TO NATIONAL REGISTER**

LAT: 41° 40' 04"
LONG: 72° 46' 57"