

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received **DEC 23 1987**
date entered **FEB - 1 1988**

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

1. Name

historic Bank of St. Albans Building

and or common St. Albans City Building

2. Location

street & number 80 Olde Main Plaza

N/A not for publication

city, town St. Albans

N/A vicinity of

state West Virginia

code 54

county Kanawha

code 039

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" 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 City of St. Albans Urban Renewal Department

street & number 80 Olde Main Plaza

city, town St. Albans

N/A vicinity of

state West Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kanawha County Courthouse

street & number Court and Virginia Streets

city, town Charleston

state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

St. Albans Historic & Architectural
title Survey, by Paul D. Marshall has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date September 30, 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Unit, Dept. of Culture & History

city, town Capitol Complex, Charleston

state West Virginia

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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The City Building of St. Albans, formerly the Bank of St. Albans Building, is located at 80 Olde Main Plaza, at the intersection of Main and C Streets, in St. Albans, Kanawha County, West Virginia. Located at what was once one of the major commercial intersections of the downtown commercial district, the building, with its semi-rounded corner, is presently the focal point of and largest building in a closed-off-to-traffic commercial pedestrian "mall."

The bank building, which it was until 1961, is a three story masonry commercial building constructed in the Classical Revival style popular after the turn-of-the-century. The building is actually a metaphor of a classical Greek column. It sits on a high raised sandstone basement-foundation that becomes higher as it recedes north down C Street (which is sloped), becoming the outer walls of a full basement. The foundation of the first floor is masonry, with recessed masonry panels. The front, or Main Street, elevation is basically two bays across with the right, or east, bay being rounded to follow the curve of the street corner. The most prominent features of the front elevation are the four fluted stone two story columns with carved Ionic capitals that support the entablature of the "capital" cornice, or second floor cornice. The entire building, in fact, as stated, is designed in the form of a classical Greek column, with the raised basement serving as the base, the first two floors as the "shaft", and the third floor and cornice(s) as the capital. These Ionic columns emphasize the illusion of the first and second floors as a shaft.

The high entablature of the second floor cornice is graced with rounded modillions, twelve in number, that have a small floral motif at their center. These modillions are spaced over the top ends of each bay side. Above the entablature, which is otherwise plain save for the modillions, is a row of graceful dentilation, running in a belt under the entire upper eave of the second floor cornice. Above the eave, which is wide and projecting, is the rather truncated third floor. Each of the building's six bays has two sets of windows, both at this level and at the first and second levels. However, whereas the windows on the lower levels are high, the windows at this level are rather short. The twelve windows at this level are recessed and are each separated by masonry pilasters, while above each window is a masonry soldier course with a central decorative sandstone keystone. The top, or third story, cornice has a rather high, plain entablature, excepting for painted pilaster tops, recessed panels, a belt of dentilation that duplicates that of the second floor cornice, and a fenestration that follows the recessing of each bay. Atop the cornice are handsome round symmetrical finials, rather large with the appearance of globular balls of light, eight in number, that cap each of the building's pilasters. The windows of the exterior were replaced during the early 1960's renovation, when the Bank Building was being adapted for use as a City Building, though it is not believed that this change has materially altered the overall integrity of the structure.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet St. Albans City Building Item number 7

Page 2

The side elevation of the bank building, or C Street side, consists of two recessed bays that are both flanked and separated by masonry pilasters, each of them on a sandstone base, that have a "building block" appearance. The first and second stories of these bays are separated by rectangular recessed panels. Each bay on each level contains two sets of high windows that are three paned.

The interior of the building has been somewhat altered to accommodate the change in use that occurred in 1961 when it ceased being a bank and became the city building for St. Albans. However, many of the principal features of the bank remain. The lobby space at the entrance is essentially unchanged; the tile floor is intact, as is the original bank vault and safe. Public counters stand in the place of the original teller windows. A staircase was added in the early 1960's to reach the second floor (the stairs were donated by the local branch of the Union Carbide Corporation), where office space remains much the same as during the bank period. Much original woodwork is intact, including doors, door surrounds, etc., although ceilings have been lowered and other modern furnishings, such as carpeting, air conditioning, etc. are in evidence. The large open third floor remains unaltered from its original condition, as does nearly all of the massively stone walled basement level.

There are no outbuildings or other dependent structures, contributing or non-contributing, associated with the St. Albans City Building.

The St. Albans City Building, the former Bank of St. Albans, is the city's most outstanding example of commercial historic architecture and is a fine local example of the Classical Revival movement in architecture in turn-of-the-century West Virginia.

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

Specific dates 1906 **Builder/Architect** C.P. Guice, Builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Meets Criteria C

The City Building of St. Albans, formerly the Bank of St. Albans Building, located at Main Street Plaza on the corner of Main and C Streets, in St. Albans, Kanawha County, West Virginia, is significant as the finest example of historic commercial architecture in St. Albans.¹ It is also significant as a building that has long played a significant role in the development of this, the state's fourteenth largest municipality.²

Explanatory Notes

¹The St. Albans City Building, constructed in 1906, is a three story Classical Revival structure with some Italianate influence that is easily the finest and most intact example of a commercial historic architectural style in St. Albans. The City Building is the outstanding structure on Main Street, an area that has been closed off to vehicular traffic and developed by the city as a "pedestrian mall" with a historic ambiance. The building is sited on the most prominent corner of Main Street, and its curving facade allows it to dominate the corner visually in a striking manner. The building, originally constructed as a bank, is in the form of a classical column. It stands on a high raised stone and masonry base. The "shaft" of the building is dominated by two sets of fluted columns with Ionic capitals that uphold a heavy dentilated cornice. This cornice, with both dentilation and modillions in the entablature, in turn serves as the base for the "capital" of the column effect, which is graced by paired windows, broken stepped pediment, and surmounted by large globular finials at regular intervals. The effect of the whole is most striking, especially as the building is the tallest one on Main Street. A 1983 historic and architectural survey of St. Albans revealed that the City Building was, in the opinion of the surveyer, the city's most historically intact and historically significant commercial structure.

²The Bank of St. Albans, as an institution, dates to August 14, 1900, when it was originally chartered. It was located in the drug store of "Doc" A. Zerkle, a locally prominent merchant and pharmacist, at the corner of Main and B Streets. Dr. Zerkle continued to operate his pharmacy out of the building, while the bank grew and prospered along with the growing community. A disastrous fire broke out on January 31, 1906 and swept through the Main Street business district, destroying most of the buildings there, including the Bank of St. Albans, which was the last to burn. Not to be daunted, the bank immediately began and carried forth a

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Coalsmouth Journal, journal of the St. Albans Historical Society, various issues.
 Ellis, Garland H., A Pictorial History of St. Albans, privately printed, n.d.
 Ellis, Garland H., St. Albans, West Virginia; Its Origin and Development,

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property $\frac{1}{2}$ acre: 1 city lot
 Quadrangle name St. Albans, W.Va.

Quadrangle scale 1":24,000'

UTM References

A

1	7	4	2	6	7	20	4	2	4	8	8	0	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 St. Albans City Building occupies one city lot, being the corner lot bounded on the south by Olde Main Plaza (formerly Main Street), on the east by C Street, and on the north by an unnamed alley, in St. Albans, West Va.

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

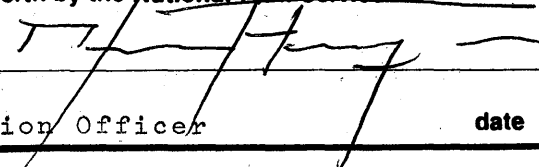
name/title Michael J. Pauley, Historian
 organization Hart and Pauley date May 18, 1987
 street & number 4651 Victoria Road telephone (304) 744-9342
 city or town Charleston state West Virginia 25313

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 December 11, 1987

For NPS use only

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

 date 2/1/88
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet St. Albans City Building Item number 8

Page 2

re-building program, constructing the three story Classical Revival structure with the "rounded" corner that is still the dominate commercial structure on Main Street. Charles P. Guice was the builder on the project. Guice was also a school teacher who served part time on the local school board. Part of the materials for the building's construction came from the American Column and Lumber Company of St. Albans. "Doc" C. A. Zerkle continued to be associated with the bank for many years after its 1906 re-construction.

The Bank of St. Albans, along with serving as one of the city's major financial institutions, contributed to the life of the community in other ways. As the bank did not use all of its available space for banking purposes, the upper floors of the building were leased as office space, primarily to prominent St. Albans attornies, such as Herbert W. Bryan, a city councilman and Dr. Ward Harshbarger who was also the city's first health officer. The upper floor of the bank, which is an open "ball room" type floor, was also used as a meeting place for such organizations as the Masons and the International Order of Oddfellows.

The Bank of St. Albans survived the great banking crisis of 1933, while its "sister institution", the First National Bank of St. Albans, did not. In 1960-61 the Bank of St. Albans constructed a new facility, and the original bank building was purchased by the city of St. Albans for use as a city hall. In the quarter-century since that time, the building has continued to serve the city as office of the mayor and other city agencies and as a meeting place for the city council as well as various civic organizations. In this way, the building has continued to play a significant role in the history and development of the city of St. Albans.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet St. Albans City Building Item number 9

Page 2

St. Albans, W.Va., Dawson Printing Co., c.1977
Marshall, Paul D., St. Albans, West Virginia, Historic and Architectural Survey, Charleston, W.Va., 1983
"Oral Interviews" with Hon. Edward Bassett, mayor of St. Albans, Dorothy Harshbarger, and Margie Miller, by Michael Pauley, February-April, 1987
West Virginia Centennial Committee of St. Albans, A Century with St. Albans, West Virginia, 1863-1963, Russell G. Davisson, ed., St. Albans, W.Va., Harless Printing Co., 1963
West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia, Richwood, W.Va., J.Comstock Pub., 1973, various volumes