

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 6 1984

date entered OCT 10 1984

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

1. Name

historic Marr and Holman Buildings in Downtown Nashville (1922-1936)
~~Thematic Resources~~

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number See Inventory Forms

N/A not for publication

city, town Nashville

N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee

code 047

county Davidson

code 037

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

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership - See Inventory Forms

street & number N/A

city, town N/A

N/A vicinity of

state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Davidson County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Nashville

state Tennessee 37201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nashville-Davidson County Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1978 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Metropolitan Nashville Historical Commission

city, town Nashville

state Tennessee 37203

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 early buildings of the architectural firm of Marr and Holman comprise this thematic nomination of seven properties in downtown Nashville, Tennessee. Marr and Holman was one of the most important architectural firms in Tennessee during the early 20th century. They were one of few firms to design large buildings in the Art Deco and Moderne styles and were also only one of several companies to remain in business during the Depression. The buildings in the nomination include the most historically and architecturally significant structures designed by the firm which remain in downtown Nashville.

The seven buildings included in the nomination are: the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta constructed in 1922 in the Neo-Classic style (#1); the James Robertson Hotel built in 1928 in the Art Deco style (#2); the Sudekum Building completed in 1932 in the Art Deco style (#3, NR 1979); the Noel Hotel completed in 1930 in the Neo-Classic style (#4, NR 1982); the Rich Schwartz building finished in 1929 in the Art Deco style (#5 NR 1983); the United States Post Office which was completed in 1934 in the Art Deco style (#6); and the Tennessee Supreme Court building (#7) built in 1936 in an austere Neo-Classic style.

The buildings included in the nomination represent the major works of Marr and Holman designed between 1922 and 1936 in downtown Nashville. All of the properties were constructed for commercial or governmental use and have been continually occupied since their completion. They range from three to twelve stories and represent a unique grouping of structures in downtown Nashville. While alterations have occurred to several of the structures on the first or ground story, all of the buildings retain their original design and integrity.

The nomination includes the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta and the Noel Hotel which shows Marr and Holman's expertise with the Neo-Classic style of the 1920s. The remaining buildings in the nomination represent the finest expressions of the Art Deco and Art Moderne style found in the downtown area. The James Robertson Hotel and the Rich Schwartz building illustrate the firm's growing expertise with the Art Deco style. This movement towards Art Deco design culminated in the Sudekum building which is regarded as Nashville's best example of the Art Deco style. Also built in the Art Deco style was the U.S. Post Office while the Tennessee Supreme Court building is representative of the austere Neo-Classic style of the 1930s.

The buildings in this nomination were selected from those surveyed by the Metropolitan Historical Commission of Nashville and Davidson County in 1978. Selection was also based upon the original files of Marr and Holman which were located in 1980 and are on file with the Tennessee State Archives. Additional advisement was received from representatives of the Tennessee Historical Commission in 1984. Research was provided by Philip Thomason and Jim Dreager of Thomason and Associates of Nashville, Tennessee.

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Over two dozen buildings were designed by Marr and Holman in downtown Nashville between 1913 and 1936. Of these only eleven are still standing and of these seven were selected for inclusion in this nomination. The remaining buildings were not selected because they did not possess sufficient architectural or historical significance to meet National Register criteria.

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

Specific dates 1922–1936 **Builder/Architect** Marr and Holman

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Marr and Holman Buildings in Downtown Nashville, Tennessee (1922–1936) Thematic Resources are nominated under criteria A and C. All of the properties possess significance in local history and were designed by Marr and Holman, a leading architectural firm of the Southeast in the early 20th century. Of the many buildings designed by the firm this grouping of seven properties represents the best remaining examples of their work in downtown Nashville. Included are several of their early designs which illustrate the development of the firm as well as their Art Deco designs which are unique in the city. Together they represent an important historical and architectural resource in the city.

The firm of Marr and Holman was organized in 1913 with Joseph Holman and Thomas Marr principals in the firm. Marr was born in 1866 and was an apprentice to several prominent architects in Nashville at the turn of the century. Although Marr was born partially deaf this did not hinder his career. During the early 1900s he opened his own office and for the first few years concentrated on residential design. In 1905 Marr hired Joseph Holman as an office boy to run errands and clean the office. Holman was born in 1890 and studied at Vanderbilt University for a year before working with Marr. Eventually Holman became a draftsman for the firm and by 1913 the relationship grew into a partnership between the two. Holman became an adept businessman and he served as the company's front man in securing contracts and clients while Marr worked primarily on the architectural designs.

After World War I the Neo-Classic style became the dominant form of architecture for large buildings in the city. Many new banks and commercial structures were constructed in the early 1920s in this style. One of the finest examples in Nashville is the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta on Third Avenue North. This building was completed in 1922 and was designed by Marr and Holman in association with architect Ten Eyck Brown of Atlanta. The three story structure displays a massive portico with four large limestone columns with Ionic capitals. Above the columns is a projecting pediment with modillion blocks and entablature. This building has not been altered and is one of the best examples of the Neo-Classic style in the city.

During the 1920s the firm expanded to include many architects and draftsman and for many years occupied offices in Nashville's prestigious Stahlman Building. They produced designs for buildings throughout the South including courthouses, banks, residences and commercial structures. In Nashville Marr and Holman designed many other buildings in the Neo-Classic style but most of these have

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property See Inventory Forms

Quadrangle name Nashville West, TN

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References See Inventory Forms

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Inventory Forms

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Philip Thomason, James Draeger

organization Thomason and Associates

date 4/11/84

street & number 1700 Hayes Street, Suite 202

telephone 615-320-5732

city or town Nashville

state Tennessee 37202

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X 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.

Deputy

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Herbert L. Hays

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 8/21/84

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

See Continuation Sheet for listing

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Paul R. Reed

date 10/1/84

Chief of Registration

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been demolished. One of their best designs was for the Caldwell Building (demolished) at the corner of Fourth Avenue North and Union Street. This eight story bank building completed in 1924 featured massive Corinthian pilasters on both major facades and an elaborate cornice at the roofline. The building's main entrance displayed bronze doors created by famed metal worker Samuel Yellin of New York.

Another important example of this style was the Andrew Jackson Hotel completed in 1925 at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Deaderick Streets. The Andrew Jackson was a twelve story hotel containing 400 rooms and was completed at a cost of one and one-half million dollars. The building featured limestone sheathing on the first three floors with large rounded arch windows and classical designs. At the roofline was an large modillioned cornice, balustrade and urns. The hotel was regarded as Nashville's finest upon its completion. The building remained standing until the early 1970s when it was demolished for the Tennessee Performing Arts Center.

Neo-Classic structures by Marr and Holman also included the Farmers and Merchants Bank on Third Avenue completed in 1922 (demolished 1974), the Cotton States Life Insurance building on Sixth Avenue (demolished 1984) and the Sam Davis Hotel on Seventh Avenue. The Sam Davis is not regarded as one of their best designs and has been determined not to meet National Register criteria.

After the early 1920s Marr and Holman's reputation increased and they were chosen to design buildings throughout the Southeast. Their designs can still be seen in communities such as Columbia, Clarksville, Chattanooga, Paducah, Kentucky and Huntsville, Alabama. For many years they worked under contract with the Crescent Amusement Company to design its theatre buildings in the region. The Princess Theatre buildings in Bowling Green, Kentucky and Murfreesboro, Tennessee are extant examples of their designs of this period. The firm was praised for their work in the Commercial and Neo-Classic styles but their best works came during the Art Deco period.

Marr and Holman was the only architectural firm to execute major designs in the Art Deco style in Nashville. The transition to the Art Deco style can be seen in their design of the James Robertson Hotel on Seventh Avenue. The James Robertson Hotel was completed in 1928 and was one of several large hotel buildings constructed in the city during the building boom of the 1920s. The building displays elaborate geometric banding in the limestone panels on the first and second floors and at the roofline. It is also given a heightened vertical appearance through projecting brick piers and the stepped roofline.

This emphasis on the Art Deco style carried over into the Rich Schwartz building on Sixth Avenue. This three story building is distinguished by its simple decoration on the upper facade. Window openings are located only in the

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central bay while the remaining two bays have recessed concrete panels. Accenting the vertical appearance of the structure are fluted piers at the corners of the building which culminate in Art Deco floral panels. Although some alterations have occurred to the storefront the upper facade displays its original character.

Art Deco detailing is also visible on several other designs of the period. One of the city's first high rise garages was the Seventh Avenue garage built near Church Street. This reinforced concrete structure was completed in 1929 and displays zig zag banding at the roofline and other decorative ornamentation. At 814 Church Street the Sterchi Furniture Company store was finished in 1930 and also features geometric banding and multi-colored brick at the roofline. The verticality of the structure is also emphasized by thin strips of corbelled brickwork which runs the height of the building. Unfortunately both buildings have been significantly altered and are therefore not included in the nomination.

The firm's best expression of the Art Deco style occurred in 1930 with the construction of the Sudekum Building (originally called the Warner building) on Church Street. This twelve story building is the largest and best example of the Art Deco style in Nashville. It features sleek vertical aluminum piers which run the height of the building and at the roofline is extensive geometric patterning in a stepped, ziggurat design. The entrance is sheathed with smooth black granite and leads into an elaborate lobby. The lobby features multi-colored marble and aluminum in dramatic sharply angled geometric designs. The lobby is unaltered and its opulence is characteristic of the firm's later work in the Tennessee Supreme Court Building and U.S. Post Office. Its significance was recognized in 1979 when it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In the early 1930s the Depression caused the closing of many architectural firms in Tennessee and Nashville. Marr and Holman was the exception to this rule even though at one time they were down to three employees in the office. In spite of the layoffs of employees they were one of the few firm's to consistently generate work in these years and as a result they were responsible for the design of several of Nashville's more notable buildings of the decade. Two of these, the U.S. Post Office and the Tennessee Supreme Court Building, are considered among their best designs. Both buildings were Works Progress Administration projects funded by the federal government.

The U.S. Post Office was completed in 1934 and is an excellent example of the Art Deco style. It is squat and horizontal with a streamlined appearance and minimal decoration. The exterior features fluted pilasters, fret banding and large paired eagles at the entrance. While ornamentation is restricted on the exterior the interior is one of the most diverse and lavish in the city. The lobby displays multi-colored marble on the walls and floors, aluminum grills and doors

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with zig zag banding and an elaborate plaster and marble ceiling. Both the interior and exterior of the building have not been altered and it remains one of the city's most notable buildings of the period.

Following their work on the Post Office, Marr and Holman submitted a design for the proposed Davidson County Courthouse in 1935. Their design was edged out by Emmons Woolwine of Nashville and Frederic Hirons of New York. This disappointment was assuaged somewhat by the firm's selection as designer of the Tennessee Supreme Court building in 1936. This building was designed in the austere 1930s Neo-Classic style and its exterior was somewhat more restrained than the Post Office. The Supreme Court building is a low, horizontal structure of three stories with a limestone exterior. Decoration is confined to the use of classical elements such as guttae and metopes above the limestone pilasters and antefix at the roofline. The restrained exterior contrasts sharply with the interior lobby which is rich in multi-colored marble and granite. The lobby also features a coffered ceiling and aluminum grillwork.

In addition to the WPA projects in Nashville, Marr and Holman also designed courthouses during this period in Union City, Jackson, Ripley, Dresden, Savannah, Byrdstown and Gallatin. In addition to courthouses the firm also designed many schools throughout the state for the WPA.

During the early 1930s Thomas Marr retired but he continued to come into the office and advise on architectural designs until his death in 1936. Upon his death Joseph Holman became the principal in the firm and after 1940 employed an ever growing number of architects to complete the rising amount of work. The company continued to grow and designed numerous theatres, industrial buildings and banks between 1940 and 1950. While many of these are considered fine designs of their period they are not as highly regarded as the designs produced by Marr and his fellow architects of the early 20th century. Joseph Holman died on a business trip to Switzerland in 1952 and the business evolved into the hands of his two sons who were not architects. After operating intermittently over the next few years the firm closed in 1963.

During its fifty year history Marr and Holman designed 61 theatres, 43 schools, 14 banks and office buildings, 13 courthouses and 6 hotels. They designed buildings throughout the Southeast but the majority of their work was concentrated in and around Nashville. They produced the most notable Art Deco buildings in the city during the 1920s and 1930s and are best known for these projects. In 1980 the original files and papers of the firm were located in the basement of Joseph Holman's house in Nashville. This information contains materials relating to their buildings and building products and materials of the period. The files and blueprints have been donated to the Tennessee Historical Society and are a valuable source of information on the company. The seven buildings included in this nomination represent some of the most notable designs of Marr and Holman and are among the most architecturally significant in downtown Nashville.

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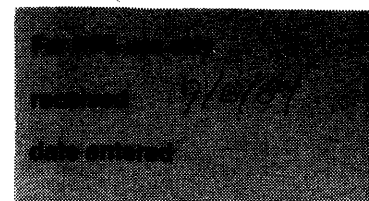
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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Marr and Holman Buildings in Downtown Nashville Thematic ResourcesState Davidson County, TENNESSEE

Accept cover. P. Reed 10/1/84

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Federal Reserve Bank of
AtlantaEntered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Attest

Melvin Byers 10/10/84

4. Noel Hotel

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Attest

Melvin Byers 10/10/84

5. Rich-Schwartz Building

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Attest

Melvin Byers 10/10/84

2. Robertson, James, Hotel

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Attest

Melvin Byers 10/10/84

250 5. Tennessee Supreme Court
Building

Substantive Review

Keeper

Attest

Return PWA 10/1/84

Return P. Reed

6. U.S. Post Office

dated, 11/15/84

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

Attest

3 7. Warner Building (Sudekum Building)
Already listed 12-19-79

Keeper

Attest

8.

Keeper

Attest

9.

Keeper

Attest

10.

Keeper

Attest