

VLR - 5/18/82 NRHP - 2/17/83

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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# 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 J.W. Wood Building

and/or common Same

## 2. Location

street & number 23-27 Ninth Street (north corner Ninth and Jefferson) state N/A for publication

city, town Lynchburg N/A vicinity of congressional district

state Virginia code 51 county (in city) code 680

## 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	both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	g o v e r n m e n t <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	military o t h e r :

## 4. Owner of Property

J.W. Wood Inc.  
name c/o C.W. Bryant and Wade Steele

street & number 27 Ninth Street

city, town Lynchburg N/A vicinity of state Virginia 24504

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clerk's Office, Lynchburg City Courthouse

street & number 900 Court Street

city, town Lynchburg state Virginia

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Lower Basin Survey  
title Historic American Engineering Record has this property been determined eligible? y e s  no

date Summer 1976  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

city, town Washington state D.C.

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The J.W. Wood Building is a modified Greek Revival-style commercial building situated at 23-27 Ninth Street in downtown Lynchburg. Its brick walls are set on a stone basement laid in irregular ashlar which is exposed on the north and east sides. The facade is distinguished by its cast-iron lintels and twin cast iron store fronts with decorative iron cartouches and Corinthian pilasters. Built between 1851 and 1853 as a warehouse, it still functions in that capacity. Its interior thus has an open plan and is relatively plain.

#### ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Including the basement, the building contains some 29,000 square feet of usable floor space. Above the top story, a broad, wooden cornice with simple Greek Revival profiles continues around the entire structure. The shallow hipped roof above is covered in standing-seam metal. The side elevations have five bays, irregularly spaced. The front elevation, facing Ninth Street, has six bays. Spacing is wider between the two central bays than between the others. Windows on the facade are capped with simple cast-iron lintels; those on the other three sides have simple wooden lintels, flush with the walls. Also noticeable on the side and rear walls are several iron tie rods.

Although stone and brick comprise the major exterior fabric of the building, the most important design feature is the cast-iron, first-floor facade on Ninth Street. This, the only such antebellum iron facade remaining in Lynchburg, is composed of seven pilasters which divide the front into six bays. The pilaster faces contain decorative iron cartouches and Corinthian capitals and support a broad entablature with an unadorned frieze and a modillioned cornice. The second and fifth bays, reading from either end, contain double doorways with large, glazed transoms. The other bays have large, triple-sectioned display windows. The arrangement of this ground-floor entrance, with two main doorways, as well as the spacing of the windows above, indicates that the original intent was for the building to house two separate offices, shops, or warehouses.

Adding further credence to the presumed original usage as a warehouse is the lack of any interior trim. All the floors are basically open space, with heavy timber framing left unadorned. Stairways connecting the several floors are also wooden, with no ornamental balusters or trim. Flooring is soft pine, and joists, also of pine, are exposed throughout.

SAC

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

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

J.W. WOOD BUILDING, 23-27 NINTH STREET, LYNCHBURG, VA

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 8

Page 1

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8. Significance -- Historical Background

The J.W. Wood Building was included in an inventory of Lynchburg's wholesale commercial area undertaken by the Historic American Engineering Record in 1976. Titled the Lower Basin Survey, in reference to a part of the canal which was nearby, the survey focused on six buildings in regard to their potential redevelopment. Although the Wood Co. building was one of those so studied, it continues in use as a wholesale grocery warehouse. The major activities of the J.W. Wood Co. are conducted in a recently erected prefabricated metal structure adjacent to the 1850s building, with the older structure used primarily as overflow space. The owners are aware of the building's importance, however, and have cleaned and painted the cast-iron facade since the photographs attached to this nomination were taken.

SAC

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** ca. 1850 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The J.W. Wood Building is the largest and best preserved of the few pre-Civil War commercial structures remaining in Lynchburg. Its first-floor, cast-iron front is the sole survivor of its type in the city. Located in a now-underused and largely deserted section of downtown, the building is one of the few visual reminders of the city's tremendous commercial activity of the 1850s, the decade in which Lynchburg was declared by the United States Census to be the second richest city in the country on a per-capita basis.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although the J.W. Wood Building figures prominently in mid-19th-century views of Lynchburg and was one of the largest buildings in the commercial area when it was built, little is known of its early history or usage. The city lot on which it was built was purchased in November 1850 by Wilson Bryant for \$750.00. In February 1853 George G. Curle purchased the property from Bryant for \$3,000.00, a price increase which would indicate that the structure had been erected during the interim. Stylistically, the building would also fit well within these dates. More than likely, the structure was intended from the outset to serve multiple uses. Located almost adjacent to the James River and Kanawha Canal and facing one of the main business streets, it was exceptionally well located for business purposes. During the later 19th century, it was used by a variety of merchants, including wholesale grain and feed dealers, tobacco factors, a hardware salesman, and shoe distributors. In 1927 Jesse W. Wood, a wholesale grocer, established his firm in the building, and his successors continue to occupy it.

The building itself is a handsome example of the plain commercial architecture typical of the mid-19th century. Stylistically, its affinities are with the Greek Revival, but a very plain, almost severe interpretation of that style. What distinguishes it from similar buildings is the first-floor, cast-iron facade. Extending across the entire frontage, the cast-iron components establish the six-bay division of the building, which is carried out in the two stories above. Pilasters separate the bays and support an entablature with a modillioned cornice. Although some ornamental iron was produced in Lynchburg's antebellum foundries, it is doubtful if work of this sort was of local manufacture. Daniel Badger, whose Architectural Iron Works of New York was the largest producer of such work at the time, recorded in his 1865 catalog that he had shipped two iron "store fronts" to Lynchburg prior to the war. The components of the Wood Co. building are similar to, but not exact matches of, a number of patterns illustrated in that catalog. The possibility exists as well that the parts were cast in Richmond or Baltimore. Whatever the source, the front is a significant survivor for its time and place.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Historic American Engineering Record. Rehabilitation. Washington, 1978.

Lynchburg City Deed Books, Lynchburg City Courthouse.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 66' x 100'

Quadrangle name Lynchburg, Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	7	6	6	4	5	4	0	4	1	4	2	4	4	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** Situated on a lot at the N corner of 9th and Jefferson sts., measuring 66' x 100', the 66' fronting on the N side of 9th St. Lynchburg City Assessor's Records: 23-27 Ninth St., Old Block #481. **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:** The bounds have been drawn to coincide with the above-described lot and to include the building and surrounding land contained in the lot.

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

state N/A code  county N/A code

state N/A code  county N/A code

**11. Form Prepared By** (1) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff  
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
 (2) 221 Governor Street, Richmond, Va. 23219  
 name/title S. Allen Chambers (804) 786-3144

organization Private Consultant date April 1982

street & number 1237 31st Street telephone N/A

city or town Washington state D.C. 20007

# 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 *H. Bryan Mitchell*

H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date MAY 18 1982

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)  
Lynchburg, Va. 1963(PR1978)

J.W.WOOD BUILDING, 23-27 Ninth St., Lynchburg, Va.

UTM References:

17/664540/4142440

