

VLR-7/20/82 NRHP-9/9/83
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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received
date entered

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 ST. ALBAN'S HALL (Preferred)
and/or common THE CRENSHAW BUILDING

2. Location

street & number 300-302 East Main Street N/A not for publication
city, town Richmond N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~
state Virginia code 51 county (in city) code 760

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Third and Main Associates
street & number 6724 Patterson Avenue
city, town Richmond N/A vicinity of state Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Richmond City Hall
street & number 900 East Broad Street
city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Downtown Richmond Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date June 22, 1981 federal state county local
depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street
city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Summary Description

300-302 East Main Street was built as St. Alban's Hall, a Masonic meeting place, in 1869. The building entirely occupies its urban site. The three-story rectangular mass of the Hall is covered in stucco over brick. The building is articulated by stucco quoins and by a metal cornice and window caps. The ornamental features of the building are simply yet boldly treated. The major spaces of the interior, a concert hall and the Masonic rooms, were on the upper floors of the structure; the first floor was occupied by a shop. The shop had a glazed storefront which was removed in 1948. According to early newspaper accounts, the upper level rooms were spectacularly decorated. The interior has been entirely altered, but some traces of the original scheme can be found.

Detailed Description

St. Alban's Hall is a three-story brick building with stuccoed walls. The stucco is treated to look like stone, with raised quoins and scored joints. Marking the entrance to the second floor concert hall and to the Masonic rooms on the third floor is a slightly projected pavilion. This pavilion is crowned with a classical pediment which breaks up an otherwise flat roofline.

The first floor was originally occupied by shops. The ceiling heights of the upper floors are greater than those of the lower floor, thus giving the building a slightly top-heavy appearance. This is further emphasized by the structure's large cornice. The metal hipped roof is so shallow that it is not visible from the street.

The first floor front on Main Street has been entirely altered, but the upper levels are well preserved. They retain original window frames, sills, and caps, as well as the cornice and stucco. The only alteration has been the substitution of a triple-hung sash for the original four-over-four double-hung sash.

The side elevation also is little altered. Here the corner bay was projected two inches and embellished with quoins to give the Main Street front some visual depth. The most notable feature of this elevation is a pair of wrought-iron balconies which served as fire escapes. The chimneys, which once served the many fireplaces and stoves of the hall, have all been removed.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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 1869 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Summary

Construction of St. Alban's Hall began two years after central Richmond burned at the end of the Civil War and marked the beginning of the city's revival. The Hall consisted of shops, a concert hall, as well as Masonic meeting rooms, and served as an important focus of post-war Richmond's social and political life. The combination of commercial, cultural, and Masonic facilities in one building provided the prototype for later Masonic buildings in Richmond. The architectural style of the building shows the influence of the Renaissance Revival or Tuscan Palazzo mode widely used in the urbanizing North in the 1850s and '60s, but rarely found in the South because of the war. The style is the forerunner of the more exuberant High Victorian Italianate which achieved popularity in the 1870s.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

9. Major Bibliographical References (See Continuation Sheet #4)

Bartholomew, Alvey. "Our First Building."

Chaitaigne's Richmond City Directory for the Years 1879-80. Richmond, Virginia.

Morrison, Andrew. The City on the James. Richmond, 1893.

Richmond Daily Dispatch, 22 March 1869. "Description of St. Alban's Hall, Dedication Tonight."

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property .14 acres

Quadrangle name Richmond, VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8	2	8	4	1	8	0	4	1	5	7	6	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 property occupies a city lot in Block 34W, parcel 1, and is 102' x 60' in size. Justification: It is situated on the NE corner of 3rd and Main sts.

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

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert P. Winthrop

organization Robert Winthrop, Architect date 12 May 1982

street & number 417 North Boulevard telephone 804/353-8828

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23220

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.

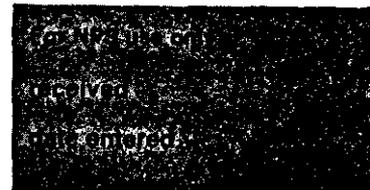
State Historic Preservation Officer signature H. Bryan Mitchell

H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date JUL 20 1982

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
date
Keeper of the National Register
Attest:
Chief of Registration
date

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#1

Continuation sheet

St. Alban's Hall
Richmond, VA

Item number 7

Page 1

Old photographs indicate the general appearance and some of the details of the front. They do not indicate the materials of the front, which could be either cast iron or wood.

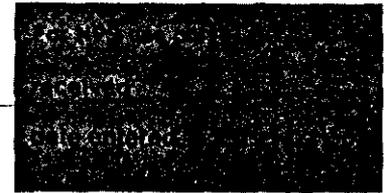
The interior rooms on the upper floors were elaborately decorated. Most notable were the Masonic meeting rooms on the third floor, as described in a March 22, 1869 article in the Richmond Dispatch: "The walls and ceilings were frescoed quite tastefully. Upon the later is represented the clouded canopy or starry-decked heavens, where all good Masons hope at last to arrive, and in either corner appears an emblem of the Order....The floor is carpeted with tapestry of beautiful pattern, and the settees and chairs, which have enticing spring seats, are covered with blue reps."

The interior of St. Alban's Hall has been entirely altered, but some traces of the original scheme can be found. In 20th-century alterations a lower ceiling was installed and a layer of plaster covered the walls. While this has obliterated the original interior from view, it also has preserved the remains. The ceilings of the rooms were papered with several layers of paper trim added to the edges to form a border; the "starry" sky described in the newspaper article was a wallpaper pattern. The plaster cornices were painted in several colors, and the walls were painted in panels. Only the cornices were three-dimensional, everything else was flat. The visual effect was dazzling according to the newspaper account.

The most extensive change was made by a new elevator and a stair which wrapped around it. These were located in the middle of the building and were surrounded by a corridor upon which the offices opened. The only original element of the plan to remain unchanged is a new stair.

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Continuation sheet #2 St. Alban's Hall Item number 8 Page 1
Richmond, VA

Historical Background

St. Alban's Hall was the first institutional building erected in Richmond following the Civil War. Its construction was a major landmark in the city's post-war recovery. The cornerstone was laid in December 1867; the building was dedicated in March of 1869.

Architectural activity in the immediate post-war period in Richmond was related to the reconstruction of the burned district. The need to rebuild the mills, shops, and offices of this area took precedence over all other construction; thus new institutional, church, and public buildings were rare in the city at this time.

The later 19th century was the heyday of fraternal and social organizations in the United States. The oldest and the most influential of these organizations in Richmond were the Masons. Richmond's first Masonic lodge was established in 1780, and by 1800 there were five lodges in the city. These were Richmond Lodge #10, 1780; Richmond Randolph Lodge #319, 1787; St. John's Lodge #36, 1792; Jerusalem Lodge #54, 1797; and the Richmond Royal Arch Chapter #3, 1792. Additional lodges were established throughout the 19th century.

Most of these early organizations met in the Mason's Hall on Franklin Street in Shockoe Valley. Built in 1785-87 and erected by Lodge #10, this building still exists and is one of the most important early landmarks of Richmond.

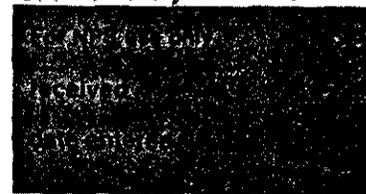
The first hall was in the heart of 18th-century Richmond. Eighty years later the center of Richmond had shifted to the west and the original hall was inconveniently located for the western residential areas. St. Alban's Hall was built by Metropolitan Lodge #11 and by Joppa Lodge #40, Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, to provide meeting spaces nearer the homes of the members. Newly founded Joppa Lodge had been established in 1867.

Erected at the corner of 3rd and Main Streets, St. Alban's Hall was in the heart of Richmond's most prosperous residential area. To the north were the mansions and substantial residences of Franklin and Grace Streets. To the south were the more modest middle class homes of Gamble's Hill. Thus, this was an ideal site for the Hall.

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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Continuation sheet ^{#3} St. Alban's Hall Item number 8 Page 2
Richmond, VA

In addition to the Masonic facilities, the building accommodated a shop on the first floor and a concert hall/meeting room on the second level. The income from the shop and the hall was to pay for the building. This combination of income producing and Masonic facilities was apparently successful for it was to be repeated on a much larger scale in later Masonic buildings in the city. The 1888 Masonic H Temple at Adams and Broad Streets and the Mosque, which was built as an Acca Temple, both follow the same arrangement.

The hall was erected by the Masonic Building Association which had been created especially for this purpose. A March 22, 1869 newspaper article describing the building lists the members of the society and the names of all of the major contractors but does not name the architect, which suggests that the building was designed by a committee with one single person responsible for the design. The Building Association members were William L. Manley, President; Dr. J. G. Cabell, Powhatan Weisiger, and Robert Maconber, Vice Presidents. The Directors were John Regnault, John S. Calvert, Peyton Wise, James W. Archer, James A. Scott, and William Lowenstein.

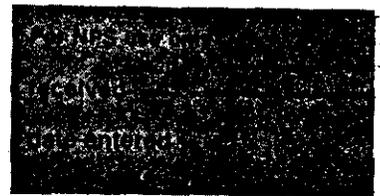
The restrained and simple design is in the Tuscan mode of the mid-19th century. The basic simplicity of the composition and detail suggests the restraint of the first part of the century. The heavy cornice, bold detail, and vertical proportion of the facade are related to the exuberance of the later Victorian period.

While the design of St. Alban's Hall is not amateurish, it is also not progressive and does not have any similarities to work of architects known to have been active in Richmond at that time.

The lodges which had erected the Hall thrived. The shop was rented to W. T. Fitzgerald and Brothers, a high-quality grocer, and the concert hall was regularly used. The original lodges were joined by others, and in 1888 began construction of a much larger building a few blocks to the west. They moved to this building in 1892 after selling the Hall to the Richmond Scottish Rite Bodies in 1891. It continued in this use until the Scottish Rite moved into the former Church of the Covenant on Harrison Street in 1920.

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

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Continuation sheet ^{#4} St. Alban's Hall Item number 8, 9 Page 3, 1
Richmond, VA

The original tenant was replaced with another grocer, Harrison & Cox, in the 1890s. By 1920, the first floor was occupied by Gilkeson Brothers Druggist; the upper floors, by a printing firm.

In the 1940s, major alterations were made to the building for the first time. It was then renamed the Crenshaw Building after its new owners. The storefront was removed and replaced in cast stone. The upper floors were subdivided for offices. An elevator and new stair were erected in the middle of the building, and the rooms were entirely renovated. By the 1970s the offices became gradually less desirable, and by 1980 much of the building was vacant and in need of repair.

Today, the structure is being totally rehabilitated. With the exterior restored to its original appearance and the interior retained as offices, St. Alban's Hall will be preserved as a rare post-Civil War institutional landmark in Central Richmond.

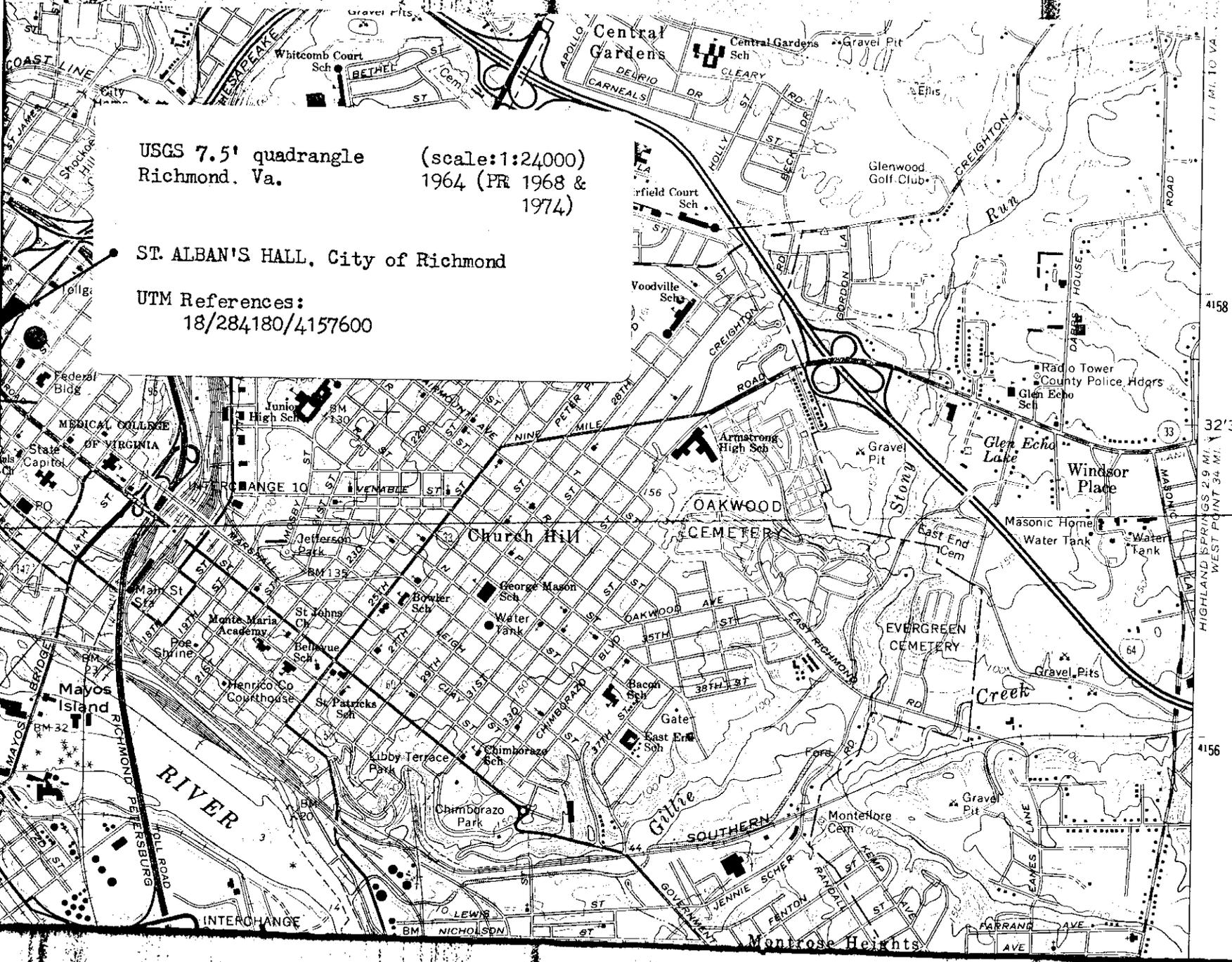
9. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Walthall, David K. History of Richmond Lodge No. 10, A.F. & A.M. Richmond, 1909.

USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Richmond, Va. 1964 (PR 1968 & 1974)

ST. ALBAN'S HALL, City of Richmond

UTM References:
18/284180/4157600



1.1 MI. TO VA.
4158
32'30"
HIGHLAND SPRINGS 2.9 MI.
WEST POINT 3.4 MI.
4156