

VLR- 6/16/99 NRHP- 8/12/99
NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Professional Building

other names/site number American Bank and Trust Company (DHR File No. 133-5032)

2. Location

street & number 100 North Main Street not for publication N/A
city or town Suffolk vicinity X
state Virginia code VA county Suffolk, independent city code 800 Zip 23434

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William C. Stusser
Signature of certifying official Date July 6, 1999
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is: _____ removed from the National Register
_____ entered in the National Register _____ other (explain): _____
_____ See continuation sheet _____
_____ determined eligible for the _____ Signature of Keeper
National Register
_____ See continuation sheets. _____ Date of Action _____
_____ determined not eligible for the National Register

Professional Building

Suffolk, VA

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>COMMERCE TRADE</u>	Sub: <u>business</u>
<u>COMMERCE TRADE</u>	<u>financial institution</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>VACANT / NOT IN USE</u>	Sub: _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Skyscraper

Professional Building

Suffolk, VA

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
 roof asphalt
 walls brick
 other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Commerce

Period of Significance 1916-1919

Significant Dates 1916

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder John Kevan Peebles, architect
Harwood and Moss, builders

Professional Building

Suffolk, VA

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Department of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	358610	4065660	2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.						

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kimble A. David/Gregory Rutledge
 Organization: Hanbury Evans Newill Vlattas and Company date March 15, 1999
 street & number: 120 Atlantic Street telephone (757) 321 - 9662
 city or town Norfolk state Virginia zip code 23510

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Professional Building

Suffolk, VA

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Suffolk (contact - L. Elizabeth McCoury, Downtown Development Coordinator, City of Suffolk)
street & number 441 Market Street telephone (757) 925 - 6384
city or town Suffolk state Virginia zip code 23434

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Abstract:

The Professional Building is a Colonial Revival skyscraper located at a main intersection in downtown Suffolk. The building is seven stories, has Pyrobar-fireproofing over a steel-frame structural system, and is 35.2 feet and 81 feet on the west side and south sides, respectively. The west and south sides are treated with a patterned brick veneer and the north and east sides are an inconsistent American-bond brick. There is a metal roof cornice and multiple window openings. The floor plan of the ground floor consists of a vestibule with marble wainscot and door casings. In the vestibule is a manual elevator, metal stair to the upper stories, brass mailbox with exposed chute and carved wood directory. Beyond the vestibule is the main banking floor with two-story, plaster, Tuscan columns, coffered ceiling, pendant light fixtures and three-part windows. On the far east wall beyond the banking floor is a secure open space for the unloading and loading of armored trucks. Above the vestibule, forming a mezzanine level are three offices. Above the mezzanine level are five levels subdivided into offices of various sizes. There is a central terrazzo hall and lavatories on each of the upper stories. There is a corrugated-metal penthouse on the roof with a 3000-gallon water tank and elevator equipment. The building is currently vacant, but retains a high level of architectural integrity and is in good condition.

Exterior:

The building faces west-northwest to North Main Street. It is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of North Main and East Washington Streets in downtown Suffolk, Virginia. The site declines slightly to the east, approximately two feet.

The building is 81 feet long on the south side, 35.2 feet on the west side and is 80 feet tall. The ground floor has a trapezium-shaped plan. The first to fifth stories have a pentagonal-shaped plan. There are five wall planes on these stories. The north and south elevation walls are parallel. The east and west walls are not parallel. The east wall is connected to the south and north walls, but the west wall is connected to the south wall and a short wall plane located at the northwest corner. This short wall plane is at the same angle as the north wall and follows the northwest corner of the ground floor plan.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

There is a smooth-cut granite-veneer plinth applied to the poured concrete foundation. On the west and south sides, the building is treated with a common bond, brown, brick, veneer. The north and east walls are an inconsistent bond brick varying between 6- and 7-course American-bond. Colonial Revival elements are found in the metal roof cornice, accentuated keystone on the entrance arch, and on the interior in the banking floor.

Above the granite-veneer plinth on the facade¹ is a slightly projecting brick soldier-course surmounted by a brick rowlock-course stringcourse, which continues on the south side. The west façade has three bays with a central entrance. The entrance is a cased opening articulated by a slightly projecting, soldier- and stretcher-course brick, rounded arch with cast-concrete, scrolled keystone. The interior of the arch has been further articulated by cast-iron pilasters on the reveal supporting a cast-iron entablature. Surmounting the entablature is a rounded-arch transom light in the arch rise with vertical metal bars and a single, rounded-arch light. The doorsill is smooth granite similar to the granite plinth. Framing the entrance is a slightly projecting, rectangular brick frame of soldier- and stretcher-course brick veneer. Between the brick frame and the rounded arch is header-course brick patterning.

Flanking the rectangular-framed entrance are three-part windows. These windows have metal frames and are almost full-height. The windows have stone sills. The central portion of the window is 1/1, double-hung sash and the flanking windows are narrower and fixed.

There are windows above the entrance and its flanking windows, which are half the height of the windows on the ground level. These windows are at the mezzanine level. They have a central, double-hung sash window flanked by fixed single-light windows. Between the ground floor windows and the mezzanine windows on the north and south bays of the west façade, there are wood panels with quirks at the corners. The windows on the ground and mezzanine floors on the north and south bay are framed in a slightly projecting header- and rowlock-course brick frame. Within the header- and rowlock-course frame is a stretcher- and soldier-course brick frame. The mezzanine story windows have rowlock-course, brick sills, which are a part of the framing. The central bay window on the mezzanine level has a rowlock-course, brick sill. The

¹ The building faces west-northwest, but for the convenience of the description it will be referred to as west. This will apply to the other sides of the building as well.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 3

central-bay window and rounded entrance are also framed in a similar rowlock-, header-, soldier-, and stretcher-course brick frame.

On the west façade, above the mezzanine level windows' soldier-course brick framing, is a stone architrave. This architrave continues on the south side of the building. The frieze, above the architrave, is common-bond brick veneer. On the facade, centrally placed in the frieze and applied to the wall, is the name of the building, "Professional Building," in raised metal letters. Surmounting the frieze is a stone cornice with dentil-course and dripstone. The cornice continues on the south side of the building.

On the west and south elevations, above the cornice, is a stone stringcourse. The first story windows break the stringcourse and rest on stone sills above the cornice. The first to fifth story windows on the west and south elevations have fixed double-pane windows with metal frames. These windows replaced the 2/2, wired-glass, metal, double-hung sash windows still found on the north and east elevations. The windows from the second to fourth stories have stone sills with small, slightly projecting, rectangular brackets underneath. There are two common-bond courses of brick below the sills of the second, third and fourth story windows. Below these two common-bond brick courses is header-course brick patterning, which terminates at the lintel of the window directly below. The windows have brick rowlock-course lintels and each bay from the first to the fourth stories is recessed from the wall plane. There is a brick stretcher- and header-course flanking the windows in each bay from the first to fourth stories, as a frame for the bay. The fourth story windows have flat-arch lintels with an articulated, smooth-stone, keystone. These articulations are found on the west and south elevations of the building.

Between the fourth and fifth stories is a slightly projecting stringcourse comprised of a corbelled brick header-course surmounted by a brick rowlock-course between two soldier-courses of bricks. This stringcourse continues on the west and south sides. The upper soldier-course of the stringcourse is broken by window openings on the west and south sides. The rowlock-course forms a sillcourse for the windows. Each window on the fifth story is framed in a slightly projecting brick header-course. Between the fifth story windows is a recessed, common-bond brick panel. The common-bond brick is broken at the north and south corners by a diamond-brick pattern formed of soldier-course bricks, placed centrally in the square recessed panel on the west side.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 4

Above the fifth story is a metal, boxed cornice. The cornice continues on the west and south sides with returns on the north and east sides. The cornice has square modillions. Below the metal cornice is a soldier-course of bricks. Above the cornice is a common-bond brick parapet with rowlock-course brick coping.

The south elevation has seven bays and the central five bays, between the westernmost and easternmost bays, are slightly recessed from the wall plane. The upper portion of the granite-veneer plinth has a concave splay in the central five bays. The ground and mezzanine story windows at the west of the south elevation are similar to those flanking the entrance on the façade, including the raised brick framing. The configuration directly east in the next bay has a similar mezzanine story window, but without flanking windows. It retains the paneling, but the ground story window has been replaced with a single leaf door with transom light. This door has since been boarded. The central three bays have window groupings and brick framing similar to the one located at the west corner, but the ground story window is not as tall. These windows have stone sills and recessed, wood paneling between the ground and mezzanine level windows. The windows are also three-part with a central, double-hung sash window flanked by fixed single-light windows. Below are recessed brick panels. The central panel is pierced by a dual, copper hydrant, and the panel directly to the east has a metal grate, which replaced a coal door.

The bay located west of the easternmost bay has a single leaf, metal door, which accesses the basement. Above this door is an alarm with the name, "Diebold Burglar Alarm," printed in the upper portion. Between the alarm and single leaf door is a metal, louvered vent. Surmounting the alarm is a wood panel with a double-hung sash window above. The double-hung sash window has a rowlock lintel.

The opening on the easternmost bay is double the size of the others found on the south side. It has brick soldier-, stretcher-, rowlock-, and header-course framing similar to the other window groupings. It once served as the vehicle entrance for armored cars. It presently has a three-light plate glass window with a wood base treated with metal. This window replaced a multi-light overhead door. Above the plate glass window is a multi-light, three-part window with centrally placed pivot windows in each part. The central pivot window has eight lights, while the flanking windows have six. The lights are frosted-glass. The window extends to below the stone architrave.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 5

The westernmost and easternmost bays are common-bond brick from the first story to the fourth story. The recessed interior bays have similar configuration to those found on the façade, and retain the brick stretcher- and header-course patterning and rowlock lintels. The windows on the fourth story have accentuated keystones, similar to those on the façade. The easternmost and westernmost bay windows on the fourth story do not have the accentuated keystones. The fifth story continues the diamond-pattern seen at the north and south corners of the façade, but diamond patterning in recessed panels flanks the fifth story windows on the east and west bays of the south side. There are also recessed panels between the windows on the fifth story in the central bays. The southeast corner of the building has a quirk in the masonry.

The north elevation has six bays and there is brick veneer quoining on the west corner. The north and east elevations are an inconsistent American-bond brick of 6- and 7- courses. The north wall continues to the penthouse forming a parapet above the penthouse roof. The wall at the penthouse level is pierced by a 3/3, double-hung sash window. The window openings on the north and east walls have stone sills and rowlock lintels. The windows are metal, 2/2, double-hung sash with wired-glass panes. The window frames are wood. The central bay windows vary in size due to the placement of the lavatories. The fifth story has a window between the westernmost bays. At the east corner of the north wall is an exterior, square, brick chimney, which extends beyond the height of the building. The chimney cap is poured concrete.

The east elevation has three bays with similar 2/2, metal windows found on the north wall. The windows in the central bay are slightly wider than those found on the north and south bays of the east wall. The windows have stone sills and rowlock lintels. The chimney projecting from the north wall is flush with the east wall.

Interior:

The upper stories have a consistent height of twelve feet. The banking floor is twenty feet in height, and the mezzanine is 8 feet in height. The secure bay located on the east wall is twenty-two feet in height, accommodating the two-foot decline to the east.

There is an open chamber leading from the rounded arch entrance on the façade to the vestibule. This chamber has a terrazzo floor, and polished marble wainscot, door casings, and baseboards. On the cast-iron entablature in the arch rise transom light, is

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 6

a leaf and dart course on the cornice. This arch also has polished marble casing. The walls above the wainscot are stuccoed. On the north and south walls within this chamber are single leaf, wood doors with a single, rectangular light. These doors have sidelights, half-marble with a light above. There is a three-light transom above the door and sidelights, with the lights corresponding to the size of the door and sidelights. The doors have brass mail slots and door hardware. There is a double-leaf door leading to the vestibule, which was added approximately in the mid-20th century. It is modern aluminum with plate glass.

The two storefronts located to the north and south of the open chamber have molded wood door casings, window frames, baseboards, and picture rails. They also have plaster walls and are one-story in height. Each storefront has a single leaf, wood door with a single light on the east wall leading to the main banking floor. There are radiators under the almost full-height windows on the west side. The floors are treated with linoleum. The southwest corner storefront has modern wood paneling applied to the plaster walls and there is a sink and built-in cabinet located on the north wall. The doors have sidelights that are half marble on the open chamber side, but wood paneled on the storefront side.

The vestibule is ornamented with similar polished marble wainscot and baseboards. There are two single leaf doors with transoms immediately to the north and south of the modern, aluminum, double-leaf doors accessing the storefronts. The floor is black and brown terrazzo. There is a molded wood picture rail and cornice in the vestibule. On the south wall, there is a metal radiator. Above the radiator and mounted on the wall, is a wood directory case. It has a wood frame consisting of classical elements. Fluted shafts frame the single light and support an entablature with a modified rosette-quatrefoil design at the ends of the architrave. In the architrave, the word "Directory" is mounted in brass letters. North of the Directory, across the vestibule, is a metal stair leading to the mezzanine level. The stair has cast-iron, paneled risers, polished marble treads, and a brass handrail affixed to the wall. To the east of the stairs is a brass mailbox with chute mounted on the wall. It is supported by cast consoles and has other classical elements including paterae and a cornice. The mailbox was cast by and the chute constructed by the Cutler Mail Chute Company in Rochester, New York. Directly east of the mailbox is the manual elevator. It has a metal gate and manual switches in the car. A brass call button is located to the east of the elevator door. The east wall of the vestibule has a double leaf aluminum door accessing the main banking floor.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 7

The banking floor occupies the ground and mezzanine levels of the building. This monumental space is articulated by six Tuscan columns, which terminate at a coffered ceiling. The columns are in two sets of three running west to east and are located at intervals corresponding to the space between the four window bays on the south wall and form three aisles. The south and central aisles are the same size and the north aisle is narrower. There are two Tuscan columns missing in the configuration so only four currently exist. The columns are plaster on lathe and have a central metal pier. There are pilasters on the north, south, east, and west walls corresponding to the Tuscan columns. Pilasters divide the window bays on the south wall and frame the door openings on the east and west walls. The pilasters on the north wall frame the clerestory double-hung sash windows located at the mezzanine level of the north wall. The ground floor extends north beyond the mezzanine level north wall, which forms a one-story triangular space, 12 feet tall north of the main banking floor. The pilasters which framed the clerestory windows continue to the floor, but become square piers, when the wall opens to the small triangular, one-story space located to the north of the wall below the clerestory windows.

The floor is poured concrete with remnants of linoleum tile and vinyl flooring. The small triangular space, located north of the main banking floor, terminates at the west wall in a single-leaf wood door with a single, rectangular light. This door accesses a narrowing hallway with wood baseboards, which leads to the storefront on the northwest corner, via a single leaf door. It also yields an open space below the stairs leading to the mezzanine level.

In each coffer on the south aisle is a foliate light fixture with four light bulbs. The central aisle coffer at the banking floor entrance from the vestibule has a pendant light fixture. There is also a two-stepped block approximately one-story in height located on the southeast corner of the banking floor, which obscures the exterior door on the south wall. It shelters the stairs accessing the basement. The windows on the south bays have wood frames and panels between the ground and mezzanine level windows.

The north wall has 3/3, metal, double-hung clerestory windows between the pilasters at the mezzanine level overlooking the banking floor. These windows have bars on the exterior. Below the clerestory windows is the first story triangular space, which terminates at the east wall of the banking floor. The east wall has an centrally placed opening leading to the secure bay for the loading and unloading of armored cars. The Pyrobar-fireproofing is exposed above the entrance through a hole knocked in the

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 8

plaster. There are remnants of wood-paneling-patterned wallpaper that once adorned the walls.

Beyond the east wall of the banking floor is another rectangular space, which occupies the ground and mezzanine stories. It is approximately two feet lower than the banking floor and has poured concrete buttresses and floor. The buttresses divide the space into three sections. The south wall is a large plate glass window, which once was a multi-light overhead door. There are two gas heating elements hanging from the ceiling in the central section. There is a wired-glass skylight in the ceiling near the north wall located on the ceiling of the north section. Power boxes are located on the west wall near the plate glass window. A door opening has been cut into the east wall connecting the building to the two-story store located to the east of the Professional Building. This area once served as a secure location for the unloading and loading of armored cars.

The mezzanine level is divided into three office spaces and hallway. The windows on the mezzanine level are at the floor level. Radiators are located in each room. The walls are treated with plaster and there are molded wood baseboards, window and door casings, and picture rail. The doors are single-leaf, wood with a wired- and frosted-glass light above two wood panels, and have brass hardware. In the office located on the northwest corner, there is built-in shelving on the north wall. The hallway has a terrazzo floor and the mail chute has a slot to receive mail. Across from the elevator doors on the south wall of the hallway is the remnants of a light fixture. The stair on this level continues to the first main story, but the rail is wood on cast-iron brackets from the mezzanine to the first story.

The first through fifth stories have a central hallway accessing the offices. Leading from the hallway to each office is a wood, two-panel door with a single wired- and frosted-light. Above the door is an operable, frosted transom-light. The doors have molded wood casings with polished marble plinth blocks. The hallway on these floors is standard terrazzo in black and white on poured concrete. The mail chute continues on each floor terminating on the fifth floor. The elevator doors also continue on each story and have wood casings.

The office sizes vary and some offices have been combined. The floor plan of each story is different, but there is an average of three offices on the west side, seven on the south side, two on the east side, and two on the north side. There are only approximately eleven offices per floor, as corner offices are counted twice in the above

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

list. The average office size on the south wall is approximately ten by sixteen feet. Corner offices are larger. Some offices have been combined on the third, fourth and fifth stories. On the first and fifth stories, the northwest office is slightly smaller than the offices located in the same location on the second through fourth stories due to the change in stairwell.

Each office has plaster walls with a wood picture rail above the transom casing level. There are molded wood baseboards in each office, and there are metal radiators below each window. Some offices have additional modern wood paneling applied to the plaster walls. The windows have wood frames. The floors in the offices were originally tiled in linoleum on poured concrete. There are offices that retain the original flooring, but some floors have been carpeted or treated with vinyl flooring. There are wood, six-panel doors dividing the offices. These door openings form an enfilade through the offices on the west, south, north, and east walls.

There are some original electrical outlets remaining in the office spaces. They consist of a single outlet with a metal cover attached to the outlet, which can be opened on a hinge. There are additional outlets and telephone jacks added in each office. The wires have been run on the baseboards, plaster walls, and along the ceilings. Lighting in the hallways and offices has been altered with various fixtures. Drop ceilings with acoustical tiles and fluorescent lights have been removed from the offices. There are also sinks visible in some offices.

There is a lavatory on each story from the first to the fifth stories. It is located east of the stairwell from the first to the four stories, and east of elevator on the fifth story. The lavatories originally were single gender and had two toilets, urinal and sink. The lavatories were converted and subdivided into two lavatories to serve men and women. The lavatories were converted differently on each story. Some have a common entrance leading to a narrow hall with two separate entrances for the men's and women's lavatories. Others have separate doors leading from the main hallway to the respective lavatories. There are only a few original fixtures remaining in the lavatories. There are two original urinals remaining and most original toilets have been damaged.

The stairs accessing the upper stories are not located in the same location as those to the mezzanine and first story. The stairs to the mezzanine and first story are located on the west side of the elevator. The stairs leading from the first story to the fourth story are located to the east of the elevator. These stairs have wood on cast-iron rails, and

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 10

cast-iron risers, treads, stanchions, newels, newel drops, and balustrade. The treads are also paneled. The stair is in a double-L pattern with kite winders at each turn. On each story overlooking the stair is a niche with mechanical equipment for the respective story. It is enclosed with a wood, paneled door. The stairs leading from the fourth to fifth stories are located west of the elevator above the original stairs in the vestibule. At the mezzanine and the fifth story level, there is a rounded arch, metal light fixture above the stairs attached to the wall.

There is a penthouse constructed of corrugated metal on the roof. It shares the north brick wall of the main building. It is accessed via a metal ladder in the hallway of the fifth story, opposite the elevator. The penthouse has three chambers. The west chamber has the elevator mechanics, generator, and telephone wiring equipment. The ladder is located in the southwest corner of this chamber. The central chamber houses the 3000-gallon wood water tank. A paneled metal door with two wired lights, which leads onto the roof, is located on the south wall of this chamber. The east chamber is used for storage. It has a metal-plate floor. There are metal, 3-light, awning windows flanking the door on the south side of the penthouse. There is a 3/3, metal, double-hung sash window on the north wall in the west chamber.

The building roof is flat and treated with poured asphalt. The parapet wall is visible, but parged on the interior. There is a flagpole located at the southwest corner affixed to the interior of the parapet wall. There are also antennas attached to the penthouse on the west and east sides.

The basement is accessed via a door on the south wall, just west of the large opening for armored cars in the easternmost bay of the south side. This door is metal with a single, wired- and frosted-glass light. The stairs leading to the basement are open with cast-iron treads and rail. The basement floor is dirt and there is a sump-pump directly north of the stair. The basement consists of three chambers. The chamber accessed by the stair is the central chamber and houses the furnace, and some electrical and plumbing equipment. The furnace is located in the center of the chamber, and the electrical and plumbing equipment is located on the west side of the chamber. The chamber has two openings on the north and south sides at the west wall. The north chamber has a dirt floor. The south chamber was once coal storage for a coal furnace. This furnace was replaced by the current furnace, which uses heating oil. The walls in the basement are poured concrete and the basement is only the size of the three bays north of the armored car bay located on the east corner of the south side. It is as long

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 11 .

as the building from the north to south wall. The basement floods periodically, but the sump-pump still operates and clears excess water.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12

Abstract:

The Professional Building in Suffolk, Virginia was constructed as the American Bank and Trust Company building from 1916 to 1919. It was designed by John Kevan Peebles, a prominent Norfolk architect. This building was one of the first two multiple-story office buildings to rise in downtown Suffolk, and was only one of three to be completed in the downtown area. The building was constructed at such a height not due to the lack of space in the downtown, but for the status of tall buildings in American cities. The building remained the American Bank and Trust Company building until 1962, when the American Bank and Trust Company moved to a modern bank building a few blocks from the original tower. It was then that the building was renamed the Professional Building. The Professional Building housed various local professionals until 1993, when the building officially closed to tenants. The building has remained vacant since 1993, but with the construction of a new court building downtown, it has become the main focus of downtown renewal. The building meets Criteria A due to its association with banking towers that were rising in American cities and meets Criteria C due to its construction as a skyscraper and modern fireproofing materials.

History:

The city of Suffolk has an agricultural focus, emphasized by its rural population and large number of farmers. It is best known as the home of Planter's Peanuts. Suffolk was located in the center of Nansemond County. The city of Suffolk grew after the Civil War into a prominent agricultural community, facilitated by the emergence of numerous railroads that stopped in the city. This led to significant prosperity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The city of Suffolk's population grew dramatically between 1900 and 1915, more than doubling.¹ This led to Suffolk being the largest, thriving commercial nucleus in then Nansemond County. Continued prosperity of agricultural products led to the growth of the city as the center of Nansemond County. The City of Suffolk and Nansemond County eventually merged in 1974, forming the present City of Suffolk.

The first bank in Suffolk was the Farmers Bank of Nansemond County, which was organized December 13, 1869. This was the only bank in Suffolk until the turn of the 20th century. The early 20th century saw the rise of two additional banks, Bank of Suffolk and American Bank of Suffolk. The two later banks were the first to construct

¹ American Bank and Trust Company, Our 50th Year (Suffolk, VA: By the author), 7.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 13

bank-towers in Suffolk. The two towers were constructed across the street from one another at the downtown location of Washington and Main Streets. They were also the only two "skyscrapers"² in Suffolk until 1925. The Hotel Elliot, also designed by John Kevan Peebles, was constructed in 1925, and was the last tall building to be constructed in downtown Suffolk.³

Skyscrapers in American cities evolved due to the lack of space in congested downtown areas. The allure of these tall buildings developed into status symbols for corporations as important landmarks in the late 19th century. The invention of the electricity-driven elevator in the 1880s helped buildings reach taller heights. By the 1910s, skyscraper construction was commonplace for large corporation headquarters.⁴ This phenomenon reached the rural cities in the south, including Suffolk. Though there was no need for an office tower due to adequate space in the downtown area, the desire for the tall office building had infected the early 20th century banks. The banks' emergence, along with their growth fueled by the early 20th century prosperity, led to modern construction and conspicuous building. This type of building formed a presence in the community and through its presence it became a commercial landmark, as well as a landmark building. This is not only found in Suffolk, but nationally.

Fireproofing was always a concern among builders. Early advancements of fireproof construction from the early 20th century can be seen in the Professional Building. The Pyro-bar fireproof material, which is a type of gypsum board, is used in the building construction as a space divider and protects the steel frame. Gypsum board, originally used as lathing for applied wall plaster, was found to be fire-retardant shortly after its invention at the turn of the 20th century.⁵ Another element of fireproofing found in the Professional Building is poured concrete floors on the metal floor decks. The concrete is mechanically bonded to the frame encasing it and forming a barrier between the fire and the steel frame.⁶ With these two innovations, the Professional Building was technologically advanced compared to its neighbors and used modern construction methods of 1916.

² Skyscraper refers to buildings over five stories in this instance.

³ Kermit Hobbs and William A. Paquette, Suffolk: A Pictorial History (Norfolk, VA: The Doning Co., 1987), 140.

⁴ Leland A Roth, A Concise History of American Architecture (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1979), 160-162.

⁵ Friedman, Donald, Historical Building Construction (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1995), 137.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 135.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 3 Page 14

The Colonial Revival style of the building reflects the dichotomy of building styles of the mid-1910s. The early 20th century saw advancements in technology, which altered the landscape of American cities and also residential areas. Along with advancements in technology, the streamlined style of Frank Lloyd Wright emerged, which had more of a "modern" flair than his predecessors, such as McKim, Mead and White. The advancements in style coincided with the industrialization of American cities.⁷ Suffolk was not an industrialized city and maintained an agricultural community. The Professional Building, with its modern construction materials, could have followed a modern style, but would not have reflected the traditional nature of the area with its agricultural community. The Colonial Revival style was familiar to its residents and in many ways retained the appearance of the numerous surrounding buildings. All three skyscrapers in Suffolk have Revival styles, which emphasizes the popularity of traditional styles.

Ernest E. Jones founded the American Bank of Suffolk in 1912. Jones had been associated with the banking community from the age of 14, as a runner for the Farmers Bank of Nansemond County. At 21, Jones saw a need for a financial institution to cater to the agricultural community in and around Suffolk. He traveled the countryside via horse-and-buggy soliciting support from the area farmers and tradesmen for approximately two years. Upon receiving adequate support, he opened the American Bank of Suffolk on October 1, 1912. The bank first used office space on Saratoga Street, but soon moved to a new location on Main Street. This bank building was a small, one-story, brick facility with a rounded arch entrance flanked by two rounded arch window openings.⁸ The bank on Main Street was two doors from the Farmers Bank of Nansemond County. This building was only occupied until approximately 1917, when the American Bank and Trust Building was opened at the intersection of East Main and Washington Streets.

It is unclear when or how the name of the bank changed, but the name had changed by the opening of the new bank tower. It may have been a merger with another bank, American Trust Company, which was organized in 1916.⁹ The American Bank of Suffolk was a member of the Virginia Bankers Association and retained its original officers during the name change around 1916.¹⁰

⁷ Roth, Leland M., 239.

⁸ "Christmas Progress and Prosperity," The Suffolk Herald (10 December 1915), 3.

⁹ Bankshare Corporation of Virginia, American Bank and Trust Company of Richmond: Formerly American National Bank and American Trust Company 1899-1929 (Richmond, VA, 1929), 2.

¹⁰ The Suffolk Herald, 3.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 15

The building was constructed on the former site of the Suffolk Five and Ten Cent Store.¹¹ Most of the buildings on the block prior to the construction of the National Bank of Suffolk, and American Bank and Trust Company skyscrapers in 1916 were one- to three-story brick commercial buildings.¹² There are a few of the original commercial buildings remaining in the vicinity reflecting the dichotomy of the new banking towers and Suffolk's existing commerce at the time of their construction.

The construction contract for the American Bank and Trust Company building was granted in 1916 to Harwood and Moss of Norfolk, Virginia. The architect is listed as John Kevan Peebles (1866-1934), also from Norfolk.¹³ Peebles was a native of Petersburg, Virginia and studied Engineering at the University of Virginia. He was granted his degree in 1890. From 1890 to 1892, Peebles taught at the University of Virginia. He then moved his architectural practice to Norfolk. He was a director for the plan and construction of the 1907 Jamestown Exposition held in Norfolk, Virginia.¹⁴ Peebles was active in Virginia, and especially in southeast Virginia, from 1898 to 1935. There are numerous buildings in southeast Virginia bearing his design, including the Professional Building in Portsmouth.

During the construction of the Professional Building in 1917, Peebles was joined by Finlay Forbes Ferguson, another Norfolk architect. The two formed a partnership, Peebles and Ferguson, which lasted until 1934. Ferguson was a native of Norfolk and graduated from Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia. He studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His architecture practice began in 1890 in Norfolk. In 1902 Ferguson joined Charles Parker Breese, and shortly after another Norfolk architect, Charles J. Calrow, joined the firm. The partnership of the three architects was short lived and terminated in 1904. Ferguson and Calrow continued their partnership until 1917, when Ferguson joined Peebles. After his partnership with Peebles, Ferguson served on the Advisory Committee of Architects for the restoration of the historic buildings at Williamsburg.¹⁵

¹¹ Suffolk City Directory (Asheville, NC, 1910, 1912/13).

¹² Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (New York, 1888, 1914).

¹³ Manufacturers' Record (Baltimore, MD, Volume LXIX, no. 18, 4 May 1916), 87-88.

¹⁴ John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, The Virginia Architects 1835-1958: A biographical dictionary, (Richmond, VA, New South Architectural Press, 1997), 348.

¹⁵ Wells, 140.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 3 Page 16

There are conflicting reports of the actual date of construction of the American Bank and Trust Company, now Professional Building. According to local history, the building was constructed from 1916 to 1919. In a 1915 publication, Pen and Picture Sketches: The City of Suffolk, Virginia, there is a rendering of the building and discussion of its imminent construction.¹⁶ According to local history, the building commenced construction at the same time as the National Bank of Suffolk tower, which was 1916.¹⁷ The contract for the American Bank of Suffolk Building was awarded in May 1916 to Harwood and Moss and described as "reinforced concrete construction, 7 stories, stone and pressed brick, stone and terracotta trim, tile corridors, marble base and wainscot."¹⁸ The Sanborn Map from 1926 has a construction date of 1917 and there are plans for the 5th story and penthouse dating 1919 executed by the firm of Peebles and Ferguson. The city directory for 1918/1919 has numerous occupants in early 1918, but the 5th story does not appear to be occupied, and may still have been under construction at the time of the publishing. Therefore it has been assumed that the design of the building was completed in 1915, and construction commenced in 1916 and was finally completed in 1919.¹⁹

In 1918/1919, there were eleven tenants from the first to fifth stories. By 1923/1924, there were twenty-five tenants and five vacancies. The ground floor storefronts had become home to the Virginian-Pilot local office and the Western Union Telephone Company. On the mezzanine was the recently founded American Bank and Trust Company Insurance Department. Until 1930, there were a consistent number of tenants, and vacancies in the building declined. Also, the growth of tenants' professional practices is seen during this period as they expanded into adjoining office space. Most tenants in the Professional Building were dentists, physicians, and numerous insurance companies. 80% of the tenants listed in the 1918/1919 City Directory still had office space in the building in 1930/1931.

The building was once adorned with a clock, which was located on the southwest corner above the mezzanine level. It was affixed to the building and was known as the "city clock." It is not known when it was placed on the building or why, but it is not seen in

¹⁶ American Bank and Trust Company, 7.

¹⁷ "Cornerstone for National Bank of Suffolk Laid" The Suffolk Tri-Weekly Herald, Volume I, no.55, 14 June 1916.

¹⁸ Manufacturers' Record, 87-88.

¹⁹ Unfortunately, there are only a few Suffolk newspapers remaining from 1901 to 1925. There was a great loss of newspapers between these dates.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 17

early photos upon the completion of the building. The clock was taken down by G. P. Jackson when the building closed in 1993.²⁰

The building was renamed in 1962 after the American Trust and Bank Company moved to a new location in Suffolk. The building was named the Professional Building for the numerous professional occupants. In 1962, there were physicians, lawyers, dentists, real estate agents, a Brokerage firm and a reporter occupying the building. This building was also the home office of the State attorney for Suffolk.

The tenancy in the Professional Building steadily declined from 1962 until the building closed in 1993. The last tenants were physicians and attorneys. Prior to the building's vacancy in 1993, there was only one business and six tenants occupying the Professional Building. There were a total of 15 vacancies found between the first to fifth stories.

A local proprietor, G. P. Jackson donated the building to the Western Tidewater Community Services Board (WTCSB) in 1993. Plans were developed by Cedarquist, Rodriguez and Ripley Architects based in Norfolk, Virginia in November 1993. Due to the over \$1 million cost of renovation, the WTCSB was unable to complete the project and the building continued to lie vacant. In July 1995, the city of Suffolk acquired the building. Efforts to revitalize downtown Suffolk were anchored in this area by the city and the construction of the Godwin Courts Building one block from the Professional Building has spurred interest in restoring the landmark building.²¹

The Professional Building retains a high degree of integrity and is reflective of national trends in construction and design of the early 20th century. It meets Criteria A due to its association with the popularity of the construction of tall buildings by corporations. The building also meets Criteria C due to its association with modern construction methods, including fireproofing and steel-frame construction. It also meets this Criteria due to its high level of architectural integrity and influence of the Chicago-school of architecture on building construction.

²⁰ Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society, Newsletter (Volume 7, Issue 1, April 1998), 3.

²¹ Elgin M. Lowe, Sr., Suffolkians: Two Plus Cultures... Facing Realities from 1900-1970, (Suffolk, VA: By the author), 75.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 18

Bibliography

American Bank and Trust Company. Our Fiftieth Year. Suffolk, VA: By the author, 1962.

Bankshare Corporation of Virginia. American Bank and Trust Company of Richmond: Formerly American National Bank and America Trust Company 1899-1929. Richmond, VA: by the author, 1929.

Burton, Ann H., ed. History of Suffolk and Nansemond County, VA 1970. Suffolk, VA: Phelps Ideas!, 1970.

"Christmas Progress and Prosperity." Suffolk Herald, The, Supplement, Section 2, Friday, December 10, 1915.

Friedman, Donald. Historical Building Construction. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1995.

Hobbs, Kermit and William A. Paquette. Suffolk: A Pictorial History. Norfolk, VA: The Doning Co., 1987.

Lowe, Elgin M., Sr. Suffolkians: Two Plus Cultures...Facing Realities from 1900-1970. Suffolk, VA: By the author, 1970.

Manufacturers' Record. Baltimore, MD, Volume LXIX, no. 18, 4 May 1916.

Peebles and Ferguson. Professional Building. Plans for floors five and penthouse, 1919

Roth, Leland M. A Concise History of American Architecture. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1979.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1888.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1914.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 19

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1926.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1939.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1966.

Suffolk City Directory. Asheville, NC: Piedmont Directory Co., Inc., 1910.

Suffolk City Directory. Asheville, NC: Piedmont Directory Co., Inc., 1912/1913.

Suffolk City Directory. Asheville, NC: Piedmont Directory Co., Inc., 1918/1919.

Suffolk City Directory. Asheville, NC: Piedmont Directory Co., Inc., 1923/1924.

Suffolk City Directory. Asheville, NC: Piedmont Directory Co., Inc., 1925/1926.

Suffolk City Directory. Asheville, NC: Piedmont Directory Co., Inc., 1927/1928.

Suffolk City Directory. Asheville, NC: Piedmont Directory Co., Inc., 1930/1931.

Suffolk City Directory. Charleston, SC: Baldwin, Co., 1940.

Suffolk City Directory. Richmond, VA: Hill's Publishing Co, 1955-1981/1982.

Suffolk City Directory. Richmond, VA: Polk's Publishing Co., 1985-1997.

Suffolk Tri-Weekly Herald, The, Vol. I, no. 55, Wednesday, June 14, 1916.

Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society. Newsletter. Volume 7, Issue 1. April 1998.

Wells, John E. and Robert E. Dalton. The Virginia Architects 1835-1958: A biographical dictionary. Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1997.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 20

Verbal Boundary Description

Suffolk Tax Map and Parcel number: 34G18 (A) *269.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the property reflect all the area historically associated with the building under current ownership.

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section photo Page 21

All photographs are of:

THE PROFESSIONAL BUILDING
City of Suffolk, Virginia
VDHR file # 133-5032
Kimble David, photographer

All negatives are stored with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Date: March 1999

View of: Bank of Suffolk, left and
Professional Building, right from the
south

Negative no: 17454
Photo 1 of 21

Date: March 1999

View of: interior, NW storefront detail
Negative no: 17454
Photo 6 of 21

Date: March 1999

View of: Professional Building, exterior
Negative no: 17454
Photo 2 of 21

Date: March 1999

View of: banking floor, west wall
Negative no: 17454
Photo 7 of 21

Date: March 1999

View of: exterior, south wall detail
Negative no: 17454
Photo 3 of 21

Date: March 1999

View of: vestibule detail, mailbox &
elevator
Negative no: 17454
Photo 8 of 21

Date: March 1999

View of: exterior NE corner
Negative no: 17454
Photo 4 of 21

Date: March 1999

View of: banking floor, SW corner
Negative no: 17454
Photo 9 of 21

Date: March 1999

View of: interior, directory detail
Negative no: 17454
Photo 5 of 21

Date: March 1999

View of: vehicle bay, looking north
Negative no: 17454
Photo 10 of 21

National Register of Historic Places

Professional Building
Suffolk, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section photo Page 22

Date: March 1999
View of: banking floor NE corner
Negative no: 17454
Photo 11 of 21

Date: March 1999
View of: mezzanine office, SW corner
Negative no: 17454
Photo 12 of 21

Date: March 1999
View of: stairwell
Negative no: 17454
Photo 13 of 21

Date: March 1999
View of: office, looking to hallway
Negative no: 17454
Photo 14 of 21

Date: March 1999
View of: offices-enfilade south wall
looking west
Negative no: 17454
Photo 15 of 21

Date: March 1999
View of: lavatory
Negative no: 17454
Photo 16 of 21

Date: March 1999
View of: penthouse SE corner
Negative no: 17454
Photo 17 of 21

Date: March 1999
View of: water tank
Negative no: 17454
Photo 18 of 21

Date: March 1999
View of: elevator equipment
Negative no: 17454
Photo 19 of 21

Date: March 1999
View of: office, outlet detail
Negative no: 17454
Photo 20 of 21

Date: March 1999
View of: furnace
Negative no: 17454
Photo 21 of 21

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

5651 SW
(WINDSOR)

76°37'30"
36°45'

560000E

357

358

PETE
35 ELEPH

4068000N

4067

4066

4065

4064



Professional

Building

133-5032

UTM REFERENCE

POINT:

Z/E/N
18/358616/4065660

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

5571 SW
(WINDSOR)

