

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name (former) Citizens Bank Building
other names/site number Yancey County Public Library Building

2. Location

street & number Town Square N/A not for publication
city, town Burnsville N/A vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Yancey code 199 zip code 28714

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

William S. Pugh 2-19-90
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE TRADE: financial
institution

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: library

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____
walls _____ brick _____ brick
roof _____ asphalt
other _____ granite

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The (former) Citizens Bank Building sits on a corner on the south side of Town Square in Burnsville, North Carolina. The massive yellow brick block faces the square to the north. Across the side street to the east is the Nu-Wray Inn, behind the former bank is a house and to the west is a renovated brick commercial building. The (former) Citizens Bank Building was constructed in 1925, at the height of western North Carolina's "boom" period which preceded the Depression era, and is the only high-style building in Burnsville.

The former bank building is a blocky Renaissance Revival style structure with a rectangular configuration consisting of three stories: two lower levels (actually a single open space which formerly housed a mezzanine on one side) topped by a prominent entablature and a full story above. The first two stories of the two main facades feature monumental pilasters with granite bases and simplified Corinthian capitals defining the bays - five on the main facade facing the square and three on the side elevation - and tall round arches with brick voussoirs, granite console keystones and granite Corinthian impost. Within each arch are two tiers of wood-framed tripartite windows, with the spandrel between the tiers marking the mezzanine level and the upper window of the Diocletian type. Fluted pilasters divide the lower windows, which are fronted by a granite balconnette bearing turned balusters in relief and supporting an iron grille which reaches to the middle point of the lower window. The pilaster capitals and console keystones are all at the same level and seem to support the granite entablature, which has a plain frieze, except for small stylized sunbursts above each capital, and cornice with paterae. In contrast, the top story is quite plain and uniform on both main elevations, with simple rectangular one-over-one double-hung sash windows (single at the end bays and paired in the middle bays on each main elevation) with soldier course frieze, and a corbelled granite cornice. The rear and west side elevations are extremely plain.

Distinctions other than the number of bays characterize the lower levels of the two main elevations. On the primary facade, the middle three bays contain the tall arches, while the two end bays are plain except for a vertical rectangle outlined in brick with square stone blocks at the corners and, in the west end bay, a plate glass door leading to a stairway. The central bay on this facade contains the main entrance, highlighted by a granite entablature and pediment with raking cornice, dentils and console supports. The original double leaf doors have been replaced by a modern single plate glass door and a book drop. The side elevation has the arched composition in the central bay and the

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two flanking bays contain rectangular openings at the lower level with slightly recessed brick surrounds and brick jack arch lintels. The south bay opening is a large one-over-one double-hung sash window with panelled granite apron and panelled plinths and an iron grille over the lower sash. The south bay opening formerly contained a door with the flanking granite plinths but has been filled in with a plate glass window and a solid panel in place of the apron. At the top of the end bays of the lower side elevation there are horizontal rectangles in brick with stone corner blocks.

The interior of the library building is now one large, open room in which two levels of metal shelving and book storage structure have been placed away from the walls of the building and tied into the walls at a very few points in order not to harm the exquisite plasterwork with which the building was decorated at its construction. Two large plaster medallions with egg and dart borders decorate the ceiling above the metal structure. A plaster Corinthian frieze decorated with swags, urns and other classical motifs is topped by modillion cornice with plain leaf and dart bands. Encased ceiling beams also bear the modillion cornice. The surrounds of the upper arched tier of the tall windows are decorated with reeding and rosettes.

An unobtrusive door west of the main entrance opens to a small, narrow stair leading to the top story. The long flight is broken by a small landing at the halfway point. On this floor is a long central hall and a series of office suites. The central hall has office doors with transoms and frosted glass and oak surrounds and an oak enair rail.

The same stair entrance leads down several steps to the large basement distinguished by a large, walk-in safe whose door is surmounted by an elaborate plaster doorway containing a broken pediment with urn, fluted pilasters with carved base and Corinthian capitals and carved imposts. The basement area is otherwise unadorned.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1925-32

Significant Dates

1925

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary

The (former) Citizens Bank Building in Burnsville is this county seat's only extant example of high-style architecture dating from the "boom" years of western North Carolina, immediately preceding the Depression era. Designed in the nationally popular Renaissance Revival style, the building is characterized by a solid stateliness and handsome neoclassical detailing meant to convey an image of financial success and the stability and endurance of the banking industry. The interior is notable for moldings and plasterwork which have been well maintained although the interior now houses library facilities. The stylish building vividly recalls Burnsville's rise as a commercial and financial center for Yancey County during the early twentieth century as the area prospered with the successes of regional lumber companies and mica mines. The Citizens Bank was founded in 1908 as one of the county's first financial institutions and by the early 1920s its growth demanded a new commodious and fashionable building. The (former) Citizens Bank Building is significant under Criteria A and C, respectively, as a reflection of commercial growth in Yancey County from its construction in 1925 until the bank closed in 1932 due to the Depression and as Burnsville's outstanding example of the Renaissance Revival style.

See continuation sheet

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Architecture context: After 1880, modest prosperity came to Yancey County and the isolation of the mountain region began to dissipate. Some substantial farmhouses were built in the area, indicating that agriculture, the leading economic pursuit, was providing a good living. By 1907 railroads connected the lumber companies in the county and, in tandem with road improvements, brought new wealth and greater contact with the outside world.¹ By 1920 a thriving lumber industry and the mining of mica brought a measure of affluence to the county. In 1930 Burnsville had six dry goods stores, four hotels and a number of professional and commercial endeavors.² The former Citizens Bank building, now the Yancey County Public Library building, was the only commercial building to be constructed in the nationally-popular Renaissance Revival style of architectural design. This style, used for educational, religious and financial institutions all over the nation, features symmetrical elevations crowned with bold cornices, arched windows, and a minimum of unbroken wall surface,³ giving a picture of stately solidity which paid tribute to the new-found affluence of Burnsville. The building's massiveness and strong lines provided a setting for a reliable, secure banking facility.

Commercial context and historical background: The establishment of Burnsville as the county seat of Yancey County in 1833 provided a commercial center for Yancey County, but it was not until the turn of the century that the isolation of the rugged mountain county was overcome. After 1900, railroads, lumber and mining industries and better roads brought tangible symbols of national progress to the area. Before 1905, all banking business was handled for Yancey County residents in Asheville, thirty miles to the south. When the Asheville bank which handled Yancey County business failed in 1905, the County's first bank, the Bank of Yancey, was incorporated. In 1908, a second bank, the Citizens Bank of Yancey County was incorporated with a capital of \$25,000.⁴ The primary organizer and largest subscriber of the new bank was Garrett Dewese Ray (1833-1912), a native of Yancey County and early entrepreneur. Ray became aware early in his life of the importance of mining to the economy of the county. He invested heavily in mining companies, opened a profitable store on the corner of the public square where the former Citizens Bank building now stands, and in 1870 purchased the inn on the square, now the Nu-Wray Inn (NR).⁵ Ray bought \$5,000 worth of stock in the Citizens Bank. Another large contributor, who purchased \$2500 worth of stock, was David M. Buck, a popular political figure in the county and a large landowner. His property, estimated at between 3,000 and 4,000 acres, extended into Tennessee. Buck came to Yancey County from Abingdon, Virginia, as a graduate of Milligan College and a lumberman. He served four terms in the North Carolina state legislature and was a member of the board of directors of the bank for a number of years. He lived at Bald Mt., NC, several miles from Burnsville. S. Byrd, of Swiss, NC, about nine miles from Burnsville, subscribed for ten shares of stock. Byrd owned a sawmill near his home, and shipped dressed lumber by train. One subscriber, S.C. Williams, lived in nearby Bakersville. The remaining twenty investors were residents of the Burnsville area.⁶

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After its incorporation, the Citizens Bank of Yancey occupied the two-story red brick building which remains standing immediately west of the present bank-library building. In 1925, riding the crest of the new-found prosperity of the mountain counties and in keeping with the commercial frenzy which was overtaking the rest of the nation, the directors of the bank, under the direction of Frank Watson, president, authorized the purchase for \$2400 of an adjacent town lot for the construction of a new, larger and more stylish bank building.⁷ Six days after the purchase of the lot, the directors agreed to allow E.F. Watson, John A. Watson and D.H. Fouts, attorneys and bank officials, "to construct a second story on top of the bank building, which is being constructed on the property of the Citizens Bank of Yancey in the Town of Burnsville."⁸ The three purchasers would pay a prorated share of the cost of the construction of the building and could occupy the space or lease it with the "consent of this Bank as to who shall occupy same."⁹

The Citizens Bank of Yancey closed in 1932 and was subsequently liquidated. In 1937 the building was purchased by the Northwestern Bank (now known as First Union National Bank.)¹⁰ The building was used for banking business until October 25, 1972, when it was donated by Northwestern to Yancey County for use as a county public library.¹¹

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FOOTNOTES

1. Presnell, Mitzie, Inventory of Historic Architectural Resources of Yancey County, 1935, pp. 33-36.
2. Presnell, op. cit., p. 35.
3. Whiffen, Marcus, American Architecture Since 1780: A guide to the Styles page 79.
4. Yancey County Record of Corporations, Book 1; pages 5 and 6.
5. Telephone interview with Therese Blankenship, October 3, 1989.
6. Record of Corporations; also Hensley, Ray, Voices From the Mountains, page 69; page 214; page 218; page 220.
7. Yancey County Register of Deeds Book 64, page 110.
8. Yancey County Register of Deeds, Book 67, page 5.
9. Ibid.
10. Yancey County Register of Deeds, Book 150, page 157.
11. Division of Archives and History, Study List application.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Blankenship, Theresa, telephone interview, October 3, 1989.

Division of Archives and History, Study List application.

Hensley, Ray, Voices From the Mountains: A Collection of Interviews in Yancey County, NC, 1981-1985, Yancey Graphics, Burnsville, 1986.

Presnell, Mitzie, Inventory of Historic Architectural Resources in Yancey County, NC, Division of Archives and History, 1985.

Whiffen, Marcus, American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles, The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, MA, 1969.

Yancey County Record of Corporations, Yancey County Courthouse, Burnsville.

Yancey County Register of Deeds, Yancey County Courthouse, Burnsville

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property .05 acre

UTM References

A

Zone Easting Northing

B

Zone Easting Northing

C

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Yancey County Register of Deeds Book 150 at page 157: BEGINNING on the angle formed by the Square of Burnsville on the south side of the street that runs south from the said Public Square, being west from W.B. Wray's Hotel, and runs with the concrete walk a westerly course to the lot of the Citizens Bank of Yancey; thence a Southerly course with the line of said

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the Citizens Bank of Yancey and lot as described in Yancey County Register of Deeds Book 64 at page 110, as purchased by the Citizens Bank of Yancey on the 20th day of April, 1925, which is all the land historically associated with the building.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn A. Humphries

organization _____

date October 1, 1989

street & number Route 2, Box 175

telephone 704: 526-9462

city or town Highlands

state NC zip code 28741

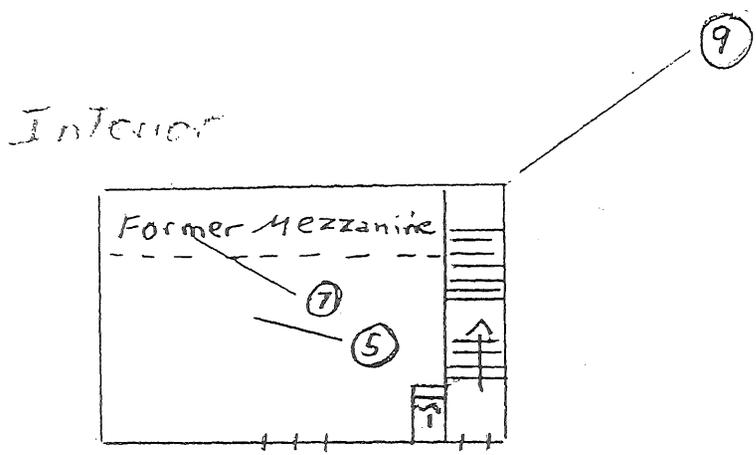
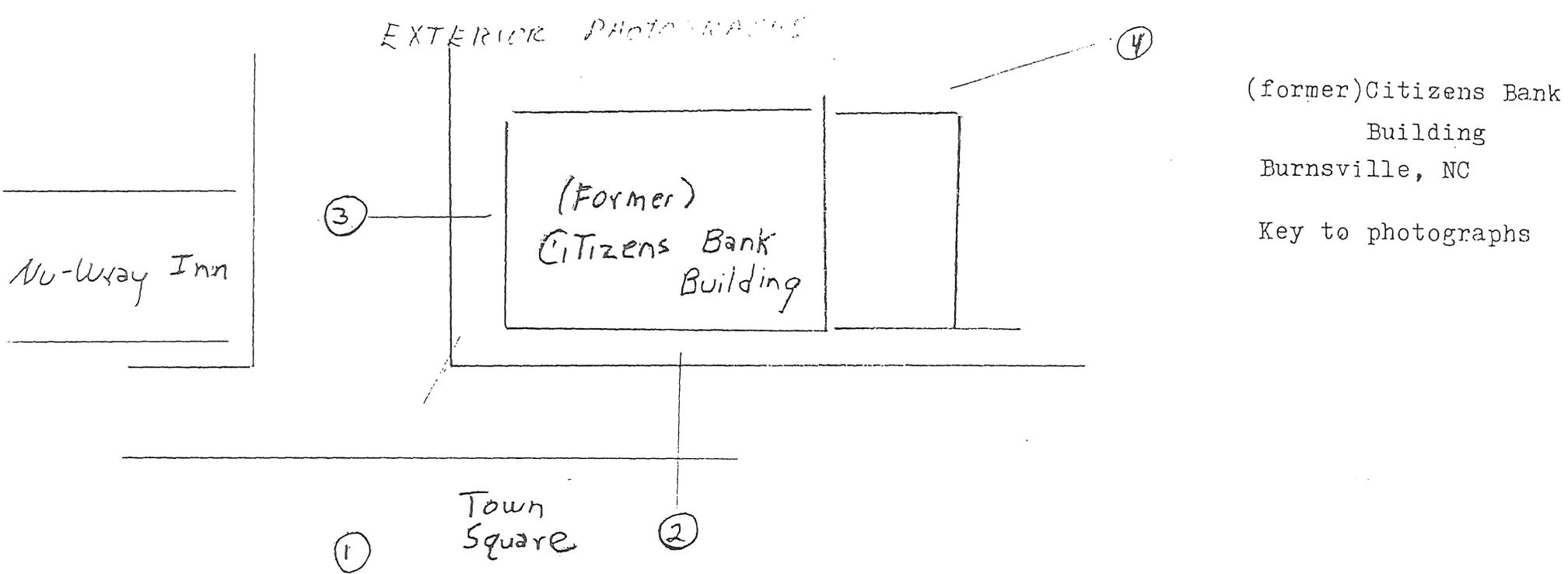
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Verbal Boundary Description (cont.)

Lot 40 feet to Welzie Riddle's line; thence East with Welzie Riddle's line to the street running south from the Public Square and immediately south of the Burns Statue; thence with the line of said street 40 feet to the BEGINNING, containing about 2240 square feet.



- Also:
- 6 entrance to basement gate
 - 8 3rd floor hallway

FORMER) CITIZENS
BANK BUILDING
BURNSVILLE, NANCEY
NORTH CAROLINA
BURNSVILLE QUAD

Zone 17
1:24,000
Easting
382700
Northing
3975260

