

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 Charleston City Hall
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Court and Virginia Streets N/A not for publication
city, town Charleston N/A vicinity
state West Virginia code 54 county Kanawha code 039 zip code 25301

3. Classification

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

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.

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date 4/21/88

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

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Government - city hall

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
City Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:
NeoClassical Revival
Renaissance Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation poured concrete, brick
walls brick, gray limestone
steel frame
roof corrugated arched pan with concrete
other single pile membrane

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Charleston City Hall occupies a deep lot on the south side of Virginia Street, opposite the Kanawha County Courthouse, at the center of downtown Charleston. The major, or entrance, elevation faces Virginia Street with monumental design features and walls clad in smooth gray limestone. The equally impressive limestone-faced Court Street facade presents a grand prospect which runs southward for nearly a block between Virginia Street and Kanawha Boulevard. These two elevations are entirely formal in design because they were intended to face the courthouse and principal city thoroughfare, while the lesser east and south elevations were formerly hidden from view by commercial buildings. The facades facing Shanklin Park are thus faced in a less expensive though handsome blond brick; they were exposed to general view only after removal of the buildings and construction of Shanklin Park, a landscaped parking lot with plantings and benches.

Charleston City Hall, an important work of civic architecture in West Virginia, is a balanced composition featuring symmetrically placed ornament and broad wall spaces uninterrupted by setbacks or projections. Though seemingly rectangular in plan from the front, the building is actually "U"-shaped, as viewed from the rear.

Charleston architect H. Rus Warne produced plans for a new city hall that reflected then popular tastes in traditional styles, such as the classical and Renaissance revivals, with which architects, like Warne, were familiar and well versed, as the result of training. Warne's 1921-22 Charleston City Hall is a West Virginia landmark of early 20th-century Classicism based upon Renaissance and Beaux Arts traditions. The architect's grand entrance elevation of the 4-story building is centered with a colossal engaged colonnade of six fluted Doric columns, which rises 3-stories in support of a massive cornice. The colonnade is carried by a rusticated ground story faced in deep jointed ashlar and punctuated with three massive arched doorways which open above a grand flight of granite steps flanked with shallow classical urns and limestone wingwalls. Above the ground story are tall, evenly spaced wood windows glazed in original assemblies featuring deeply projecting mullions and transom bars. This bank of highly ornate windows is one of the most important architectural features of the building. The windows also impart one of the strongest design elements of the Renaissance Revival style with pediments which alternate along the facade in a triangular and segmental geometry. Other refined ornament of the wall surfaces include spandrel panels between the third and fourth stories which contain bas-

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Charleston City Hall, Kanawha County, WV
Section number 7 Page 2

relief festoons carved in situ. The Court Street elevation is particularly evocative of the Renaissance palace facade because its classical treatments, such as Doric pilasters which rise three stories high, are symmetrically placed along the expanse of fourteen bays.

Formal finishes and ceremonial spaces are equally prominent within the foyers, corridors, and chambers of the Charleston City Hall. Architect Warne, who understood the classical language of architecture better perhaps than any contemporary architect in West Virginia, designed several spaces of exceptional beauty. These include the grand entrance lobby, stairhall, and council chambers.

The entrance lobby is a high ceilinged space entered through an original wood and glass revolving door. Flanking bronze doors with high plate and beveled glass panels provide secondary ingress/egress. Dividing the outer and inner lobby is a pair of monolithic Roman Doric columns of fine grained marble weighing approximately three tons. The shafts of the columns are smooth and were quarried from the same source of stone employed in the walls of the lobby and stairhall dado. This marble is compactly grained and exhibits color tones of beige and cream. The ceiling within the outer lobby is coffered. The ornamental mouldings highlighting the beams are gilt-painted. Smooth plaster surfaces form the ceiling of the inner lobby beneath which, left of center, is the first flight of the 7-flight stairway that rises within its open well three full stories. The ornate cast metal rail runs continuously from floor to floor.

Walnut paneling embellishes the walls of the council chamber, often described as the building's most beautiful room. Corinthian pilasters accent the walls above which a plaster ceiling with decorative moulding and trim dominates the room. Spaces within the building have retained much of their original finish, although certain rooms have been adapted for different purposes. The fire department, for example, is now used as an emergency communications center. The rear block's upper floors contain the city's jail facilities, but fourth floor quarters originally utilized for health care and hospital services are now used for city office space.

Restoration work in the lobby and council chambers was undertaken in the 1980's during the first term of Mayor Roark. These projects were directed by Charleston architect Paul D. Marshall. A last detail project slated for completion in 1988 is the restoration of historic lighting fixtures in the council chambers.

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
Social History

Period of Significance

1920's

Significant Dates

1921-1922

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

H. Rus Warne, architect

A.G. Higgenbotham, builder

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

Charleston City Hall is one of West Virginia's most significant works of civic architecture and is the best southern West Virginia example of an important public building designed in a fashionable early 20th-century style based upon the classical and Renaissance tradition. The building was constructed from plans produced by H. Rus Warne, one of West Virginia's most accomplished and influential architects of the early 20th century. Charleston City Hall derives additional significance as the focal point of local government efforts during the 1920's to house urban services and agencies, such as those required for health care, under a single roof.

The site of the present city hall was acquired on October 23, 1882, and later cleared to permit construction in 1884 of a \$14,000 red brick eclectic structure combining Second Empire and Romanesque styles. A major feature of the earlier city building was its fire department bays which faced Virginia Street. Charleston's growth accelerated in the late 19th century, particularly after 1885, when the city became the state's permanent capital. Growth of the city was dramatic during these decades, as evidenced by burgeoning commercial and industrial developments centering around the coal, gas, oil, and lumber industries. The selection of Charleston as the state capital was a momentous event, but, in the words of historian Otis K. Rice, in his book Charleston and the Kanawha Valley, "...the transformation of the city into a thriving industrial and commercial center in the succeeding decades was no less exciting." The population growth of the city during the first decades of the 20th century placed a great strain on the utility of the 1884 red brick city hall. A measure of this rapid rise in the city's population is contained in the following yearly statistics:

1900 - 11,099
1910 - 22,354
1920 - 39,998
1922-23 - 44,585

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Charleston City Hall, Kanawha County, WV

Section number 8 Page 2

At the beginning of the decade of the 1920's, and during the administration of Mayor Grant P. Hall (1919-1923), the city was forced to replace its less than 40-year-old municipal building with a more capacious and comfortable seat of government. This was accomplished in 1921-1922 with construction of an impressive Renaissance-style, gray limestone clad "symbol of paternalism and government", which was described in local papers as the finest municipal building in the south. "It is up-to-date in every respect and is designed to take care of the business of the city for many years, no matter how fast may be its growth." The cost of \$650,000 was considered, nevertheless, expensive, even for a building built during the boom period of the Roaring 20's.

City government placed the project in the hands of H. Rus Warne, Charleston's leading architect. His superintendent of construction was A.G. Higginbotham, a successful and well-known Kanawha Valley builder. Supervising the 2-year project was Bonner H. Hill, City Manager, who was lauded by the Charleston Gazette because "he saw every brick, stone, board, and nail that went into it. He scoured the country for material of the cheapest quality and at the same time of the highest." It was Bonner Hill who in 1924 became secretary of the West Virginia Capitol Building Commission; it was he who oversaw that gigantic project until its completion in 1932. During the course of the project many, including private citizens participated in discussions and provided advice leading to successful completion of construction.

Formal opening of City Hall was held during the evening of August 31, 1922. An estimated one third of Charleston's population toured the building, which was described in the September 1, 1922 Charleston Gazette as containing "... as integral parts, stone and steel, polished wood, dull bronze, beaten brass, costly rugs, glistening furniture, flowers, handsomely gowned women and all that is beautiful." The throngs were greeted by Mayor Hall, architect H. Rus Warne, contractor A.G. Higginbotham, and project manager Bonner H. Hill. (Mr. Hill was city manager during the early Hall administration; he was succeeded by Lon S. Barringer.)

Also presiding at the opening reception was Dr. R.A. Ireland, of the city health department. City Hall was equipped with modern health facilities, to insure that "the city government will wage war on disease in the same building when it wages battle against crime, the product of disease." Fourth floor quarters, providing health and hospital facilities, were regarded as a significant new concept in city services. As reported by a writer covering the opening, and quoted by Paul D. Marshall in his Survey of Charleston (1984):

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Charleston City Hall, Kanawha County, WV

Section number 8 Page 3

"But the new thing, the one with which Charleston people are not familiar, is the provision made for caring for the physically ailing or the delinquents of life. Here the paternal aspect of the whole thing was best exemplified. Here it has been shown how a city is not indifferent to the derelict who is sick, the wayward who needs restraint and medical attention, the casual emergency case that needs treatment and care and all done at the expenses of of the city."

Charleston City Hall, with its heavy classical treatments, refined detail, and marked symmetry is an important West Virginia example of early 20th-century classicism. Architect Warne produced plans for a fashionable city hall that was based upon popular tastes in traditional styles, such as the Neo-Classical Revival and Renaissance Revival, with which Warne, like many contemporaries, were familiar and well versed. It is not surprising that Warne, a West Virginia native, once traveled in Europe as a young man to study historically significant architecture. A generation of American architects did in fact study under teachers, or at schools, which emphasized design in which classical, Beaux-Arts, and Renaissance modes were considered professionally superior and proper. One of the leading proponents of this tradition in the United States was architect Cass Gilbert, with whom architect Warne became well acquainted during the times Gilbert spent on intermittent trips to Charleston to supervise construction of the West Virginia Capitol (1924-1932).

Architect H. Rus Warne

H. Rus Warne (1872-1954) was a pioneer leader and organizer among early West Virginia professionals in the field of architecture. Warne produced plans for many prominent buildings in West Virginia during the half century of his professional career. His works are found in all sections - save the panhandlers - of the state. Important to profession and state were Warne's efforts to organize a state board of architects and form a state chapter of the AIA.

A student of the Beaux-Arts, Warne studied in a Paris atelier before the turn-of-the-century, and also spent some time in Rome. It seems appropriate then that even a minor detail such as the large, handsome, and distinctive polished bronze dedicatory tablet affixed to the marble walls of the lobby of Charleston City Hall, and bearing the name of the architect, should conform in dignity and style to the whole of the building.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Charleston Gazette. Charleston, WV. Aug. 19, 1922, p. 1;
Aug. 31, 1922, pp. 1, 9; Sept. 1, 1922, pp. 1, 10, 11.
Marshall, Paul D. Historical and Architectural Survey - Downtown Charleston, West Virginia. Sept. 24, 1984, pp. 31-33.
Rice, Otis K. Charleston and the Kanawha Valley. Woodland Hills, Calif.: Windar Publications, Inc. for West Virginia Historical Society, 1981, pp. 57; 80-81.
West Virginia Review. Vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 26-27; 45.

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:

N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than 1 acre.

UTM References

A

1	7
---	---

4	4	4	1	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	2	4	4	7	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Zone Easting Northing

D

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of a rectangle beginning at the southeast corner of Court and Virginia Street, thence 215 feet south along the east side of Court Street, thence 124 feet east along the south edge of the alley, thence north 215 feet to the south edge of Virginia Street, thence 124 feet west to the point of beginning, to form a rectangle.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property constitutes the entire lot historically associated with Charleston City Hall.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rodney S. Collins, Architectural Historian
 organization WV Department of Culture and History date February 19, 1988
 street & number The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex telephone 304/ 348-0240
 city or town Charleston state WV zip code 25305

CHARLESTON WEST QUADRANGLE
WEST VIRGINIA—KANAWHA CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

SW 4 CHARLESTON 5 QUADRANGLE

4601 NE
BIG CHIMNEY

OCATALICO 9 MI
GUTHRIE 2.8 MI

43

44

1 820 000 FEET 81° 37' 30"

38° 22' 30"



500 000
FEET

BIG CHIMNEY 7 MI
ELKVIEW 12 MI

CHARLESTON CITY
HALL
COURT AND VIRGINIA
STs.
CHARLESTON, KANAWHA
CO., W.VA.

425

77 UJM:

17 444180/4244700

STATE CAPITOL
WEST VIRGINIA TURNPIKE

MANAWHA CITY 8.3 MI
WEST VIRGINIA TURNPIKE 3.4 MI

20'



ONLY

COURT ST

ONLY

ONE WAY

ONLY

VIRGINIA ST

