

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: West Virginia
COUNTY: Kanawha
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
West Virginia Capitol Complex

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
West Virginia State Capitol, West Virginia Executive Mansion

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Along Kanawha Boulevard, East

CITY OR TOWN:  
Charleston

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
Third

STATE:  
West Virginia

CODE:  
54

COUNTY:  
Kanawha

CODE:  
039

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
State of West Virginia

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1800 Washington Street, East

CITY OR TOWN:  
Charleston

STATE:  
West Virginia

CODE:  
54

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Kanawha County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
416 Kanawha Boulevard, East

CITY OR TOWN:  
Charleston

STATE:  
West Virginia

CODE:  
54

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: West Virginia

COUNTY: Kanawha

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DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The West Virginia Capitol Complex, located along the Kanawha River in Charleston, incorporates the State Capitol with its three attached units and the Executive Mansion which serves as the home of the governor. Covering an expanse of more than eighteen acres, the capitol shadows the mansion which is set on its western side. The following descriptions will indicate the physical appearance of each.

WEST VIRGINIA STATE CAPITOL

Designed in Italian Renaissance style by renowned architect Cass Gilbert and completed in steps between 1924 and 1932 at a cost of a little less than \$10,000,000, the symmetrical, "U"-shaped West Virginia State Capitol, of limestone and marble, has a porticoed central section and two four-story (plus basement) wings attached to the main unit by a single story divider.

The office wings, to the east and west of the domed section, are about three hundred feet long by sixty feet wide and have slightly projecting central entrances with a greater projection opposite and to the rear of the building. Pilasters run between window arrangements on the upper three floors to support the surrounding cornice. As with the central section, the wings have a flat roof enclosed by a balustraded parapet. The oblong area inside the "U" formed by the complex is landscaped to complement the structure.

A two hundred and ninety-two feet high dome (about four and one-half feet higher than that of the United States Capitol), embossed with gold leaf, crowns the central unit, which measures one hundred and twenty by five hundred and fifty-eight feet. Atop the crowning lantern is a bronze staff upon which is poised a golden eagle. The outer walls, like those of the wings constructed of Indiana select buff limestone, are adorned with pairs of Doric pilasters, two stories in height, which rise in support of the main cornice.

The primary entrance on Kanawha Boulevard, protected by a monumental Corinthian portico balanced on the opposite side of the central unit by a similar entrance, is approached by a broad flight of steps. The colonnade of the portico rises in support of a plain classic pediment under a copper-colored gable roof.

This main, south entrance opens into the rotunda on the principal floor, and one is surrounded by a circular-arched hall directly beneath the high dome. Its pilastered walls of Imperial Danby Vermont marble, pierced with four massive arches, rise to a carved frieze at the base of the drum. The north and south arches open upon the two entrance porticoes, while the two others give access to the east and west foyers. These foyers lead to the house and senate chambers, in the east and west wings respectively of the central unit. The arches extend to the base of the dome and are adorned with lunette panels of deep-blue plaster. The floor of the rotunda, circular in plan around an open well, is inlaid with Italian travertine and white Vermont marble. A balustrade encircles the well in the rotunda floor, through which can be seen a colonnaded hall on the floor below. Gold-leaf bands decorate the walls of the circular drum and ceiling of the dome, which are in shades of blue, gray and old rose.

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7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

A row of slender windows covered with gold-leaf grilles encircles the dome at the base of the bell.

Walls and floors of the foyers are of the same marble as that of the rotunda, but the ceilings are embellished with square coffered panels, each decorated with a bronze cluster of leaves against a background of rose. Light comes softly through translucent Italian alabaster urns, supported on standards of black and gold Belgian marble.

Designed with strict classic proportions, the Senate chamber, at the west end of the main unit, has an air of quiet dignity and beauty. Public galleries framed by massive arches open on three sides of the room, and a fourth arch, set with a blue panel, is a background for the dais. The walls are divided by rose-colored panels of acoustic plaster. Behind the galleries are small arched windows covered with ornamental bronze grilles. The domical ceiling, topped with a small cupola, is in the form of a paneled skylight with stained glass. In the center, hung on a brass chain, is a chandelier of imported hand-cut glass. The chamber of the House of Delegates is similar.

Double flanking stairways of white marble, leading off the hallway on the south side of the rotunda, descend to the Doric Hall, under the rotunda on the ground floor. This hall has fluted Doric columns and six crystal lights suspended on bronze chains. In the center of the hall is a circular colonnade of sixteen square Doric piers, enclosing the well in the rotunda floor. Bronze light stands are arranged in pairs inside the colonnade. High above the well is the blue vaulted ceiling of the dome. A crystal chandelier, eight feet in diameter, containing more than 3,300 pieces of hand-cut crystal and weighing more than two tons, is suspended from the dome ceiling. A circular design on the floor has the same diameter as the chandelier far above.

The outer reception room of the governor's suite, on the ground floor in the extreme west end of the main unit, is regarded as a show room of the capitol. It is of Georgian Colonial design with ivory-colored walls, embellished with fluted Corinthian pilasters. The parquet floors, of herringbone design, have a border of quarter-sawed oak, black walnut and maple. The floor is covered with a tan rug, twenty-six by sixty feet and weighing 1,800 pounds, made especially for the room and said to have been the largest seamless rug in the United States at the time the capitol was constructed. Two large crystal chandeliers and many crystal wall brackets light the room; a fireplace of black and gold Belgian marble is at the eastern end.

WEST VIRGINIA EXECUTIVE MANSION

Built in 1924-1925 under the supervision of architect Walter F. Martens, the West Virginia Executive Mansion is of red Harvard colonial brick laid in Flemish bond with black headers. The Georgian Colonial building is fronted by a central, two-story portico with a bracketed pediment supported by four free standing and two engaged fluted Corinthian columns. The capitals of these columns are ornate with acanthus leaves, and this lends an impressive grace and dignity to the front of the mansion. The arched entranceway,

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1925, 1927, 1932

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The West Virginia Capitol Complex consists of the three-unit State Capitol and the Executive Mansion. The former was constructed under supervision of renowned architect Cass Gilbert, who presented it in an Italian Renaissance design with a high dome, continuing the tradition of the lines of the United States Capitol and presenting a magnificent structure to the people of West Virginia. The Executive Mansion, as somewhat of a contrast, was planned and supervised by Walter F. Martens, an architect in Charleston, West Virginia, who was comparatively young in the profession and had never undertaken a project of such scope before. This building is of fine, but simple, Georgian Colonial design and serves the state as the home of its governor. The architectural significance of these structures may be better appreciated when it is realized that they are also quite politically significant, for they house the highest branches of state government. In effect, then, each complements the other, the beauty of the buildings matching the state functions of legislature, executive and judiciary, and the government processes making the buildings in which they are practiced outstanding.

On January 3, 1921, a fire swept through the West Virginia State Capitol at Charleston and completely destroyed the building and its contents. The need for a new structure was immediate, but it was generally agreed that plans and preparations should be well developed and considered before proceeding, for a capitol would have to be built to meet several types of demands. The people should be given an impressive structure which would serve the needs of state government in a practical sense for a long time to come. Above all, construction should be undertaken with the idea of providing an edifice of quality at a reasonable cost. While problems were discussed, the state government was temporarily housed in a long office building of wood, often referred to as the "pasteboard" capitol.

The first step toward construction of a new capitol was taken during an extraordinary session of the 1921 West Virginia Legislature when a seven member Capitol Building Commission was created. On July 23, 1921, this group selected Cass Gilbert as architect of the complex, and on December 20, 1921, the present site was selected for the new buildings.

Gilbert's selection as architect came only after the Building Commission considered the leaders in the profession. It found that Mr. Gilbert had more to his credit and that he came more highly recommended than any other member of his profession. His achievements were found in some of the most famous buildings in the country, including the Woolworth Building in New York, which at the time was pictured everywhere as the tallest structure in the world. To his credit also were the capitols in

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7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

painted white to complement the brickwork as is all trim, frames a delicate fanlight above the door.

On either side of the structure, and extending about one-third of the depth, are porches surrounded by a low balustrade and rows of columns which rise to support a flat roof onto which several second floor rooms open. These second floor balconies also have low balustrades with interesting designs in wood. The porch to the east is open, while that toward the west is enclosed. A single story entranceway at the rear balances the central, front portico.

A bracketed cornice circles the house above the second floor, and third floor dormers pleasingly jut from the indented, slate-shingled mansard roof. The third story was not included when the mansion was first built, but original plans called for it and it was added in 1946. Until then, the building was capped above the second floor with a flat tin roof. The mansion has been redecorated twice since construction, in 1937 and 1958.

Completing the grounds, the enclosed gardens and a garage over which are the servant quarters were added in 1926, and they each complement the mansion while functioning in their own right as distinct elements.

As one enters through the main portico, he is immediately struck by the checkered black Belgian and white Tennessee marble floor which is flanked by well-proportioned, dual Georgian staircases, a design inspired by architectural studies of the White House. The main floor also houses the elegantly designed and furnished drawing room, ballroom, State dining room, a sitting room and the library. Eight bedrooms and four baths, including the Governor's private quarters and family room, are located on the second floor, and the third floor contains two additional bedrooms.

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

St. Paul, Minnesota, and Little Rock, Arkansas, buildings of the University of Texas and University of Minnesota, the United States Treasury Annex at Washington, D.C., and the United States Chamber of Commerce Building in the nation's capital.

After many consultations and exchanges of ideas, Gilbert's plans were adopted, and contracts were let for office building number one, the west wing of the capitol, on December 22, 1923. Ground was broken on January 7, 1924, and the structure was completed and accepted by the Building Commission on April 14, 1925. The east office building was begun in 1926 and completed in December 1927, while the main unit was not started until March 31, 1930, and was finally finished on February 10, 1932.

The U-shaped complex which now houses the legislature and numerous departments of state as well as the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia, took eleven years to complete. Under the guidance of Cass Gilbert and the restraints of appropriations, the magnificence may be better understood when one looks at what was accomplished for a total of less than \$10,000,000.

Developed as an expanse along the Kanawha River, the capitol is

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

especially known for its fine proportions and high dome--about four and one-half feet higher than that at the United States Capitol. Gilbert's idea of combining the best materials with consideration of function and cost led to construction of an edifice which would be as practical as it was beautiful. The Indiana limestone and Vermont marble were of high quality, use of gold to cover the embossed panels of the dome was justified as being less expensive than upkeep of a painted top, and no effort was lost in making legislative chambers attractive at the same time as guaranteeing their meeting the demands of usefulness.

The main unit is about 558 feet long and 120 feet wide and has two connecting wings each 300 feet by 60 feet. The wings having four floors plus basement and the central section having three floors plus basement, the complex offers about fourteen acres of usable floor space. Such a large area brought most state agencies under one roof, so to speak, until new state buildings were constructed nearby about the time of World War II.

The capitol was dedicated on June 20, 1932, sixty-ninth anniversary of the state's admission into the Union, and was first used by the legislature in an extraordinary session convened on July 12, 1932. Since that time it has been the center of state affairs, the place where its laws are made, carried into effect and ruled upon by its highest court when necessary.

Even as the initial plans to build a new capitol went forward in 1921, talk of a permanent facility to house the state's governor and his family was heard. Land for an executive mansion was purchased on July 7, 1921, at a time when there was considerable speculation as to where the Capitol Building Commission would decide to erect the new capitol. As it happened, the mansion site was only a street and lawn away from the proposed state house.

Walter F. Martens, an aspiring Charleston architect who had little idea he would be considered, was chosen to draw up and present plans for the structure. After much thought, study and some conversation with capitol architect Gilbert, he presented his sketches for the Georgian Colonial edifice that is today the West Virginia Executive Mansion. Although the full extent of his ideas was not immediately carried out, the job was completed in 1946 when the third floor was added to the building.

This new governor's home was the second owned by the state; the first had been purchased only in 1893 from a firm which had constructed a house just a few years before for a private residence. Before that time, West Virginia governors had to house themselves.

Ephraim F. Morgan, governor from 1921 to 1925, first occupied the new mansion only one week prior to the expiration of his term. It has since housed twelve governors, including the present executive, Arch A. Moore, Jr.

The West Virginia Capitol Complex, which includes the State Capitol and the Executive Mansion, combines a structure of an Italian Renaissance design with one of Georgian Colonial. Spacious lawns and landscaped terraces, however, allow their existence in close proximity without a clashing of styles. Each has its own significance: the capitol's distinctive grandeur of size and the mansion's fine, but simple, lines. Architecturally

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

complementary in this sense, the structures serve the functional needs of the state in housing its chief executive, legislature and highest court.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

\_\_\_\_\_. Second Biennial Message of Governor Howard M. Gore to the Legislature of 1929. Charleston, W.Va.: n.p., n.d. (pp. 9-10)

\_\_\_\_\_. State Papers and Public Addresses of William G. Conley, Governor of West Virginia, 1929-33. Charleston, W.Va.: n.p., n.d. (pp. 210-13, 311-13, 349, 394-95).

Stutler, Boyd B. "West Virginia's Magnificent State Capitol." West Virginia Review, IX (July 1932), 401-03, 426.

Writers' Program, Work Projects Administration. West Virginia: a Guide to the Mountain State. New York: Oxford University Press, 1941, (pp. 190-94).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Charleston (W.Va.) Daily Mail, June 19, 1932. New Capitol Section (48 pp.).  
 The Governor's Mansion. Pamphlet on file at the West Virginia University  
 Library.  
 Huston, Charles G.F. "West Virginia's Executive Mansion." Journal of the  
 Alleghenies, Fall-Winter 1963-64, 12-15.  
 State of West Virginia. State Papers and Public Addresses, 1921-25. Charles-  
 ton, W.Va.: n.p., n.d. (pp. 30-32, 67-68, 80).  
 . First Biennial Message of Governor Howard M. Gore to the  
 Legislature of 1927. Charleston, W.Va.: The Tribune Printing Co.,  
 1927. (pp. 16-17)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	38 ° 20' 17.5"	81 ° 36' 51.3"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	38 ° 20' 13.5"	81 ° 36' 38.1"		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	38 ° 20' 5.8"	81 ° 36' 41.5"		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	38 ° 20' 9.8"	81 ° 36' 54.7"		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 18

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
 James E. Harding, Research Analyst

ORGANIZATION: West Virginia Antiquities Commission      DATE: April 11, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 Old Mountainlair, West Virginia University

CITY OR TOWN: Morgantown      STATE: West Virginia      CODE: 54

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the Na-  
 tional Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law  
 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion  
 in the National Register and certify that it has been  
 evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set  
 forth by the National Park Service. The recommended  
 level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Leonard M. Davis  
 Leonard M. Davis

Title State Historic Preservation  
 Officer

Date May 9, 1974

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_



WEST VIRGINIA  
CAPITOL COMPLEX,  
KANAWHA COUNTY,  
WEST VIRGINIA



Form 10-301  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE West Virginia	
COUNTY Kanawha	
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E I N S T R U C T I O N S

<b>1. NAME</b>			
COMMON: West Virginia Capitol Complex			
AND/OR HISTORIC: West Virginia State Capitol, West Virginia Executive Mansion			
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER: Along Kanawha Boulevard, East			
CITY OR TOWN: Charleston			
STATE: West Virginia		CODE 54	COUNTY: Kanawha
			CODE 039
<b>3. MAP REFERENCE</b>			
SOURCE: U.S. Geological Survey. Charleston East, W.Va., 7.5' Quadrangle			
SCALE: 1:24000			
DATE: 1957 (Photorevised 1971)			

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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STATE: West Virginia	CODE 54	COUNTY: Kanawha	CODE 039
<b>3. MAP REFERENCE</b>			
SOURCE: U.S. Geological Survey. Charleston East, W.Va., 7.5' Quadrangle			
SCALE: 1:24000			
DATE: 1957 (Photorevised 1971)			
<b>4. REQUIREMENTS</b>			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			

WEST VIRGINIA  
CAPITOL COMPLEX,  
KANAWHA COUNTY,  
WEST VIRGINIA.









