

PROFESSIONAL BUILDING
5200 Baltimore Avenue
Hyattsville, Prince George's County, Maryland

BOUNDARY:

Coterminous with the Neo-Classical Revival structure property at the corner of Baltimore Avenue and Gallatin Street, as shown on map.

DESCRIPTION:

In its approximately 80 year history of evolution and change, this building has had a number of forms and functions through the years. The original building was the brick, Federal style, First National Bank. Although only one story high, the building had pleasing proportions even though it encompassed roughly the same area as the present two (2) story structure. The entrance bay, then and now, is three (3) bays wide, and the Baltimore Avenue facade probably eight (8) bays long. In the original structure, constructed prior to 1901, the framing of the openings, as well as other decorative elements, were made of limestone to contrast with the brick. An abbreviated classical entablature had paired limestone roundels running the length of the two (2) sides in the frieze. *integrity of original bldg. is destroyed*

Next door to the First National Bank on Gallatin Street was Saint Matthews Episcopal Church, which was, evidently, set back considerably from the walkway. In the space between the church and sidewalk, as well as between the church and bank, a Hyattsville entrepreneur, Mr. Rush, in the early 1920's, constructed some additions, with shops located on the first floor and apartments above. These ultimately were used for a theatre, bowling alley, and a shopping arcade.

About 1915, after electrification, the bank building proper was raised to two (2) stories and the south and east sides faced with limestone Neo-Classical Revival facades. Following the Bankers Holiday, the bank was purchased by its major competitor in town, the Suburban Trust Company. Ultimately, the various additions made to the church were also purchased, and they were continued in their customary use for quite a few years.

The building was converted to a courthouse and jail in 1932, when the city police was reorganized. The judges occupied the first floor, and cells for prisoners were located in the basement. The building is currently used as a professional office building.

The entrance facade (B and C), approximating a distyle in antis classical temple, has a Corinthian style entablature. The entry is centered between two (2) Tuscan columns. The prominent egg and dart pattern of the echinus is repeated on the pilasters located on the corners and the east side. Raised roundels and rectangles alternate in the frieze. ***

*Significant
as local
example of
Neo-Classical
institutional
Bldg.*

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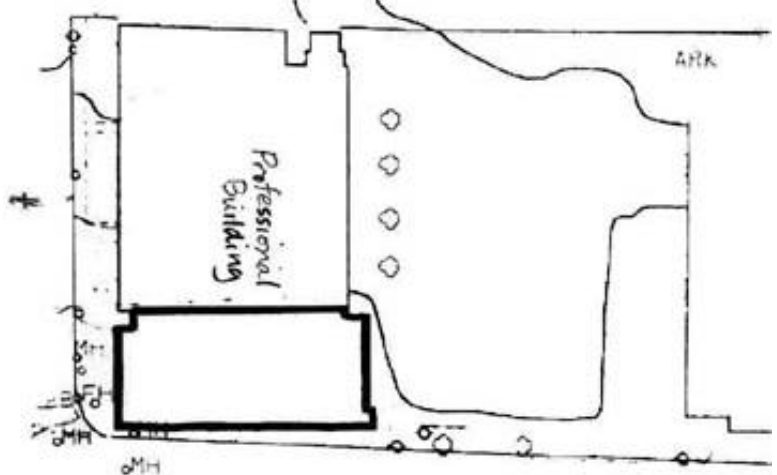
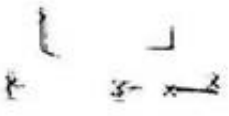
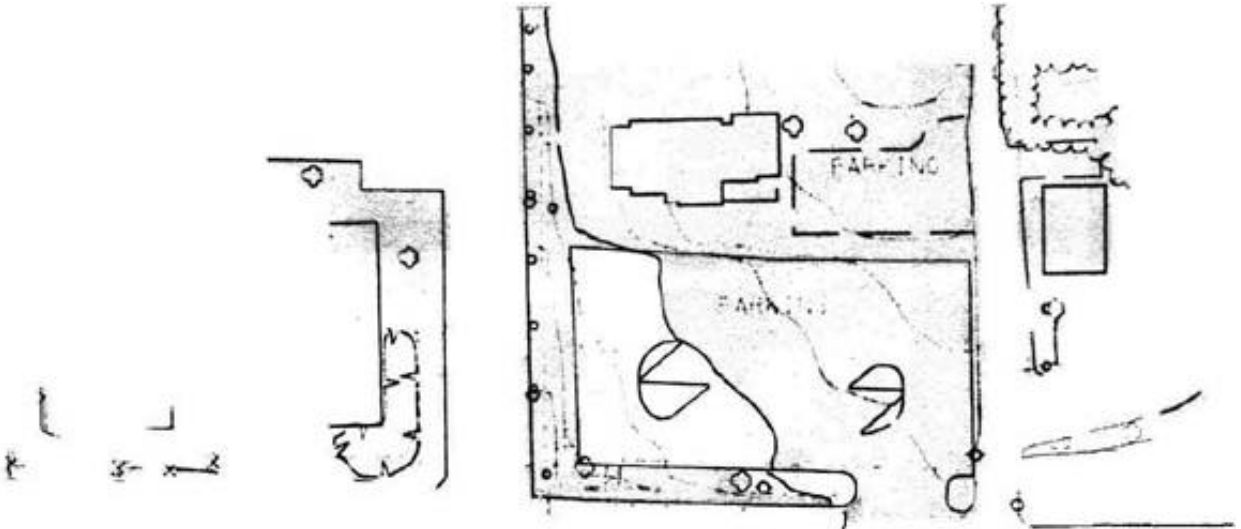
The east side fronting on Baltimore Avenue (A) is divided by attached pilasters into eight (8) bays, the most northern one of which is set back. Fenestration is fairly uniform, with windows on both the first and second stories, except for very small window surmounted by a solid panel in the third bay and the off-center entrance in the fourth. Overall, the building presents an image of refined elegance, despite the fact that the brick wall on the north (D), incongruous with the limestone facades on the other sides, is highly visible due to the conversion of the neighboring parcel to a parking lot.


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

One of a handful of buildings in the commercial center of Hyattsville which have any architectural style per se, or which date to the turn of the century, this building, along with the mostly Neo-Classical Revival Suburban Bank farther north on the same block, brings some distinction and elegance to the dowdy and irregular U.S. 1 streetscape.

In that this building has housed a number of functions in its 82 year existence, functions important to the Hyattsville community, it is considered locally significant. In addition, it is noteworthy that it also underwent a major stylistic metamorphosis, making it an example of the widespread pattern of adapting and remodeling buildings in response to economic, social, or other forces ubiquitous in urban life.

Prepared by Ms. Rita Suffness, Maryland State Highway Administration (659-1183).




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