United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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INDIVIDUAL DATA SHEET

General Description

Code: PU-169

Name: Exchange Bank Building
Address: 423 Main Street
         Little Rock, Arkansas
County: Pulaski

Congressional District: 2

Current Owner: Real Properties, Inc.

Address: 114 East Capitol Avenue
          Little Rock, AR 72201

Architectural Information

Architectural Firm: Thompson and Harding

Date of Construction: 1921

Original Use: Bank

Stylistic Influence: Classical Revival

Present Use: Offices

Geographical Information

UTM Reference: 15/566790/3844720

Acreage: less than one

Verbal Boundary Description: Lot 6, Block 5,
                              Original City

Condition

X Excellent	___ Deteriorated	X Unaltered
___ Good	___ Ruins	___ Altered
___ Fair	___ Unexposed	

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

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Code: PU-169 (Exchange Bank Building, 423 Main Street, Little Rock)

Physical Description

The Exchange Bank Building is a five-story structure that was constructed in 1921 of reinforced concrete. The building is designed to withstand the addition of several additional floors, although this option has never been pursued by the owners. The building's yellow brick shaft provides a neutral backdrop for an outstanding array of Classical Revival elements executed in limestone on the south and west street facades. The base of the Exchange Bank Building is clad in black granite and bevel-cut limestone, and ornamental lion's head panels detail the horizontal band between the base and shaft. The Main Street entrance features a pair of brass doors and is flanked by engaged Doric columns. The west, or Main Street facade is dominated by a pair of three-story engaged, fluted Ionic columns which support an entablature which stretches across the west facade and down the south side of the building as a limestone band between the fourth and fifth floors. The outermost bay of windows on the west elevation are connected by vertical limestone molding; the second floor windows have broken pediments for hoods. A prominent cornice is accentuated by modillion blocks and brackets and is topped by a parapet wall. The Capitol Avenue facade is divided by seven window bays and a secondary entrance at the eastern corner of this facade originally serviced a retail space. An extensive restoration project has recently returned the property to its original appearance, save the replacement of all of the original windows with stationary panes.

Statement of Significance

When the Masonic Temple at the corner of Main and Capitol Streets burned in August 1919, the city's third oldest financial institution, the Exchange Bank, was left without quarters. The officers resolved to construct on the same site a modern, fireproof structure that would house the bank's offices and provide quality rental space to a rapidly growing city. The Exchange Bank retained the architectural firm of Charles Thompson and Thomas Harding to design their new facility; they responded with a plan which must be regarded as one of the Thompson Firm's finest commercial commissions. Its elaborate detailing and use of expensive materials made it the most elegant structure on Main Street. Unfortunately, in 1931, the Exchange Bank, like so many other lending institutions across the country, failed and the building was involved in a foreclosure. The banking lobby was lowered to street level, remodeled for retail space, and the building became known simply as the Exchange Building. The property is now owned by Stephens, Inc., the largest off-Wall Street investment banking firm in the United States.