

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Old Guaranty Bank Building (1905) is a two story brick and terra-cotta neo-classical commercial building located in downtown Lafayette. Despite several changes, the building retains its National Register eligibility.

The bank is set at the corner of Congress and Jefferson Streets and consequently has two articulated elevations. The main entrance is at the corner under a round, domed pavilion. The pavilion is set off from the rest of the building by a flanking pair of jutting brick piers. The elevations advance and recede slightly to express different interior spaces. Most of the windows are of the round head type and feature brick piers and terra-cotta impostes, surrounds, and keystones. Most of the lower story windows are accented with free-standing Tuscan columns on pedestals. The rounded corner entrance features free-standing Tuscan columns supporting a full entablature. The building is surmounted by a low parapet and a terra-cotta entablature with a modillion cornice. The corner dome is set on a high drum and features a cornice of its own.

Since construction the following changes have been made in the bank:

1. The entire interior has been gutted; nothing historic remains.
2. All windows and doors have been replaced.
3. A truck bay has been installed on the southwest end of the Jefferson Street elevation.

Despite these changes, the bank still retains the features which contribute to its architectural significance. (See Item 8)

Specific dates 1905
Builder/Architect Bank of Lafayette (Builder)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion C

The Old Guaranty Bank is locally significant in the area of architecture within the context of downtown Lafayette. Of the fifty or so older commercial buildings remaining in Lafayette's much modernized central business district, the Guaranty Bank is clearly the most classically pretentious. Most of the city's older commercial buildings are humble and innocuously styled. The Guaranty Bank is the only one which can claim to represent a specific historic style of architecture. Moreover, it is the city's only domed commercial building and the only one to feature free-standing classical columns. For these reasons, it is a major landmark in the Lafayette central business district.

Major Bibliographical References

Historical Sites Inventory, Lafayette Parish, Section II. Prepared by the Lafayette Regional Planning Commission for the Lafayette Council of Governments. June, 1977.

Historical sketch submitted by the city of Lafayette, Copy in Register file, LA State Historic Preservation Office.