

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic NATIONAL BANK OF NORTH PHILADELPHIA

and/or common BEURY BUILDING

**2. Location**

street & number 3701 NORTH BROAD STREET

N/A not for publication

city, town PHILADELPHIA

N/A vicinity of

state PENNSYLVANIA

code 42

county PHILADELPHIA

code 101

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name 3701-03 COMMUNITY CORPORATION

street & number 3701 N. BROAD STREET

city, town PHILADELPHIA

vicinity of

state PENNSYLVANIA

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. PHILADELPHIA CITY HALL

street & number ROOM 153 CENTRE SQUARE

city, town PHILADELPHIA

state PENNSYLVANIA

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Beury Building, located at 3701 N. Broad Street, stands at the corner of Broad Street Erie and Germantown Avenue, in North Philadelphia. Originally, the National Bank of North Philadelphia, the building was constructed beginning in 1926. Towering over the neighboring rowhouses, this imposing office structure, designed by William Lee, represents one of Philadelphia's more sophisticated examples of the Art Deco style.

An outgrowth of Commercial style architecture, introduced by Louis Sullivan in the late nineteenth century, Art Deco worked from the basic principles laid down by Sullivan--a tall columnar structure with a base, a multi-use main floor or floors, as well as an upper story shaft and crowning entablature. His maxims on ornamentation, restricting details to the cornice, spandrel and doorway are retained, as is his emphasis on height, expressed by piers rising upward through the stories and defined by regular fenestration. Drawing influence from Eliel Saarinen's 1922 design for the Chicago Tribune Building Competition, buildings designed in the Deco style replaced the commercial overhanging cornice with a series of setbacks, usually culminating at a pyramidal roofline.

What distinguished the new design mode most was the application of sumptuous ornament, color and texture at the base and rooflines. The form of ornament taken derived in part from designs introduced at the Paris 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts. These designs featured an eclectic array of stylized floral pattern and geometrics including chevrons, circles, zigzags and angles. A variety of materials were employed both for coloring and ornament including metals, brick, stone, glazed terra cotta, tile and glass. Brick was often polychromatic, emphasizing tonality. Faceted, Gothicized detailing was another distinguishing characteristic of Art Deco architecture, particularly in the early period of its popularity.

Wholeheartedly embraced in New York, the Art Deco style saw rather limited application in Philadelphia. The WCAU Building (1935) at 1620 Chestnut Street, which carried Deco flamboyance and style to the limit was a rare exception. For the most part, Philadelphia Art Deco held to an expressive but hesitant interpretation, retaining Classical overtones in ornamentation. William Lee's design for the Beury Building falls within this category, distinguished by its subtle sophistication of detail and bold massing.

The choice of the modern imposing Art Deco skyscraper style for the National Bank of North Philadelphia, later named the Beury Building, was an intentional one, designed to draw attention to the institution and, by implication, the North Philadelphia community, from distant vantage points. The eleven story building, crowned by a dramatic three story penthouse tower, stands on a lot 48 feet in front and extending 151 feet in depth; the narrow, major elevation fronting along North Broad Street. Reflecting the Commercial style's interpretation of space, the "base" or lower floors of the Beury Building are clad in limestone, defined by large opening embellished with decorative ironwork along the Airdrie Street elevation. This limestone base is crowned with an ornamental terra cotta belt course extending the length of the southern elevation.

An overscale arch with voisoirs and keystone marks the main Broad Street entrance to the first and second floor banking areas. This entry was originally comprised of a double leaf metal door flanked by plate glass side panels. A smooth metal surround consisting of a plain frieze and flanking vertical strips, replace the original surround. The original arched, multi-light transom panel survives intact. Ornamental, limestone panels embellish the arch intrados. The entire entryway is set within a slightly recessed panel, balanced by flanking, projecting panels.

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Physical Description (continued)

A recessed ten story bay at the building's northernmost corner delineates a secondary entrance providing access to the elevator lobby and upper stories. This entryway consists of a deeply recessed double leaf door with a single light, with glass display panels piercing the passage walls. A plain, rectangular wall opening with ornamented round corners, set flush with the facade, marks the entrance to this passageway. A sign denoting the Beury Building spans atop this opening, surmounted by a multi-light window with four light transom and plain stone surround. The accompanying balcony features a limestone balustrade pierced with stylized cut panels, supported by plain brackets, the middle bracket incised with the street number 3701.

The surface treatment along the shaft portion of the building reflects the influence of the Commercial style formula, displaying regular patterns of fenestration, and of projections and recessions. The Broad Street elevation is dominated by projecting end bays, rising from the third through eleventh floors. These bays flank a recessed shaft pierced by four bay openings. Embellished terra cotta bands, delineating each floor level, creates a horizontal band which serves as a subtle contrast to the building's verticality. Thin ribbons of brick, delineating each bay of the shaft, echo the vertical thrust of the end bays. A visual rhythm is created by the recessions and projections, pronounced by the regular pattern of ribboning. The expressiveness of the Art Deco style comes into full play in the building's uppermost stories. Here the strong influence of Gothic styling merges with Classically-inspired detailing. Limestone quoining highlights the main elevation end bays on the top story as well as the corner bays of the tower. Capping the corners of the main eleven story building unit are bands of terra cotta combing creating a crenellated effect. Stylized ornaments fill the void between the terra cotta "teeth." Projecting from the center of this main roofline are four Gothic balconies supported with pierced terra cotta panels, supported by ornamented brackets.

The roofline of the Beury Building follows a setback pattern. Crowning the main building unit is a recessed three story, penthouse tower with pyramidal roof. Here the ornamentation is lavishly applied to the recessed tower, allowing for continued distinction of detail when viewed from a distance. The front elevation features arched windows with relief arch lintels embellished with brick dentils, crowned with panels of paired arched niches. The niches are defined by attached smooth dressed classical columns, with Corinthian capitals. A brick dentil band crowns the tympanum of each niche panel. The tower's third story, clad in terra cotta with angular ribboning, is pierced by single light rondelle windows. A band of terra cotta ornament, featuring diamond tracery crowns the tower facade. Copper cladding sheathes the conical roof.

The rear section of the penthouse projects back, each facade distinguished by ornate fenestration detailing. The easternmost elevation features a multi light arched window with projecting Gothic tracery balcony supported by a decorative bracket. Attached smooth dressed terra cotta columns with Corinthian capitals flank the window and support the dentiled arched lintel. The window is set within a lavish surround, featuring flanking recessed pilaster strips with stylized sculpture and quoining, crowned with paired decorative niches capped with a dentil band. Plain limestone bands extend the width of the facade, above the window and at the building's cornice, while terra cotta quoining adorns the cornice. Square brick chimneys with terra cotta Gibbs surrounds extend above the roofline. The tower's southern elevation feature paired arched windows with brick lintels, terra cotta quoining and balustrades with Gothic panels.

The Airdrie Street elevation repeats the surface treatment and fenestration patterns of the main elevation. Large two story metal frame multi-light sash pierce the lower floors.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1926

Builder/Architect WILLIAM L. LEE

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In an area characterized by elegant rowhouses, the Beury Building, stands as an important North Philadelphia landmark, unusual in its scale and character. Towering fourteen stories above its neighbors, this imposing Art Deco office tower displays a sophistication in styling rarely seen in this location, comparable to that of the most progressive center city office buildings. Constructed in 1926, the Beury Building, originally known as the National Bank of North Philadelphia embodies an era of local pride which gave rise to numerous local business ventures, continued northward residential development and the expansion of Temple University, all focused along the North Broad Street corridor.

The growth of local industry and institutions, in the nineteenth century, brought dramatic change to North Philadelphia, transforming the once rural liberty-lands into an urban neighborhood defined by its elegant rowhouse construction. Unlike many residential areas, characterized by modest worker housing in close proximity to factories, North Broad Street developed as a hub for Philadelphia's nouveau riche entrepreneurial class. Construction of these fashionable spacious mansions continued at a rapid pace into the twentieth century, pushing the outskirts of the city further north. An increased sophistication, even opulence of design paralleled this northward progression, as wealthy clients sought the designs of noted Philadelphia architects Willis Hale, James Windrim and Furness and Evans.

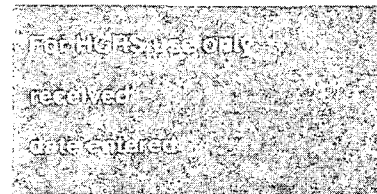
By the 1920's residential development in North Philadelphia was nearly complete. Much of this development interest was predicated upon the completion of the Broad Street subway, in 1924, which drew large numbers of new residents, attracted by the availability of new housing within easy commuting distance from the business district. Growth of local business and institutions accompanied this late spurt of building activity reflecting a strengthening local identity.

By far the most spectacular new construction project in North Philadelphia, in the late 1920's was the Beury Building, originally known as the National Bank of North Philadelphia. Designed by William L. Lee, in 1926, this fourteen story structure replaced the bank's original structure within five years of its opening. The design selected for the bank represented one of the most sophisticated interpretations of the modern Art Deco style to appear in Philadelphia.

Derived from the 1925 Exposition des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels in Paris, the term Art Deco originally referred to a modern stylistic trend in the decorative arts. As applied to architecture, it came to describe a new mode of design, building upon the American Commercial style of the late nineteenth century, marking the advent of the skyscraper era. A distinctive shift in massing, from lofty shaft to a series of setbacks ending in a pyramidal roofline, emerged as an identifying characteristic of the style, much of which was inspired by Eliel Saarinen's 1922 design submission for the Chicago Tribune Building competition. Further, the design effect of projections and recessions provided a practical solution to zoning law requirements for the new taller structures. The setbacks carried important aesthetic value by creating a building top visible from a far distance. Architects took full advantage of this visibility, applying ornamentation in large scale and vivid color. In its most dramatic forms, the Art Deco style

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utilized such building materials as terra cotta, metals and glass, adopting a panoply of ornament, including sculpture, stylized floral patterns and geometric detailing.

Relatively few examples of pure Art Deco exist in Philadelphia. Rather, the city's Deco style is generally identified by its marriage of "modernism" with classically derived details. The effect, no less expressive, saw considerable use in buildings designed for the city's leading financial and banking institutions. In its subtle use of stylized Gothic ornamentation and dramatic massing, the Beury Building would fit comfortably among Centre Square's Liberty Title and Trust Company Building, built by Dennison and Hiron or the Market Street National Bank Building (One East Penn Square), built by Ritter & Shay. That so sophisticated a design should appear much further north, along Broad Street, lent additional importance to the bank as well as the building.

The National Bank of North Philadelphia, founded by a group of public spirited citizens, in 1920, signalled the commitment of local business to the progress and development of North Philadelphia. From among the most prominent local businessmen and community leaders, these sponsors selected a group of representatives to serve as the board of directors and officers. Charles E. Beury, a successful local attorney was chosen as the first bank president. Recognized for his civil mindedness, business sense, leadership and dedication, Beury went on to become one of North Philadelphia's most prominent leaders.

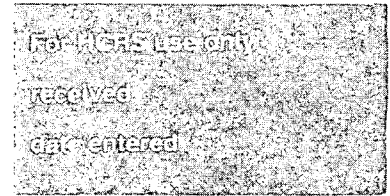
A major figure in North Philadelphia's banking community, Charles Ezra Beury served as Vice President for Tioga Trust Company and for the Manheim Trust Company, as well as director of several coal companies and commercial enterprises. A graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School, Beury travelled extensively throughout the world in diplomatic capacities. Appointed Special Commissioner to the Near East, by the American Red Cross, during World War I, Beury later applied his relief work skills to the local community, working on such campaigns as the Trustees Welfare Federation of Philadelphia, the Welfare Federation Campaign for North Philadelphia, and the Victory Loan for North Philadelphia. In 1926, Beury became the second president of Temple University, a prestigious and influential role he held for fifteen years.

Under Beury's direction, the National Bank of North Philadelphia gained immediate popular support, expanding at a rapid pace during a period of local and national prosperity. As the bank's growth continued, the need for larger facilities became apparent. Plans for the imposing new skyscraper at North Broad Street and Germantown Avenue were approved in 1926, and the building was completed the following year. Unfortunately, the success of the National Bank of North Philadelphia was short-lived; the Stock Market Crash of 1929 brought financial ruin to the institution, forcing the closing of its doors. Within the nation's financial recovery, the building was again used for offices. It became known as the Beury Building, a tribute to the man responsible for its construction.

William L. Lee, architect for the building, was best known for his theatre and academic commissions. Trained in architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, he entered into private practice in his native Shamokin, Pennsylvania, in 1912. In 1919, Lee moved his office to Philadelphia, where he carried on a long and successful practice. The Beury Building and his many commissions for Temple University including Corwell Hall are among his most prominent projects.

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Standing prominently among the blocks of elegant townhouses which characterizes North Philadelphia's development, the Beury Building represents one of the city's more spectacular examples of the Art Deco skyscraper. Constructed to house the National Bank of North Philadelphia, the structure represents period of financial prosperity for the North Philadelphia community and the city, as a whole, its design rivaled those found along the South Broad Street corridor. Named in honor of one of North Philadelphia's most prominent citizens, the Beury Building stands as an important survivor of early twentieth century prosperity.

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Athenaeum of Philadelphia, William H. Lee file.  
Building Permits, 1926-32.  
Business and City Directories, 1926-36.  
Financing An Empire-Banking in Penna. , Vol. IV, Banks and Bankers.  
Chicago: S.J. Clark Publishing Co., 1928.  
Who Was Who In America. Vol. III 1951-60, Chicago: Marquis, 1960.

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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NATIONAL BANK OF NORTH PHILADELPHIA

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Street; thence north along the west of said street a distance 70' to the property line of the adjacent parcel; thence west along the south party wall a distance of 153' to Broad Street and the point of beginning.



# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .10

Quadrangle name Germantown, Pa.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>4872810</u>	<u>41421861210</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
---	--	--	--

D			
---	--	--	--

E			
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F			
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G			
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H			
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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at a point of the east side of Broad Street thence south along Broad Street 29'5½" to the north side of Airdrie Street, thence east along said street 153' to a point at the intersection of the north side of Airdrie Street and the west side of Watts

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
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state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title ELIZABETH R. MINIZ - HISTORICAL CONSULTANT

organization ELIZABETH R. MINIZ date 11/20/84

street & number 301 CHERRY STREET telephone (215) 592-0465

city or town PHILADELPHIA state PENNSYLVANIA

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Larry E. Tise*

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date 3/19/85

For NPS use only

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

date

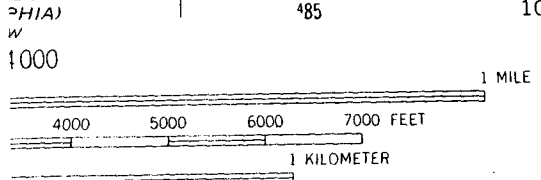
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

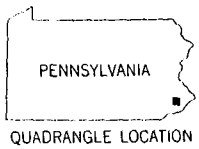
date

Chief of Registration

**BEURY BUILDING**  
**3701 N. BROAD STREET**  
**PHILADELPHIA, PA.**



SCALE 10 FEET  
 DATUM OF 1929



**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

Heavy-duty ————— Light-duty - - - - -  
 Medium-duty - - - - - Unimproved dirt - - - - -

○ Interstate Route    ◌ U. S. Route    ○ State Route

**GERMANTOWN, PA.**

40075-A2-TF-024

1967

DMA 5964 II SW - SERIES V831

J. L. SMITH CO. INC.  
 2104 WALNUT ST. PHILA. PA.

(CAMDEN)  
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