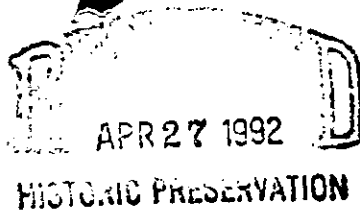


370 000
FEET
467
20'
SOUTH FORK 7 MI.
CRESSON 23 MI.
53
(GEISTOWN) SCALP LEVEL 6 MI.
5264 IV SE WINDBER 6 MI.
4464

Downtown Johnston Historic District
Johnston Aerial - Zone 17 - Coeburn Co.
A E 676630 N 4466000 C E 676970 N 4465743
B E 677150 N 4465750 D E 676580 N 4465533

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not-applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Downtown Johnstown Historic District
other names/site number Johnstown Central Business District

2. Location

Bounded by Washington, Clinton, Bedford, Vine, Market, Locust
street & number and Walnut Streets
city, town Johnstown
state Pennsylvania code PA county Cambria code 021 zip code 15901

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal, building(s), district, site, structure, object, and resource counts for contributing and noncontributing resources.

Name of related multiple property listing: na
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 3

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Religion - religious structure
Landscape - park
Domestic - single dwelling
Domestic - multiple dwelling
Social - meeting hall

Current Functions

Religion - religious structure
Landscape - park
Domestic - multiple dwelling

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce - specialty store

Commerce - department store

Commerce - business

Government - City Hall

Government - Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce - specialty store

Commerce - business

Government - City Hall

Government - Post Office

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque

Second Empire

Art Deco

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

Stone

roof Asphalt

other Terra cotta

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Downtown Johnstown Historic District includes the core of the city's historic central business district. Overwhelmingly commercial, the district also consists of important institutional buildings, including six churches, the post office, city hall and a museum. The district is built on a grided street pattern, four blocks by three blocks in size, with alleys providing rear access to most of the buildings. A collection of well-preserved buildings date from before the 1889 flood, but the majority were constructed between 1890 and 1930. Architectural styles reflect the eclectic styles of the period and include Second Empire, Queen Anne, Romanesque, Classical Revival, Gothic Revival, Art Deco, Art Moderne, Early Modern and Beaux Art examples. The overall integrity of the building stock is quite high, despite alterations to some storefronts and upper floor facades. The essentials of the nineteenth century streetscape, consisting of uniform setback, two to three story building height, historic building ornament and original fenestration patterns preserve the traditional character of the downtown commercial area.

The historic district comprises most of Johnstown's central business district, located in a deep winding river valley surrounded by steep hills. The Little Conemaugh River on the north and the Stony Creek on the west and south join into the Conemaugh River at the north tip of the Central Business District. Flanking the downtown, up and down the river valleys, neighborhoods cluster around the mill sites. All five of Bethlehem Steel's mills in Johnstown are registered National Landmarks. One of the largest is the former Gautier Works, flanking the district's north boundary. Another, the former Cambria Iron Works, is located one-half mile north of the district.

The downtown district is bordered by the Stony Creek River on the south. The north boundary is Washington Street and the Gautier Works. The west boundary is Market and Walnut Streets. This is also the edge of the city's c1970 urban renewal district, since rebuilt with large buildings used by commercial and nonprofit groups. On the east, the district edge follows the rear property boundary of commercial buildings along Clinton and Bedford Streets, continuing to the south property line of the Moose Building on the banks of the Stony Creek River.

With the district are several distinct areas, reflecting stages of development in the Central Business District and evolving urban land use patterns. At the center of the district is Central Park fronting on Main Street. Running east to west through the center of the district, Main Street contains the largest concentration of late nineteenth century commercial buildings in the downtown. Park Place is an enclave of both large and small commercial buildings. Clinton, Bedford and Vine Streets, major secondary

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commercial streets, retain notable turn of the century commercial and religious structures. Franklin Street is the site of the city's major banking institutions. On Market Street there are pockets of small scale shops and houses, tightly packed on narrow lots. The northwest corner of the district on Washington and Walnut Streets harbors a unique enclave of large institutional and commercial structures linked with the city's heritage as a steel making center. These include the original company office building and its successor; the former Penn Traffic department store, descendant of the company store; and the Johnstown Flood Museum, a Carnegie-built library replacing the one originally founded by the Cambria Iron Company.

An important physical feature defining the downtown's commercial character is the urban street grid, following the 1800 plan of founder Joseph Johns (Schanz). The city's basic street and alley plan, and several public spaces set aside by Johns, have remained intact for nearly 200 years. Market Square, at the intersection of Main and Market Streets, retains three of four original corner parklets. The Public Square, Main and Franklin Streets, is now the site of Central Park. The original dimensions of the Johns Plan were reinstated following the 1889 flood.

There are five primary building types in the district. The type most clearly defining the district, and comprising about half of the building stock, is the brick commercial structure with ground level retail storefront with several upper floors of residential or office space. Most are two to four stories and two to four bays in width. They feature large plate glass windows, sign board, recessed entrances, and projecting cornice. A significant subgroup are the large commercial blocks and office buildings. These are typically masonry, five or more stories, built on large consolidated lots, often with ornamental terra cotta details. The second major group of buildings in the district are public and nonprofit buildings. These are some of downtown's most distinguished buildings, and each is architect-designed. The third most prominent type is the religious structure. The

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fourth type is buildings built by and for fraternal organizations, all well preserved. Residential is the fifth and least numerous building type represented. There are both vernacular balloon frame examples and high type dwellings designed in several popular period styles.

Commercial buildings predating the 1889 flood are all the two to four story type, constructed in brick. Queen Anne is one of the most popular styles. Alma Hall at 442 Main Street, built in 1884, is a four story downtown landmark still owned by the International Order of Odd Fellows. It features decorative facade treatments including incised artwork on inset stone blocks, elliptical brick arches and corbelled brickwork. Another example is the 1888 Bantley Building at 538 Main Street. It is distinguished by decorative brickwork and stone lintels and sills. Reflecting the popularity of Gothic Revival style is the building currently occupied by BGS&G Investment Company at 211 Franklin Street. Dating from 1884, it has a fleur de lis incised in stone and an elliptical arch. Two vernacular commercial buildings which survived the 1889 flood are located nearby. The 1883 Stenger Dry Goods Store at 523 Main Street, now The Family Store, features brick corbelling, pilasters and a metal cornice. The Tribune Building at 209 Franklin Street, built in 1883, has been altered with the addition of a third story.

The vast majority of commercial buildings in the district were built after the 1889 flood. The Second Empire style is one of the oldest styles in this group, concentrated mainly on Market Street, west of Main Street. The c1890 example at 227 Market Street is representative. It retains decorative molded wood lintels, metal "shingle pattern" roofing and bracketed cornice. It also retains its original use pattern, with two retail shops on the ground floor and apartments above. The downtown's most decorative Second Empire building, Schrader's Florist Shop at 510 Vine Street, dates from c1890. It includes Stick style detailing on the outer walls, slate mansard roof, stained glass windows and small second story porches.

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Other businesses built in the decade following the 1889 flood utilized high style late Victorian commercial design. The most intact of this group are the Wehn, Lenhart, and Penn Hotel buildings, in the 100 block of Clinton Street. Today they are underutilized, with only first floor tenants. Each has a cast iron storefront and heavily ornamented facade. The 1889 Wehn features decorative stonework, original recessed storefront entry with stained glass fan window and inset panels with bas reliefs depicting the 1889 flood disaster. The 1889 Lenhart incorporates Romanesque details including rounded arches, metal cornice and the original entryway. The Clinton Hotel, built in 1890, has decorative flower carvings in stone, cast iron trim along the roofline and brick corbelling.

Most of the remaining two to four story commercial buildings in the district are modestly designed and date from between 1889 and 1920. The Widmann Building at 139 Clinton Street, housing Petrusic's Religious Goods, was built in 1892. Its handsome Romanesque design includes a rough sandstone exterior, buff and pink sandstone pillars, keystones and stone belt courses. A later example is the 1913 J. T. Kelly Building at 502 Main Street, currently the Main Street Bakery. This narrow three story building is distinguished by Richardsonian Romanesque features including rusticated stonework, small marble columns and stained glass windows.

Large commercial and office buildings are a very visible element of the district. Probably the oldest of this group is the vacant Cambria Iron Office Building, 317 Washington Street. The building's two sections, built in 1881 and 1885, reflect the changing popularity of architectural styles. The oldest section is Palladian with its symmetry, hip roof, stone belt course and stone window surrounds. The later section has a contrasting Queen Anne design with asymmetrical massing, large dormers, and brownstone details. The c1900 St. Vincent DePaul Building, 566 Vine Street, is an example of vernacular commercial design in the late nineteenth century. This four story structure's only decorative element is an arcade of intersecting window arches on the top floor and brick corbelling.

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By the turn of the century, taller larger buildings were built with increasing frequency. This was made possible through developments in construction technology including iron and steel framing, reinforced concrete, elevators and the use of inexpensive terra cotta for exterior decorative elements. The c1900 Conrad Building, 301 Franklin Street, is a four story triangular shaped office building. The striking Romanesque design includes open round arches framing ground floor doorways and windows, brick arcading over upper floor windows and decoratively patterned brick work. The 1907 Swank Building, 616 Main Street, is a six story building. The city's largest glazed terra cotta facade had a rusticated profile, classical cornice, egg and dart molding, pilasters and dentils.

Some of downtown's largest commercial buildings are the department stores constructed in the early twentieth century. The oldest is the vacant 1905 Glosser Brothers Department Store at 435-449 Franklin Street, built in the Romanesque style. Originally known as the Ellis Building, it is distinguished by brick colonnades and projecting bay windows. The 1931 Art Deco addition features vertically aligned window bays and glazed terra cotta sheathing incorporating shell and plant motifs. The five story Penn Traffic Department Store building (1906-08) at 319 Washington Street, used as an office building, occupies an entire city block. The ornate Renaissance design features Indiana pressed brick walls and semi-glazed white tile details. Details include a layered classical cornice, pilasters, and belt course. Nathan's Department Store, built in 1917 at 430 Main Street, is known as Central Park Commons today. The Early Modern design features brick exterior walls, Chicago style windows, terra cotta details and classically designed cornice. The adjoining annex, built in 1920, features fanciful terra cotta panels along the cornice lines.

Each of the district's historic public and nonprofit buildings stand out as an individual landmark. The oldest is the 1892 Cambria Free Library, at 304 Washington Street, home of the Johnstown Flood Museum. The two and one-half story French Gothic design is distinguished by vertical design

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elements including a steeply pitched hip roof, pointed dormers, slate roof, narrow windows and battlements. Johnstown City Hall, corner of Main and Market Streets, was erected in 1900. It is a Richardsonian Romanesque building with rusticated stonework, center tower, arched openings, dormers and a red clay tile roof. The former 1912 Johnstown Post Office, located at 131 Market Street, houses offices of the Cambria County Mental Health Program. This terra cotta Beaux Arts inspired building is built in temple form, with simple Doric columns, full classical entablature and four brass plaques representing the seal of the President, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the U. S. Department of Justice, and the U. S. Postal Department. The 1926 State Theatre building, now utilized as an auditorium by Lee Hospital, is located at 320 Main Street. The terra cotta facade is highlighted by brackets and moldings. The interior of the theatre balcony section was adaptively reused as the Lee Hospital Auditorium.

The present 1938 Johnstown Post Office, 111 Franklin Street, is a notable Art Moderne design featuring a smooth black stone facade, vertical window bays, iron window frames and simplified eagle statuary flanking the entrance. The city's five story Public Safety building at 401 Washington Street, dating from 1925, represents modern office building construction, with clean lines and minimal architectural detailing. Ornament includes bas relief eagles and hard pressed brick walls.

Churches are a very distinctive group in the Downtown Historic District. There are six churches representing Gothic Revival and Romanesque architecture, dating from the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries. Only one, Franklin Street United Methodist Church at 131 Franklin Street, pre-dates the 1889 flood. Constructed in 1869, this stone Gothic Revival structure presents textbook Gothic features: steeply pitched roof, 80' tall corner spire, pointed arch window and door openings, buttresses and

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rose windows. A second Gothic Revival structure is Saint Marks Episcopal Church, at 335 Locust Street. Erected in 1890, this stone church features a corner steeple, pointed arch windows and doorways and narrow battlement-like windows.

St. John Gaulbert Cathedral, 117 Clinton Street, was built in 1896. It is the most ornate of the downtown's religious landmarks, combining pressed brick, brownstone and rough faced terra cotta. There is a wheel window, stained glass windows and a huge corner bell tower. First Lutheran Church, 415 Vine Street, was constructed in 1920. It is another version of the Gothic Revival style, featuring banks of pointed arch windows, massive corner tower, buttresses, large stained glass windows and stone facing. First United Methodist Church, 436 Vine Street, was erected in 1911. This rusticated brownstone landmark has a massive 90' center tower surrounded by gable and hip roofed pavilions. It has an intact Akron style interior with sliding doors, tile roof, round and pointed arch windows and doorways. The stained glass windows were produced locally by William Heslop. First Christian Church, Vine and Levergood Streets, in a turn of the century Romanesque style building with red brick walls carved stone ornament.

Buildings built by fraternal organizations figure prominently in the Downtown Historic District. The oldest is 1884 Alma Hall, built by the International Order of Odd Fellows. This Queen Anne design landmark is located on Main Street. G. A. R. (1893), 132 Park Place, features Romanesque details including heavy round stone arches and carved stone sculpture representing military hardware including artillery, cannon, swords and bullets. The Elks Building (1903) at 516 Locust Street, another Romanesque structure, has keystones, a two story bay window and bronze elk atop the roof. A clock with the hour hand pointing to eleven is a symbol of regard for absent members. The Moose Building, located at 248 Bedford Street, date from 1917. This large brick building has pressed brick walls, round headed and bull's-eye windows and an elk head sculpture projecting over the center entryway.

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The last major building group represented in the district is residential. There are both high style and vernacular family homes, an apartment building and a hotel. One of the few surviving upper middle class homes in the downtown is the C. B. Hamm Residence, 624 Main Street, located adjacent to the Swank Building. Erected in 1893, this house combines Richardsonian Romanesque heavy stone construction and a wide stone arch over the entry, with Queen Anne asymmetry and corner tower. The Ludwig House at 662 Main Street houses a mortuary. It was built in 1883 and is a modest example of the Eastlake style, with wood columns and banisters, brackets, and projecting pavilion. Several most vernacular houses representing late nineteenth century residential construction in center city are located on Stonycreek Street.

The 1913-14 Mayer Apartment Building is an eight story structure with terra cotta classical details including keystones, cornice, and storefront pilasters. The vacant Hender Hotel on Washington Street, built c 1900, is a modest multi-story brick building. There are round arched colonnades, molded stone details around the ground floor entry and large plate glass windows.

There is a high degree of architectural integrity throughout the downtown district. A small but significant group of owners have restored their buildings. This list includes Alma Hall, the G. A. R. Building, Nathan's Department Store, and the former State Theatre owned by Lee Hospital. In addition to buildings the district includes four contributing sites, the three parklets at Main and Market Streets and Central Park, and one contributing structure. The 1937 Franklin Street Bridge, Franklin and

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Vine Streets, retains the integrity of a pre-World War II Warren Truss bridge, with its dramatic steel superstructure.

Most buildings have avoided severe alterations through benign neglect. As a result of suburban growth and a shrinking downtown retail presence, downtown buildings have been given minimum maintenance in recent years. Many merchants have had ground floor storefront retrofitted, installing modern signs advertising their businesses, while upper building facades have been ignored. Despite these problems, many of which are reversible, the building stock remains largely intact.

Non-contributing buildings number thirty-nine and are widely scattered throughout the district. Ten of the noncontributing buildings date to the period of significance but have lost integrity due to changes, including large incompatible additions, which have seriously altered the scale, massing and fenestration pattern of the buildings. For example, Jeremy's Bar at 205 Market Street has undergone a complete facade change with stone veneer and new door and window openings, and is classified as noncontributing. Whereas the buildings at 413, 415, 417 and 421 Main Street are contributing despite modern signs and alterations to the original storefronts.

Another category of noncontributing buildings are buildings constructed in the past fifty years. Included in the district are several examples, including the U.S. Bank Building at the intersection of Main and Franklin Streets and three elderly housing towers on Vine Street. There are also two parking garages in the district, facing Clinton and Lincoln Streets. Complimentary to the district's character though noncontributing due to insufficient age is the Michael Graves designed Crown American Building at 417 Vine Street constructed in 1989.

Despite the decline of downtown business in recent years, Johnstown's Downtown District retains an unusually high degree of integrity in its building stock. Main Street, incorporating Central Park and City Hall sites, is a point of pride for residents. It is a hub for banking, office, retail, and service industries for Greater Johnstown, serving a population of over

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100,000. Many of the physical qualities which made the downtown the center of the larger community are retained today -- including the setting, historic building fabric and the ambiance of a traditional downtown commercial district. A small but key element adding significance to the downtown is the concentration of 1889 flood related buildings. The Downtown Historic District is a well preserved collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries commercial, public and nonprofit, religious, fraternal and residential buildings. No where in the Greater Johnstown area is there such a concentration of buildings with the same commercial, architectural, and flood related importance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce
Architecture
Other: disaster

Period of Significance

1869-1940

Significant Dates

1889

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

na

Architect/Builder

Various

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

This district has historical significance in three areas: commerce and architecture, 1869 to 1940; and in its association with the 1889 Johnstown flood disaster. By the mid-nineteenth century, downtown Johnstown emerged as the major commercial/trading center serving Johnstown Borough and many smaller contiguous communities. This was accomplished through successive transportation improvements in canal, rail and road systems in the rise of Cambria Iron, one of America's largest iron and steel producers in the late nineteenth century. These forces concentrated governmental, service and retail/wholesale operations in the Central Business District. Neighborhoods, churches and other service institutions followed. Architecturally, the district is significant as a cross-section mid-nineteenth or early twentieth century architectural styles. These styles are represented in commercial, public, religious, and residential building types. The district is also nationally significant for its association with the 1889 Johnstown flood, America's worst inland water disaster. Concentrated in the district is the city's most important flood-surviving buildings and memorials to the disaster.

Like Philadelphia and many other cities, Johnstown was designed as a commercial center by its founder. In 1800, Joseph Schanz (Johns) laid out a gridwork of streets and alleys, with dedicated lots for public buildings, a market, burial ground and recreation. Remarkably, most of what Johns envisioned can still be seen today. The site of City Hall, four corner parklets and Central Park are prominent landscape features defining the downtown historic district.

Johns chose a location for Johnstown with an eye towards trade, choosing a site at the confluence of Stony Creek and the Little Conemaugh River, which becomes the Conemaugh River and joins the Ohio River in Pittsburgh. In the early years of the settlement, barges were rafted to Pittsburgh at high water to deliver products to market. The Allegheny-Portage Railroad, completed in 1834, connected Johnstown to Philadelphia and Pittsburgh on a combined canal-rail system. A turning basin, constructed one-quarter mile east of Central Park, brought with it canal boat building and repair shops, hotels, bars and stimulated the growth of residential areas. Transportation improvements would continue to be the key to the emergence of downtown as a commercial center.

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The construction of the Pennsylvania Railroad's main line through Johnstown in 1851 opened nationwide markets and contributed to the growth of the Cambria Iron Company. Cambria, founded in 1852, employed 1,500 workers by 1856 and 7,000 by the late 1800s. The company owned mills, coal and coke mines, and a railroad, and controlled vast amounts of real estate. Johnstown became a one-company town, with two-thirds of the workforce employed in the mills and mines. Municipal tax revenues were generated from the mills, company stores, offices and spin-off businesses established to provide workers and businesses alike with supplies and provisions. The Cambria Iron Office Building (1881-85) was built by the company at its apex in the late nineteenth century.

By the time of the 1889 flood, Johnstown Borough had become the major shopping and trading district for a number of contiguous boroughs. Johnstown's recovery from the flood disaster brought consolidation with neighbors Conemaugh, Millville, Prospect, Woodvale and Grubtown into the City of Johnstown. A population already linked by a common employer now was joined together by new transportation, utility and governmental systems. More than ever before, the central business district took on the role of political, business, shopping and entertainment center for the population of Greater Johnstown.

Growth of the railroad, and subsequent abandonment of the canal, shifted the focus of mercantile activity away from the canal basin. Office and retail establishments were already well established on Clinton, Franklin and Main Streets. Stimulated by the growth of Cambria Iron in the late nineteenth century, the business district expanded further west, beyond Central Park, into residential areas along Main and Market Streets. An example of commercial growth in this area is the Beaux Arts design Moxham Bank (c1920).

By the turn of the century, the scope and number of commercial enterprises in the downtown business district had increased dramatically.

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In 1901 there were thirty-eight attorneys, six banks, twelve blacksmiths, eleven department stores, thirteen restaurants, and fifty-four physicians in Johnstown. The older ten story section of the United States National Bank Building (ca 1910) on Main Street exemplifies downtown's development as a financial and office center. Another example is the ten story bank building (1915) at 534 Main Street. The Conrad Block, also referred to as the "flat iron building," is a turn of the century multi-story triangular office building located on the edge of the commercial district. The Carnegie Building (c1900), seven stories tall, is another prominent downtown office building.

Department stores perhaps best symbolize downtown's emergence as Johnstown's center of trade and commerce. The size of Penn Traffic (1908), Glosser Brothers (1905) and Nathan's Department Store (1917), is evidence of the huge market captured by downtown merchants. Equally important were many smaller stores comprising the downtown shopping district. The Woolf and Reynolds Building (1908) served as a popular men's clothing store for many years. The Miller-Zimmerman Block (c1890) still houses retail shops.

With the installation of an electrified trolley system after the 1889 flood, downtown also developed into an entertainment center, having many theaters, restaurants and hotels. Over a dozen downtown theaters operated in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The balcony section of the State Theatre (1926) has been adaptively refurbished into the Lee Hospital auditorium. The Garden Theater (later Park) Building (ca 1913) is occupied by retail and office tenants. Downtown restaurants catered to both day and evening crowds. The J. T. Kelly Building (1913), originally a small cafe, is now home of the Main Street Bakery. Of several large hotels once gracing the downtown, one survives, the vacant six story Hendler Hotel (ca 1900).

Since World War II, downtown Johnstown has undergone a slow but steady decline as a retail shopping district. Entertainment facilities,

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restaurants and hotels have also experienced a dramatic decline. This has been partially offset by modest growth in the banking, office and service sectors. A series of successful historic building renovation projects have taken place over the last ten years. Included are two National Register buildings: Nathan's Department Store (1917) housing offices, a museum and several retail merchants; and the G. A. R. Building (1893), occupied by offices. Alma Hall (1884), a survivor of the 1889 flood, has also been refurbished, and the original facade of the former First Presbyterian Church (1862) was uncovered and preserved during construction of the Lincoln Center.

Downtown's architectural significance derives from the variety of styles represented, a high degree of design integrity and the number of buildings attributed to noted regional and national architects. The architecture spans a period of nearly one hundred years and includes buildings erected in the mid-nineteenth century, as well as some dating from the early to mid-twentieth century.

Many buildings predate the twentieth century, and a number of these are attributed to major architectural or construction firms. The building housing Schrader Florists (c1890) was designed by Johnstown's most noted and prolific architect, Walter R. Myton. The building features very elaborate Second Empire detailing including slate mansard roof, brackets and projecting porches. High style French Gothic architecture was utilized by Philadelphia architect Addison Hutton in designing the Cambria Free Library (1892), today the Johnstown Flood Museum. High style late Victorian commercial design is best represented in the Wehn, Lenhart and Penn Hotel buildings (1890-1895); they feature intact cast iron storefronts manufactured in Johnstown and Pittsburgh foundries.

Downtown's large department stores and office buildings were often professionally designed. The Park Theater building (1913), designed by popular local architect George Wild, housed the Park Theater on the first floor and offices above. The Penn Traffic Department Store Building

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(1908) is attributed to the Buzer Bros. construction firm of Pittsburgh. It is downtown's largest structure, a block long edifice distinguished by classical ornamentation. Nathan's Department Store (1917) is the design of Pittsburgh's Charles Bickel. The 1920 annex, today the Thrift Drug Store, was designed by his son Walter Bickel.

Public and non-profit buildings erected in the twentieth century is the group most often associated with the architectural profession. City Hall (1900), attributed to Walter R. Myton and Charles Robinson of Altoona, incorporates a Richardsonian Romanesque design with central tower forming a downtown landmark. The former Post Office (1912), designed by James Knox Taylor, incorporates Classical Revival design. The present-day Post Office facility (1938), an Art Moderne building, is the work of New York architect Lorimer Rich. There is one public engineering landmark which highlights the historic importance of transportation and the city's rivers. The high profile superstructure of Franklin Street Bridge (1937) is an important visual element at the south end of the Downtown Historic District.

The district is nationally significant for its concentration of sites relating to the 1889 Johnstown flood. This theme is represented both in buildings which survived the flood and thematically related post 1889 flood structures. The 1889 Johnstown flood, which killed 2,209 people and destroyed most of the business district, spared a handful of masonry structures. Franklin Street Methodist Church (1869) is famous for having split the flood wave, allowing several buildings on Main Street to avoid a direct hit. Nearby Alma Hall sheltered over 100 people, many of whom floated into the building's upper floors and were rescued by occupants. The Presbyterian Church, incorporated into the Lincoln Center project, functioned as a morgue following the disaster. The Tribune Building (1883) sheltered editor George T. Swank, who continued to write coverage of the flood throughout the disaster. The massive Cambria Iron Office Building, located on the Little Conemaugh River, also survived the flood waters. The Ludwig House (1883), near the east end of Main Street, served

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as headquarters for Clara Barton and the Red Cross during relief efforts following the 1889 flood.

Other structures, although they did not survive the flood waters, are important landmarks relative to the story of the 1889 flood. The Wehn Building (1895), built in the aftermath of the flood, features two bas relief flood murals on the third floor facade depicting the agony of victims awash in the flood wave. Another flood-related site is Cambria Free Library, rebuilt on the location of the former library with funds donated by Andrew Carnegie. Today it is home to the Johnstown Flood Museum, interpreting the history of the 1889 flood as it impacted Johnstown and its residents.

The collection of flood-related sites in the Downtown Johnstown Historic District complement 1889 flood-related sites located at St. Michael, located 14 miles east of Johnstown. The Johnstown Flood National Memorial marks the site of the dam on what was Lake Conemaugh. Massive rainfall caused the dam to fail on May 31, 1889, which resulted in the death of 2,209 people in Johnstown and other communities downstream. St. Michael is also the location of the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club, built for elite vacationers who also owned large cottages along the shores of Lake Conemaugh.

Although other commercial streets developed and prospered in various sections of the city, the downtown was regarded as the focal point for commerce and government between 1869 and 1940. The downtown district compares favorably with the commercial center in Altoona, a city of similar size in the region. Both Altoona and Johnstown retain the historic ambiance of an urban core, although Johnstown's district appears more compact and contains fewer vacant lots.

The concentration of major public, commercial and institutional buildings in a compact three by four block area retains the vital identity of Johnstown's central business district. Architecturally, the district presents a range of styles available during the period of significance. Because of its

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history as a major downtown center, there are a significant number of architecturally prominent structures represented in the district. The district's significance regarding the nationally important 1889 flood relates to the number of extant flood-related sites. These include buildings erected both before and after the flood disaster. Nowhere in the immediate Johnstown area is there such a concentration of resources related to the 1889 flood.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Berger, Karl (editor) Johnstown: The Story of a Unique Valley.
Johnstown, PA: Johnstown Flood Museum, 1984.

Historic American Building Survey. The Character of a Steel Mill City: Four Historic Neighborhoods of Johnstown, Pennsylvania.
Washington: National Park Service 1989.

Johnstown Area Heritage Association's Downtown and Westmont Walking Tours.
Compiled by Benjamin and Susan Policicchio, 1990.

Shappae, Nathan Daniel. "A History of Johnstown and the Great Flood of 1889: A Study of Disaster and Rehabilitation." Unpublished dissertation for Doctor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh, 1940.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 - previously listed in the National Register
 - previously determined eligible by the National Register
 - designated a National Historic Landmark
 - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # The Character of a Steel Mill City, HAES, 1989
 - recorded by Historic American Engineering
- Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 50

UTM References

A

1	7	6	7	6	6	3	0	4	4	6	6	0	7	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

1	7	6	7	6	9	7	0	4	4	6	5	4	3	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

1	7	6	7	7	1	5	0	4	4	6	5	7	5	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

D

1	7	6	7	6	5	8	0	4	4	6	5	5	3	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See sketch map

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The downtown Johnstown Historic District encompasses the heart of the historic business district with commercial, public, nonprofit, fraternal, religious, and residential building types represented. It also includes the major concentration of 1889 flood-related buildings and sites in the city. Most of the district's boundaries are irregular in shape and necessitate detailed descriptions.

The north boundary, in part, follows the Little Conemaugh River and the rear property lines of buildings on Locust Street. It is carefully sited to exclude a large section of Washington Street, where open parking lots and altered buildings are the dominant features.

The east boundary line largely overlaps the traditional dividing line between the city's retail and warehouse sectors along Clinton and Bedford Streets. Anchoring the district's northeast corner is a group of three buildings exhibiting stellar high style Victorian architecture. The furthest east point of the boundary extends down Main Street to include a Richardsonian Romanesque single family house (offices today), well preserved turn of the century commercial and apartment building, and the Ludwig House which sheltered Clara Barton during the 1889 flood relief effort. The district's southeast corner boundary is drawn to embrace several notable turn of the century structures including the 1917 Moose Building. Several open parking lots along Vine Street do not seriously disrupt the continuity of the historic district.

The south boundary of the district, Stony Creek, is significant because it represents the accepted limit of the downtown business district. It also marked the south boundary of Johnstown until 1851. Vine Street includes a number of key ca 1890 commercial structures -- the St. Vincent DePaul building and Schrader's Flower Shop (local architect Walter R. Myton). The Conrad Black, a triangular four story office building, Art Deco Salvation Army building, First United Methodist Church, and Franklin Street bridge

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are products of downtown's early twentieth century growth period. The southwest corner, downtown's last example of a late nineteenth century century mixed commercial/residential neighborhood, conveys the low scale of these areas built prior to the turn of the century.

The district's west boundary line follows the contour of the ca 1970s urban renewal zone, separating the district from large, recently constructed institutional and private buildings. The line deviates west of Market Street to include the former State Theatre building, currently Lee Hospital Auditorium, which preserves the theatre's lavishly restored balcony section. The northwest corner boundary at Walnut Street includes a collection of institutional and commercial landmarks. Outside the boundary, the visual continuity and concentration of buildings change to that of a historic, but severely altered, mixed use area.