United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service  

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form  

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

1. Name  
historic Belhaven City Hall  
and/or common Belhaven City Hall  

2. Location  
street & number Main Street  
city, town Belhaven  
state North Carolina  

3. Classification  
Category  
X district  
structure  
site  
object  
Ownership  
X public  
private  
both  
Public Acquisition  
in process  
being considered  
Status  
X occupied  
unoccupied  
work in progress  
Accessible  
yes: restricted  
no  
Present Use  
X agriculture  
commercial  
educational  
entertainment  
X government  
Industrial  
military  
other:  

4. Owner of Property  
name Town of Belhaven  
street & number Belhaven City Hall, Main Street  
city, town Belhaven  
state North Carolina

5. Location of Legal Description  
courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Beaufort County Courthouse  
street & number Second Street  
city, town Washington  
state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys  
title  
has this property been determined eligible?  
yes  
no  
date  
 federal  
 state  
 county  
 local  
depository for survey records  
city, town  
state
The Belhaven City Hall stands on the north side of Main Street near the intersection with Pamlico Street in the heart of Belhaven's business district. The City Hall, which sits flush with the sidewalk, is separated by a narrow alley on the east from a frame commercial structure; a public parking lot adjoins the building on the west and north sides.

The design of the two-and-a-half story structure was furnished by local carpenter W. T. Kirk. Constructed in 1910-1911, the building is of brick laid in seven-to-one common bond, with a wood-shingled pediment and belfry. All windows feature large two-over-two sash and segmental arches. The present wooden shutters are recent additions. The arrangement of the fenestration is quite varied on the facade. The entrance to the City Hall is through a centrally placed arched opening which leads to a wide hall running the depth of the building; originally, market stalls lined this hallway. To the right of the central entrance is an identical opening which was the entrance to the fire department; this has now been bricked up with a contemporary door and window unit. To the left of the main entrance is a short flight of brick steps to the doorway leading to the second floor of the City Hall. A corbeled, two-bay projection at the second floor is above the main entrance; the projection is flanked on either side by two windows. The projection continues up the facade, breaking the pediment and supporting the belfry. A window in the pediment is flanked by small fan-shaped vents. The belfry has a slightly curved pyramidal roof, and the four faces of the belfry are identical with two pointed-arch vents with a circular vent above. A wide cornice with large scrollwork brackets appears on the belfry, around the building, and in the pediment. The side elevations of the City Hall are six bays long; some of the first floor fenestration has been bricked in. A fire escape runs up the east side of the building to a door on the second floor. The rear elevation is similar to that of the front, but lacks the pediment and projecting bay and has only the central arched opening on the first floor. Each side of the hip roof, which is covered with asphalt shingles, is broken by large hip dormers with diamond-paned windows.

The interior of the first floor has been much altered. The former market stalls flanking the wide center hall have been finished with plywood paneling and linoleum flooring to serve as town offices. The hallway retains plaster walls above a wainscot of narrow beaded sheathing. The large arched openings at each end of the hall have been filled with double glass doors with glass surrounds. The second floor of the City Hall originally housed a large auditorium; today, the Belhaven Memorial Museum occupies the space. The plaster walls, simple trim, hardwood floors, and tin ceiling with a diamond-shaped design survive. At the north end of the room is a high proscenium arch over a wide stage; the rear section of the stage has been partitioned off into storage space. At the south end of the room is a balcony with stairs leading to the unfinished attic and to the belfry, which now houses the fire department siren.
8. Significance

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Specific dates 1911
Builder/Architect W. T. Kirk; C. F. Doughty

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Belhaven City Hall has been the town's major landmark since its construction in 1911. Settled in the 1880s and incorporated in 1899, Belhaven developed as a lumber town with the arrival of the Norfolk and Southern Railway in 1891. The City Hall is the most conspicuous reminder of Belhaven's turn-of-the-century prosperity as a lumbering center. A pretentious two-and-a-half story brick structure with a belfry, the City Hall was built by C. F. Doughty, a mason, and W. T. Kirk, a local carpenter-cabinetmaker. The building's first floor housed meat and market stalls, the fire department, and the town clerk's office; the second floor contained a large auditorium. Since 1954 town offices have occupied the entire first floor. In 1967 the Belhaven Memorial Museum opened in the auditorium. The museum's eclectic collection contains antique furniture and clothing, 30,000 buttons, a preserved eight-legged pig, dressed fleas, and thousands of other such items of interest. The City Hall-Museum is one of the nine sites featured on the Historic Albemarle Tour.

Criteria Assessment:

A. Associated with the turn-of-the-century prosperity experienced in many parts of eastern North Carolina with the arrival of the railroad and the development of the lumber industry.

B. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a civic structure housing a public market, fire department, city offices, and public auditorium. The civic and architectural landmark of the town, the City Hall is an unusually large and pretentious structure for a community as small as Belhaven.

D. Is likely to yield information important in the history of late nineteenth-century urban settlement.
Belhaven was first settled in the 1880s as Jack's Neck. In 1891 the name was changed to Belle Port and again in 1893 to Belhaven; the town was incorporated in 1899. During the 1890s and the first two decades of the twentieth century, Belhaven developed into a thriving town with its economy based on the lumber industry. In 1886 the John L. Roper Lumber Company of Norfolk, Virginia, chartered the Albemarle and Pantego Railroad; in 1891 the Norfolk and Southern Railway took over the Albemarle and Pantego and brought rail service to Belhaven. With its railroad and port facilities, Belhaven became the center of a large-scale lumbering industry based on thousands of acres of woodland in Beaufort and Hyde counties. By 1910, six lumber companies, each employing several hundred workers in logging operations and saw and planing mills, were located in Belhaven. The largest was the Interstate Cooperage Company, a subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company, which produced barrels and boxes for the shipment of oil and oil products.

As a result of the town's rapid development, the Board of Aldermen issued a $10,000 "Public Improvement Bond for building a Town Hall, Public Dock, and Fire equipment" in 1909; the bond was purchased by the Chase National Bank of New York. In March 1910 a committee of three was appointed by the aldermen to secure a site for the town hall; the committee reported in the same month that a site could not be had without great expense, and recommended building the town hall on public land near the town dock. This recommendation was accepted by the aldermen, and in May W. T. Kirk was directed to submit to the board as early as possible final plans and specifications for the new town hall. For unstated reasons, the aldermen decided not to build the town hall on public land; in July the town purchased a lot at the corner of Main and Union streets from T. F. Riddick for $1,500 where the town hall was built. On 2 August 1910 the "contract for Building the Town Hall was awarded to Mr. C. F. Doughty--Mr. Doughty agreeing to furnish Brick in wall at $10.25 Pr. M the town agreeing to pay for handling brick from car to building. Mr. W. T. Kirk to be employed to oversee and look after the construction of the wood work on Town Hall at a salary of $3.50 Pr. Day." Work probably began soon afterwards, and progressed rapidly. Materials for the building were brought to the construction site by a short railroad spur of the Norfolk and Southern Railway. By February 1911 the Town was accepting bids for the use of the market stalls, and in March the E. H. Stafford Manufacturing Company was awarded the contract for furnishing opera seats in the auditorium. The building was finished by 28 April 1911 when the Board of Aldermen first met in the city hall; in May the aldermen instructed that the "City Clerk was to have use of small room between the meat stalls for his office." In addition to the 1909 public improvement bond, the town sold bonds worth $8,500 to the Bank of Belhaven to pay for the construction of the city hall.

The City Hall has housed city offices continually since its construction; today, the former market stalls have been made into offices. The Belhaven Fire Department, organized in 1903, was housed on the first floor until it moved out in 1954.
second floor served as a public auditorium until the late 1940s when the seats were removed and the space used as a gymnasium. In 1967 the Belhaven Memorial Museum opened in the former auditorium-gymnasium. The core of the museum's collection was formed before 1918 by the late Mrs. Eva Blount Way, and since 1967 local residents have contributed many items to the museum. Among the holdings are 30,000 buttons, a preserved eight-legged pig, a watch fob made from the first Atlantic cable, dressed fleas, and many other artifacts and oddities. The City Hall-Museum is one of the nine sites on the Historic Albemarle Tour.

While the City Hall continues its important function of housing city offices and the Belhaven Memorial Museum, its significance as an architectural landmark must not be overlooked. The architecture of Belhaven and Beaufort County was long dominated by frame and timber construction; the Belhaven City Hall is one of the oldest of the few non-commercial brick structures in Beaufort County. The vernacular quality of its late-Victorian stylistic features is enhanced by the thorough documentation of the building's designer, contractor, and construction. Although it could not be stated the City Hall influenced the architecture of Belhaven, it does represent the best attempt at high-style architectural design in Belhaven at the turn-of-the-century.

The structure is, of course, closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archeological record. Therefore, archeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

Footnotes


2Loy and Worthy, p. 353,

3Loy and Worthy, p. 347.

4Minutes, 6 May 1907-2 May 1913, Board of Aldermen, Belhaven, N. C., p. 63, 19 August 1909; hereinafter cited as Minutes.

5Minutes, p. 75, 1 March 1909; p. 76, 9 March 1909.
### Historical Significance

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10. Minutes, p. 96, 10 Feb. 1911; p. 98, 7 March 1911.


Minutes, 6 May 1907-2 May 1913, Board of Aldermen, Belhaven, N. C., City Clerk's Office, Belhaven City Hall, Belhaven, North Carolina.
9. Major Bibliographical References


10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: **less than one acre**

Quadrangle name: **Belhaven**

UMT References

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**Verbal boundary description and justification**
The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the red line on the accompanying map entitled "Map of the City of Belhaven," and includes the entire property connected with the structure. Beaufort County Map Book 6, 14, Register of Deeds Office, Beaufort County Courthouse, Washington.

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

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11. Form Prepared By

**name/title** Marshall Bullock, consultant to the Mid-East Commission

**organization** Survey and Planning Branch, Archeology and Historic Preservation Section

**date** August 1980

**North Carolina Division of Archives and History**

**street & number** 109 E. Jones Street

**telephone** 919-733-6545

**city or town** Raleigh **state** North Carolina **zip code** 27611

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

- **national**
- **state**
- **x** 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

**State Historic Preservation Officer signature**

**title** State Historic Preservation Officer **date** 16 October 1980

**For HCRS use only**

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

**Keeper of the National Register**

**date**

**Attest:**

**date**

**Chief of Registration**
Belhaven City Hall
Belhaven
Belhaven, NC Quad
Scale: 1:24000
Zone: 18
18 353950/3933820