

VLR: 12-2-69  
NRHP: 2-26-70  
127-173

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia	
COUNTY: Richmond (in cit.)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Belgian Building (William J. Clark Library and Barco-Stevens Hall)

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Belgian Pavilion

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
W side of Lombardy St., at intersection with Brook Rd.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Richmond

STATE Virginia	CODE 45	COUNTY: (in cit.)	CODE 760
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work In progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Rector and Board of Visitors

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Virginia Union University

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond	STATE: Virginia	CODE 45
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**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:  
10th and Broad Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond	STATE: Virginia	CODE 45
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**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Report #127-173

DATE OF SURVEY: 1969       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond	STATE: Virginia	CODE 45
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia	COUNTY: Richmond (in cit.)	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

As it is presently laid out, the Virginia Union University Library, or Belgian Pavilion, is a large, somewhat irregular U-shaped structure. The south arm contains the library, while the north arm contains a gymnasium; the two are connected by a series of classrooms. In the southwest corner of the U is a slender slate-faced campanile-like tower, one corner of which is ornamented with glass blocks while the top is crowned with a distinctive louvred lantern. The tower is dedicated to Robert L. Vann, a Pittsburgh publisher and alumnus of Virginia Union. At the base of the tower are two bas relief panels which represent culture and trades in the Belgian Congo. A third, very long bas relief panel on the south wall of the Library represents trade in Belgium. The sculptors for these panels were O. Jaspers and H. Purrez.

Most of this one-story, flat roofed structure is faced with red tiles above a black slate-faced water table. The choice of materials is symbolic of Belgian unity; the red tiles are a product of Flanders while the black slate comes from the Ardennes and the plate glass used in large areas throughout the building are from the Walloon part of Belgium. The whole of the building, with its clean lines, geometrical patterned surfaces and geometrical massing, has an aura of austere formalism, one of the chief characteristics of the International Style.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Library building of Virginia Union University was originally built in 1939 in New York City as the Belgian Pavilion for the World's Fair. The architects for the building were Victor Bourgeois and Leo Stijnen who worked under the direction of Professor Henry van der Velde (1863-1957). Van der Velde, one of the most important twentieth-century architects, began as an exponent of the Art Nouveau movement but later became a pioneer of modernism, and was the predecessor of Walter Gropius as head of the influential Grand Ducal School of Art at Weimar, Germany, which later became the Bauhaus.

The building was erected with the idea of removing it to a Belgian university following the closing of the fair. However, the outbreak of World War II put a halt to this scheme, and the Belgian ambassador presented the building to Virginia Union University in 1941. The choice of Virginia Union was based largely on the potential use the school could make of the pavilion, and the availability of a good site. The building was then dismantled, the materials shipped to Richmond, and reassembled on the grounds of the school. Its corner stone was laid on June 9, 1941.

Because of the reputation of its architects, as well as the quality of its design, the former Belgian Pavilion must be considered to possess international architectural significance. It stands as a monument in America to the modernism of the thirties, or the International Style, as it came to be called. It was this architectural movement which so largely shaped the architecture of the present day.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Fletcher, Sir Banister, History of Architecture on the Comparative Method. 17th edition, revised. New York: 1963.  
 O'Neal, William B., Architecture in Virginia. New York: 1968.  
 "Our Times," Richmond Times-Dispatch (January 25, 1942).

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		37 °	33 ' 44 "	77 ° 27 ' 00 "
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1 acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Staff, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, James W. Moody, Jr., Director**

ORGANIZATION: **Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission**      DATE: **November 19, 1969**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Richmond**      STATE: **Virginia**      CODE: **45**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>    State <input type="checkbox"/>    Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p><b>Dr. Edward P. Alexander, Chairman</b>              Title <u>Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission</u></p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____              Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____              Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date _____</p>
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS



U.S.G.S. 7 1/2' quadrangle (Scale: 1:24,000)  
 Richmond, Va. (1964)

Library, Virginia Union University  
 Latitude                      Longitude  
 37° 33' 44"                      77° 27' 00"

**RICHMOND**