

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Wisconsin	
COUNTY: Oneida	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER AUG 14 1973	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:

AND/OR HISTORIC: **Congressman to be notified:
First National Bank Rep. David Obey, Wis. 7th Dist.**

2. LOCATION

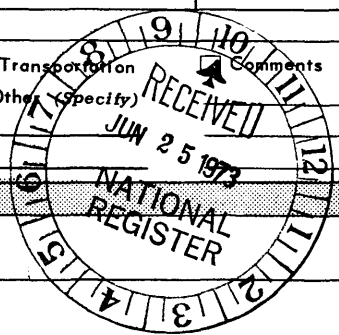
STREET AND NUMBER:
8 West Davenport Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Rhineland

STATE Wisconsin	CODE 55	COUNTY: Oneida	CODE 085
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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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <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 (Specify)



4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
First National Bank

STREET AND NUMBER:
8 West Davenport Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Rhineland

STATE:
Wisconsin

CODE:
55

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Oneida County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:
South Oneida Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Rhineland

STATE:
Wisconsin

CODE:
55

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Wisconsin Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE OF SURVEY: **1972** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

STREET AND NUMBER:
816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Madison

STATE:
Wisconsin

CODE:
55

STATE: **Wisconsin**

COUNTY: **Oneida**

ENTRY NUMBER: **AUG 14 1973**

DATE: **AUG 14 1973**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3-25-74

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

 Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

 Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

 Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The First National Bank at Rhinelander is a two-story building which is square in plan, with exterior walls of earth-red brick above a meandering first-story base of dressed white sandstone. Terra cotta surface ornamentation at the second level is very reminiscent of the National Farmers' Bank at Owatonna, Minn., done by Sullivan and Elmslie. Indeed, the exterior of the entire building is very similar to that of the two-story wing of the Owatonna bank, including window bands at the second level framed by raised brick courses and a meandering stone base.

The brick is topped by a simple stone course, of which Purcell and Elmslie wrote, "The use of simple building blocks of stone as a conclusion to the brick walls at the top, definitely arresting their upward movement, forms an interesting contrast to the usual useless verbiage of an applique 'cornice'."¹ The stone course is interrupted above the main entrance by an elaborate terra cotta which spreads about twenty feet across the facade, emphasizing the entry point.

The plan was unusual for a small midwestern bank of the period. The actual banking space was at the rear of the building, to which customers came through a broad-arched doorway leading to a deep, glasslined lobby, and then the bank. The central lobby was flanked by two commercial rental spaces which faced the street. [The bank officers originally desired the bank to face the street with rental space behind. Purcell and Elmslie countered with the scheme which was finally adopted.²] The second floor plan was "L"-shaped, permitting a large skylight to be placed over the banking area on the first floor. The second floor contained rental offices. General commercial display windows at the first floor level rose to the height of the stone base, giving the brick box above an unbroken continuity interrupted only by the main entry arch.

The exterior of the building is much the same as it was when it was built. It is in excellent condition and little altered. The street in front of the building is now littered with traffic signs and light posts, which are the only major detraction from this handsome building. [The original aspect of the building is shown in the January, 1913, issue of "Western Architect." Elmslie's original drawings for the ornamentation are shown in Gebhard's "Drawings..."] Subsequent remodelings resulted in new windows being installed, but these were chosen carefully to reflect the lines of the original windows.

The interior of the bank has changed completely in three remodelings. Around 1930 "bandit barrier system" tellers' cages were installed, removing the original grillwork. In 1946 a major remodeling integrated the whole interior of the building into one banking function, and replaced the skylight with additional second floor rental space. In 1961 the building received a major remodeling and integration with an adjacent building. Throughout all these remodelings, the bank was careful to maintain the integrity of the exterior of the building. Since the needs of the bank have changed dramatically over the past six decades, the current use of the building is really an adaptive one. As an adaptive use, it succeeds in preserving the exterior of the building with minimal violation of the original design, and it assures the building's continued preservation for the foreseeable future.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1 - Prairie School Press reprint, p. 22

2 - Gebhard thesis, p. 209

6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **February 18, 1911, date on working drawings**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input 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

"It is important to note that with the exception of [Frank Lloyd] Wright, Purcell and Elmslie was the only firm that can be said to stem directly from Louis Sullivan, the fountainhead of American progressivism. Because of the years of close contact between Sullivan and Elmslie, and Purcell's understanding of Sullivan's philosophy, the firm can logically be considered as the direct successor of the master."¹

The First National Bank in Rhinelander was designed by George Grant Elmslie and William Gray Purcell and built in 1910-1911, shortly after Elmslie left the office of Louis Henry Sullivan, where he had been chief designer for fourteen years. Elmslie first became exposed to bank design in 1907² when, as Sullivan's employe, he collaborated in the design of the famous National Farmers' Bank in Owatonna, Minnesota.

Since 1957 a vigorous dialogue has arisen over the true design authorship of the Owatonna bank. While one can argue that Elmslie was virtually the designer of the bank, or that he played a subordinate role, it is probably safe to agree with earlier conclusions of Sullivan's biographer, Hugh Morrison, which have been reinforced by architectural historian H. Allan Brooks. "Most of the interior details were designed by Elmslie," Morrison wrote in 1935, "and the idea of the single great arches of the facade was his, being substituted for three smaller arches in Sullivan's early sketches. Thus Elmslie, who was never formally a partner of Sullivan, was at this time a truer collaborator in design than Adler [Sullivan's former partner] had ever been."³ In his first exposure to bank design, Elmslie was clearly a major contributor to its final resolution.

Two years after the Owatonna bank was designed, Elmslie left Sullivan's office and joined Purcell and George Feick in a new partnership. The next year, in 1910, he undertook the design of the Rhinelander bank. Still strongly influenced by his recent employment by Sullivan, Elmslie produced a bank in the same generic vein. It is box-like in proportion with a major entry arch and ribbons of windows in the Prairie School manner. The ornamentation is richly executed from Elmslie's talented pencil. In his later years with Sullivan, Elmslie had executed most of the ornamentation done by the firm, and had even carried Sullivan's earlier ornamental system to fulfillment.⁴ For example, all the ornament on Sullivan's famous Carson, Pirie, Scott store in Chicago (1898-1904) were designed by Elmslie.⁵

The Rhinelander bank was Purcell and Elmslie's second bank commission. Throughout the firm's career, a total of nineteen banks were designed, though only about half were actually built.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brooks, H. Allen, The Prairie School, U. of Toronto Press, 1972.
 Gebhard, David, Unpublished PhD Thesis, U. of Minnesota, 1957.
 Gebhard, David, Drawings for Architectural Ornament by George Grant Elmslie, U. of California Folio, 1968.
 Morrison, Hugh, Louis Sullivan: Prophet of Modern Architecture, W.W. Norton & Co., New York; 1935.
 Prairie School Press, The Work of Purcell and Elmslie, reprint of three issues of "The Western Architect," Park Forest, 1965.
 Gebhard, David, Louis Sullivan and George Grant Elmslie, "Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians," 1960, pp. 62-68.

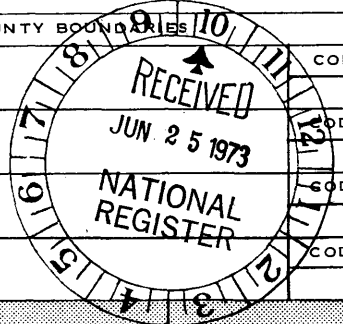
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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	° ' "	° ' "		°	'	"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		N45	38	17
SE	° ' "	° ' "		W89	24	43
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Less than 1.0**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Jeffrey Dean, State Preservation Planner

ORGANIZATION: State Historical Society of Wisconsin DATE: May 2, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER: 816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN: Madison STATE: Wisconsin CODE: 55

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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:

National State Local

Name James Morton Smith
James Morton Smith

Title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Date 2-6-19-73 cm

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Robert H. Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 8/14/73

ATTEST:

Wm. Bennett
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 7 30 73

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
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(Number all entries)

8. First National Bank, Rhinelander

"The series of small-town banks which Purcell and Elmslie built throughout the Midwest were, after their residential work, their most important series of commissions. No other progressive firm or individual obtained as many commissions for this type of commercial structure."⁶

Elmslie gathered valuable bank-design experience in Sullivan's office and made profitable contacts with his former employer's clients, who largely came to him for further architectural services when necessary. This, combined with Purcell's personal connections through his father's business, resulted in the frequency of bank commissions.

The firm's Sullivanesque designs were suitable for banks because of the sense of permanence and solidity they imparted. The most popular bank design of the day was the Neo-Classical style, which was so common that its influence accounted for the loss of many Purcell and Elmslie commissions after designs had been prepared.⁷ The firm's bank activities ended with the unfortunate demise of the Prairie School generally, the victim of a nationalizing consciousness and growing Eastern domination of architectural taste.

The day of local and regional styles in architecture left Wisconsin with the end of the Prairie School, and the later death of Frank Lloyd Wright, and they were supplanted by national modes inspired by the two coasts and growing out of foreign initiatives. As one of the foremost regional architectural practitioners, Purcell and Elmslie have left modern Wisconsin a legacy of only six remaining buildings, of which the Rhinelander example is the only bank and surely one of the finest works by the firm in the state.

[Note on the client: The firm of Purcell and Elmslie was selected to be the architect for this building by Dr. Alfred D. Daniels, MD, the head of the bank who was a practicing physician and businessman in Rhinelander since 1888. Besides founding the Bank of Rhinelander that year, the bank which later became the First National Bank, Dr. Daniels was involved in early lumbering and founded the Daniels Manufacturing Company, the Oneida Gas Company, the Wisconsin Veneer Company, the Rhinelander Refrigerator Company, and the Rhinelander Paper Company. It is thought that Dr. Daniels hired the firm because he wanted an outstanding building for his bank, and that he was aware he was hiring a progressive architectural firm.⁸ He was 53 years old at the time the building was built.]

- 1 - Gebhard thesis, p. 53
- 2 - Ibid, p. 86
- 3 - Morrison, p. 210
- 4 - Gebhard, "Drawings..." p. 2
- 5 - Gebhard thesis, p. 77
- 6 - Ibid, p. 205
- 7 - Ibid, p. 207
- 8 - Interview with bank president Bert F. Strong, October 30, 1972.

