

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0694827

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 8 1979
DATE ENTERED	FEB 2 1979

**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 First National Bank Building

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 217-233 Central Avenue N.W. NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Albuquerque CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1

STATE New Mexico VICINITY OF COUNTY Bernalillo CODE 35 CODE 001

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: vacant

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME First National Bank in Albuquerque address correspondence to: Mr. Larry Carter, President

STREET & NUMBER 40 First Plaza

CITY, TOWN Albuquerque STATE New Mexico VICINITY OF 87102

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Bernalillo County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER 505 Central Avenue N.W.

CITY, TOWN Albuquerque STATE New Mexico 87102

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE July 28, 1978 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS State Historic Preservation Office, Dept. of Educational Finance & Cultural Affairs

CITY, TOWN P.O. Box 1629, Santa Fe STATE New Mexico 87503

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

By the time the First National Bank Building was constructed in 1922, Albuquerque's downtown business district had been in existence for over forty years. Established in 1880, when the Santa Fe Railroad reached Albuquerque a mile and a half east of the original Hispanic adobe town (now known as Old Town), New Town, or the downtown business district, was a small urban area of one to three-story buildings of brick, frame, or adobe. Styles were those prevalent in the Middle West, rather than those indigenous to New Mexico.

Built in the center of the business district, at the corner of Third Street and Central Avenue, the First National Bank Building immediately became one of the city's commanding landmarks. The architect, Henry Charles Trost of the El Paso firm Trost and Trost, designed for the bank Albuquerque's first building on the skyscraper scale, and at eight stories the bank stood out dramatically among other, smaller downtown buildings.

Of the many distinguished Albuquerque buildings designed by Trost and Trost (including the Berthold Spitz House, National Register, 12-22-77; the Occidental Life Insurance Company Building, 1-30-78; Old Albuquerque High School, National Register as significant building in Huning Highlands Historic District, 12-9-78, and the Pueblo Revival Franciscan Hotel, now demolished), the First National Bank Building is closest in style to the Sunshine Building, almost across the street, at Second and Central. Built in 1923-24, the Sunshine Building at six stories was also elevator scale, and the two tall structures, seen together, suggest that Trost and Trost predicted many more skyscrapers in downtown Albuquerque. The prediction was not borne out on Central Avenue, where these two structures still loom above neighboring buildings. Both were built with blank walls on the east, which the architects must have expected to be masked by next-door structures; both are decorated on only two sides, with the east wall and alley facade innocent of elaboration.

In the case of First National Bank, this treatment contributes to an optical illusion: from Third and Central, the building appears to occupy a solid square, but approaching the building from the east it becomes clear that the bank is, in fact, L-shaped. The heavy cornice, for example, wraps around the northeast corner of the building, but ends abruptly a few feet along the east facade at the edge of the penthouse tower which rises an additional two stories with no decoration at the roof level.

The south and west facades, with their elaborate decoration, are designed to minimize the building's scale, an effect which must have been particularly important when this was the only building downtown higher than three stories. The very tall first story with its large arched windows is on an imposingly grand scale from the pedestrian level; when the building is seen from a distance, the first story anchors it firmly to the ground. Each window is topped by a decorative scroll with a medallion above; rosettes mark the spaces between the windows. Entrance doors are asymmetrical, set into identical frames. The bottom story is marked off by a heavy molding.

The middle six floors of the concrete building are relatively plain. Pairs

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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of windows are set within pilasters; larger windows mark the corners. A molding at the top of the sixth floor sets off the decorated final story, which features shield medallions on either side of the corner windows. The building is topped by an overhanging bracketed cornice.

The elegance and grandeur of the building, particularly as expressed through the first floor facade, is highly appropriate to its history as a bank; the First National Bank Building is a visible display of confidence, money and security, an excellent advertisement.

In the building's interior the most important areas are the entrance lobby, off Central, and the banking lobby, which occupies the west side of the first floor. The original entrance doors have been replaced with modern security doors, but the entrance porch, with its columns, moldings, and marble floor, continues the effect of the exterior. The large banking lobby is divided by two rows of octagonal columns; on the east wall behind what were teller's cages are large mirrors which exactly echo the west side windows in their framing and moldings. Floors, column facings, writing desks and room dividers of marble, brass railings, bracketed moldings, and a clock above the entrance door carry out the effect of restrained and simple, elegant design.

In a 1940's remodeling a mezzanine was added to the lobby's north end, so that the original effect of a grand room surrounded on all sides by large arched windows (or mirrors) has been obscured.

The bank has a full basement, where safe deposit boxes were stored. Many of the seven upper floors still retain original hardware, plumbing, fixtures and wood panelling throughout, but several (the third and fourth floors in particular) have been remodeled with drop ceilings, glass panels, and other evidences of modernity. The building is structurally sound and in excellent repair; aside from remodeling of office spaces, it has seen minimal alteration.

The First National Bank Building has stood vacant for several years; currently, it is for sale, and a number of buyers have shown interest in recycling the structure. Original blueprints for the building are available at the John Gaw Meem Collection at the University of New Mexico. The boundaries of this nomination include only the two city lots fully occupied by the First National Bank Building at the corner of Third and Central.

The First National Bank Building is a beautiful, and almost unaltered, example of architectural style in the 1920's. It still rises impressively above its neighboring buildings on Central Avenue, a monument to the fine designs of Trost and Trost and a central landmark for the City of Albuquerque.

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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1922

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Trost and Trost

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The First National Bank Building is primarily important for its architecture, which is enhanced by its commanding physical setting in downtown Albuquerque, but the structure also has significance as the home for over fifty years of Albuquerque's first bank, and of a great deal of the city's and region's financial history.

Joshua Reynolds and his brother Jefferson began their careers as bankers in Pueblo and Trinidad, Colorado; in 1876, moving south, they opened the Central Bank in Las Vegas, New Mexico, with another brother, Frederick. In 1878, two years before the Santa Fe Railroad arrived in Albuquerque, the Reynolds brothers established the Central Bank of Albuquerque in a still-existing one-story adobe building on the southwest corner of Old Town Plaza. When the railroad line was laid one-and-a-half miles to the east of the original settlement of Albuquerque, now known as Old Town, a New Town grew up around the tracks, and the Reynolds brothers followed the general move to the east, establishing the Central Bank in a two-story ornate Victorian brick building (now demolished) at the northwest corner of Second and Gold.

By 1884, the brothers were able to buy out the First National Bank of Albuquerque and assume its name, and by 1902 they had extended the family business into El Paso. Joshua Reynolds, who became president of the bank in 1902, also assumed the presidency of the locally based Occidental Life Insurance Company (see Occidental Life Insurance Building, National Register, 1-30-78). Joshua Reynolds died in 1916, and his place as bank president was taken by his son, John Madison Reynolds, under whose authority the First National Bank Building was constructed.

Trost and Trost, who had designed the Occidental Life Insurance Building (and an earlier home for Occidental Life, now demolished) for Reynolds, were chosen as the building's architects at a time when they were also designing the very different Pueblo Revival facade of the downtown Franciscan Hotel (now demolished). Sumner Sollitt Company is listed as the contractor in the 1922 building permit, in which construction costs are estimated at \$434,000.

J.M. Reynold's satisfaction with the building's design is made evident in a May 20, 1924 letter to the architectural firm:

Before starting to plan our building, we consulted a number of architects, local as well as certain architects who make a specialty of bank buildings in New York City. We never had any success with any of them except Trost and Trost, who seemed to catch our ideas of what kind of a building we wanted and what kind of a banking room we wanted, and put them on paper immediately.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Albuquerque Building Permits, 1922
Albuquerque City Directories, 1908, 1923, 1935.
Edna Hetherington Bergman, "The Fate of Architectural Theory in Albuquerque: Buildings of Four Decades, 1920-1960," Master of Architecture Thesis, Univ. of N.M., pp.53-57
Donald Dreesen, "Early Settlers of Albuquerque," Mss. in Special Collections, Univ. of New Mexico.
Raynolds-Trost letter, Ponsford Collection, Texas Public Library, El Paso.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY $\frac{1}{2}$ acre

UTM REFERENCES

349
A | 1,3 | 3194640 | 3,8 | 8,3 | 4,8,0 | B | | | | | |
 | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
 | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 21,22,23, and 24 of Block 9 of the Original Township of Albuquerque, bounded on the south by Central Avenue, on the east by the property line of Lot 21, Block 9, Original Township, on the north by the east-west alley between Central and Copper Avenue, and on the west by Third Street N.W.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Susan V. Dewitt

ORGANIZATION

Historic Landmarks Survey of Albuquerque

DATE

12-8-78

STREET & NUMBER

c/o Planning Dept., P.O. Box 1293

TELEPHONE

(505) 766-4720

CITY OR TOWN

Albuquerque

STATE

New Mexico 87103

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

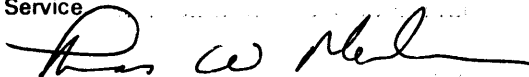
NATIONAL

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



TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

12-21-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER



DATE

2-2-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:



DATE

2-2-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Almost everything about the building, when finally done, was very satisfactory. Most of the things that we can find fault with are due to the fact that we didn't see them ourselves when we were making our plans.

We are especially pleased with the design Mr. Trost made of the exterior of the building and believe that it requires an artist like Mr. Trost to give a building distinction and individuality.

The First National Bank Building always contained rented offices as well as bank offices, and numbered among its tenants many of the city's most important legal, financial, and medical firms. In the mid-1970's, the First National Bank in Albuquerque opened its new headquarters building a block to the north, in the new First Plaza Building, leaving the 1922 building vacant. The property has been well maintained during this period, and has suffered no visible damages.

The long connection of the building with one of the city's two major banking institutions, as well as its architectural significance and importance to the city as a familiar and well-loved landmark, qualifies it for recognition.