SG-2129

NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: El Paso Natural Gas Co. (Blue Flame) Building
Other name/site number: Blue Flame Building
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 120 N. Stanton
City or town: El Paso State: Texas County: El Paso
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
☐ national ☐ statewide ☑ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☑ A ☐ B ☑ C ☐ D

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer 12/20/17
Signature of certifying official / Title **Date**

Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official **Date**

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

✓ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register.
___ removed from the National Register
___ other, explain:

Joe Edson for Beall 2.13.18
Signature of the Keeper **Date of Action**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

x	Private
	Public - Local
	Public - State
	Public - Federal

Category of Property

x	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: Commerce/Trade / Business = office building

Current Functions: Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Modern Movement: Skyscraper

Principal Exterior Materials: Brick; Glass; Metal/aluminum; Stone/granite

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7 through 8)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Commerce, Architecture

Period of Significance: 1954-1968

Significant Dates: 1954, 1955

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked):NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: Carroll and Daeuble, Architects; McKee, Robert E., General Contractor

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 9 through 15)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet 16)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- x 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 #
- _ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:
- **x** State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*, Austin)
- _ Other state agency
- _ Federal agency
- _ Local government
- **x** University (UTEP Library Special Collections)
- **x** Other -- Specify Repository: City of El Paso Public Library
  Robert E. McKee Foundation

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 0.3189 acres

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 31.759300° Longitude: -106.485992°

Verbal Boundary Description: 39 MILLS 99.25 FT ON STANTON X 120.00 FT ON TEXAS & 20.00 FT ALLEY ADJ (13895.00 SQ FT)

Boundary Justification: This is the legally recorded description of the parcel, and includes all the property historically associated with the building

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: William Helm, AIA & Paulina Lagos, AIA, with Gregory Smith, National Register Coordinator
Organization: In Situ Architecture, Planning and Historic
Street & number: 123 W. Mills, Suite 410
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Date: April 2017

Additional Documentation

M**aps** (see continuation sheet 17)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 18-32)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 33-46)

Photograph Log

El Paso Natural Gas Co. (Blue Flame) Building
El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
Photographed by William Helm
December 2016

Photo 1
North Side, from Stanton Street
Camera facing south

Photo 2
West Side, from Texas Avenue
Camera facing east

Photo 3
East Façade
Camera facing west

Photo 4
Northwest Corner
Camera facing southeast

Photo 5
North Façade, looking up
Camera facing south

Photo 6
East Façade, looking up
Camera facing west

Photo 7
South elevation (east side), looking up
Camera facing north

Photo 8
South elevation, looking up
Camera facing north

Photo 9
West elevation, looking up
Camera facing east

Photo 10
Main Entry, north side
Camera facing southeast

Photo 11
Ground floor at northeast corner
Camera facing southwest

Photo 12
Ground floor at northwest corner
Camera facing southeast

Photo 13
Ground floor at southeast corner
(connection to hyphen on left)
Camera facing northwest

Photo 14
Southeast corner at left; hyphen center
Camera facing east

Photo 15
South elevation with hyphen
Camera facing north

Photo 16
Flame Weather Beacon, looking up from roof

Photo 17
Flame Detail, looking up

Photo 18
South end of the lobby
Camera facing south

Photo 19
South Side from inside hyphen
Camera facing north

Photo 20
Main Lobby
Camera facing south

Photo 21
Terrazzo EPNG logo in lobby floor

Photo 22
Fourth Floor, Typical Upper Lobby without Glass

Photo 23
Thirteenth Floor, Typical Upper Lobby with Glass

Photo 24
Thirteenth Floor, Typical Upper Lobby

Photo 25
Thirteenth Floor, Typical Upper Lobby

Description

The El Paso Natural Gas Company Building, now commonly known as the "Blue Flame Building" is an 18-story 2-part vertical block on the east side of downtown El Paso, Texas. Completed in 1954 and formally dedicated in 1955, the building is prominently sited at the southeast corner of the intersection of Texas and Stanton avenues. The building features a rectangular plan, with the primary façade on the north. The ground floor is finished with granite, while the upper portion of the steel-framed building is finished with wide buff brick end walls framing central bays of tripartite windows with corrugated aluminum spandrels. The building's verticality is emphasized by continuous aluminum fins separating the windows on the upper floors. The building lacks a definitive cornice, but is topped by an iconic 21-foot-tall illuminated Blue Flame, built of steel and Plexiglass. The building's main lobby as well as each floor's elevator lobby is generously clad in Italian marble. The building has had few alterations and retains a high degree of integrity.

The 18-story El Paso Natural Gas Company Building is at the eastern edge of downtown El Paso. It stands among other tall buildings constructed throughout the 20th century, along with a mix of smaller commercial and civic buildings. The building is sited at a grid intersection, making its northwest corner highly visible from both the north-south and east-west directions. Its size, striking verticality, and its iconic blue flame make it a prominent visual landmark in downtown El Paso's skyline. There are 18 structural stories above ground, floor seventeen is a mechanical penthouse and roof access and the eighteenth floor is elevator penthouse and roof access. There is also an occupied basement level and an additional mechanical sub-basement for a total building gross area of 209,719 square feet. At the pedestrian level, the building is clad in granite with a continuous overhang protecting the sidewalk. The ground floor contains several commercial spaces with punched storefronts. Above, the modernist skyscraper exhibits the streamlined characteristics of the International Style, rendered in brick masonry, polished aluminum and glass on its exterior and polished marble, terrazzo flooring in the common areas of the building's interior. The building's three street facades are rendered virtually the same; brick on each of the four corners of the building with large glazed punched openings, aluminum transoms, and continuous vertical shading devices. This repetition helps to accentuate the verticality of the building.

The building's main entrance, marked by a large entry canopy, is on Texas Street; this contrasts with the location of the main entrance on the historical construction drawings. Presumably, a revision was made during construction of which there is no official record. The building features a structural steel frame, with the exterior covered at the base with crystal grey granite to the second floor. From the second floor up it is covered with light buff tapestry brick at the four corners. The glass areas on all four sides are constructed of folding t-type aluminum windows, and on three sides they will are separated with vertical aluminum fins running the full length of the building and projecting two feet beyond the sash. The aluminum is oxidized to prevent glare.

The building is rectangular in plan, wider on the north and south. The primary elevation is on the north side, on Texas Avenue. The main entrance is located in the central bay at the ground level and covered by a metal canopy that wraps the building and continues along the entire west elevation. As mentioned, the ground level is clad in grey granite and contains a few punched openings formerly used as commercial storefronts. Above the canopy, the entire north elevation is divided into five bays of tripartite windows separated by continuous projecting vertical aluminum fins. In between the windows are corrugated aluminum spandrels. There is a minimal flat cornice capping the window bays at the top of the building.

The east face of the building is made up of three bays of the same aluminum tripartite windows with wider brick end walls and two punched windows at the sixteenth floor. The aluminum windows are similarly composed separated by continuous projecting aluminum fins and the same corrugated aluminum spandrels can be found here with a flat cornice topping the window bays. At ground level, the east façade is brick with a side door and some windows in the second bay and low planter leading to Texas Street.

The west façade is similar to the east façade in its organization, except the ground floor is accentuated by the continuation of the aluminum canopy and grey granite from the main façade on the north side. There is also a non-descript side entrance recessed here at ground level, with two existing punched openings once used as storefronts.

The south elevation reads as the back of the building, and features a large central expanse of plain brick flanked by two window bays each containing a set of three windows separated by the corrugated aluminum spandrels and topped by the same flat cornice. Absent from these openings are the continuous vertical fins. At the base of the building is a connection to the adjacent Stanton Tower through a glass-enclosed hyphen, which is no longer used to provide access between the buildings.

The main entrance of the home office building faces Texas Street with exterior walls at the ground floor covered with crystal grey Minnesota granite. Passing through the pair of double doors at the main entrance on Texas Street, the first feature encountered is the EPNG emblem inlaid in the grey terrazzo floor of the main lobby. The lobby walls are covered with a buff colored marble quarried in Italy, near Trieste as are all the elevator lobbies of the upper floors – offering continuity throughout the building. The upper elevator lobbies also feature some remaining corrugated channel glass panels. From the interior, each floor each generously lit by both artificial and natural light coming through the large window openings. The surrounding mountains from both El Paso and Juarez, Mexico form an interesting back drop as viewed from the upper floor of the building.

One of the most modern features was the building's movable interior partitions. With its open floor plans at every level - office space is easily reconfigured as needs changed in the various departments.[1] For the initial occupancy of the building EPNG used EBASCO Services Inc., a space planning firm from New York, to maximize efficient use of space in the building in the initial layout of the movable partitions.[2] Meanwhile, the Executive offices on the 16th floor are still sumptuously paneled with Philippine mahogany.[3]

The building retains a high degree of integrity. The exterior materials have been retained on all elevations, and the overall form of the building has been altered only by the 1982 addition the of the ground floor connector to the adjacent building. The public areas of the interior retain much of their original form and finishes. The second tower is legally a separate property. The nominated building was well-maintained and used for its original purpose by the original owner until 1996, when ownership was transferred. It was used only briefly by one other owner for the same purpose as an office building. The Blue Flame Building has been vacant but maintained by its present owner since 2006.

[1] El Paso Natural Gas. "The Inside Story; El Paso Natural Gas Company Home Office Building Opening, 1955."
[2] Chapman, Rob. "Award Contract; 18-Months Set For Completion", *El Paso Times,* 9 Jan 1953.
[3] El Paso Natural Gas. "The Inside Story; El Paso Natural Gas Company Home Office Building Opening, 1955."

Statement of Significance

Designed by the El Paso firm Carroll and Daeuble in 1952 and completed in 1954, the El Paso National Gas Co. Building is today known as the "Blue Flame" building for the iconic 21-foot-tall illuminated sculpture on its roof. The building was the first postwar high-rise completed in El Paso's central business district, and stands as a locally-significant postwar interpretation of International Style architectural design. The skyscraper served as the headquarters of a prominent energy company that provided natural gas to customers through the southwest. The building is nominated under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, at the local level of significance as an outstanding example of postwar modern architecture in El Paso. It is also nominated under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its role as the headquarters of the El Paso Natural Gas Company, which has withstood regulatory and economic changes since its establishment in 1928 to become one of the largest natural gas-transmission companies in the United States. The period of significance is 1954, when the building was first ready for occupation, through 1968 (the current 50-year point at the time of nomination).

El Paso National Gas Company

The story of the El Paso Natural Gas Company is basically a story of the long-distance transmission of natural gas.[4] In November 1928, Paul Kayser, a young Houston lawyer, founded El Paso Natural Gas Company by obtaining a franchise from the El Paso city council to supply local customers with natural gas from wells near Jal, New Mexico. EPNG aimed to capitalize on the utilization of residue gas, a by-product of the production of oil that previously had been burned as a waste product, by pipelining it to end-user markets. El Paso built the facilities necessary to treat the residue gas to make it suitable for pipeline transmission. El Paso's action in utilizing this natural resource was hailed as a major conservation step by Railroad Commission,[5] one of the most important regulatory bodies in the nation. The first 16-inch pipeline was built in 1929, stretching from Lea County to El Paso, Texas. Gas deliveries to El Paso began that summer and throughout the 1930s service was extended to serve communities and industries as far westward as Arizona and Mexico. In 1947, construction commenced on a 700-mile pipeline to southern California and by the end of the decade the company had laid an additional 423-mile of pipe paralleling the original one, growing El Paso Natural Gas from a small regional pipeline into a major corporation. Despite efforts to lure EPNG to relocate its headquarters to Houston or Los Angeles, the company began design on a new 18-story building to be located in downtown El Paso. By 1953 construction commenced on what would become one of El Paso's tallest skyscrapers on the corner of Stanton and Texas streets. El Paso Natural Gas Company is recognized as a "pioneer and innovator in natural gas transmission."[6] It was among the first to build high-pressure, long distance pipelines and develop innovative pipeline-welding methods and it was also the first company to use large gas-turbine-driven centrifugal compressors. The company perfected several methods of treating natural gas to remove impurities, and for many years it had more gas-treating capacity than all other interstate pipelines combined. In 1985 the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission made interstate pipelines open-access or common carriers, moving El Paso from its traditional role as a merchant-producing or buying, treating, and selling gas-to that of a transporter; by 1992 El Paso had a fully computerized system of 20,000 miles of pipeline and delivered 1.1 trillion cubic feet of gas. Historically, El Paso Natural Gas Company was not only critical to the development of Downtown El Paso, but also to the development of gas transmission and expansion across the United States.[7]

[4] El Paso Natural Gas. "The Inside Story; El Paso Natural Gas Company Home Office Building Opening, 1955."
[5] *Handbook of Texas Online*, John H. McFall, "El Paso Natural Gas Company," accessed April 20, 2017.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.

El Paso National Gas Company Building

The initial design phase of the El Paso National Gas Company Building occurred between 1950 and 1952, with a series of changes before construction began in 1953. The building was completed in late 1954 and formally dedicated in March 1955.

When the El Paso Natural Gas Company decided to build its new corporate headquarters in El Paso, it sought the services of Kenneth Franzheim (1890-1959), a Houston-based architect who specialized in designing large commercial buildings. Franzheim had worked in Chicago and Boston before establishing his own firm in New York in 1925. He moved his practice to Houston in 1937, where he established himself as one of the city's foremost commercial architects designing in a modernist vocabulary. In December 1950, the *El Paso Herald Post* published a rendering of the proposed building, identifying Franzheim as design architect with the local firm Carroll and Daeuble as associate architects. The original design was to be constructed of

> steel, reinforced concrete and buff colored Indiana limestone, with the first three stories faced with granite. The structure will have a setback on the eleventh floor, on Stanton street side…A striking feature of the new structure will be vertical fins of reinforced concrete running to the top of the building. The three-foot wide fins will shade windows from the sun and increase efficiency of air conditioning system.[8]

The Kenneth Franzheim Archive at the University of Houston contains two items related to the project: an undated rendering and an undated photo of a building model. In November 1952, however, the *El Paso Herald-Post* reported that original plans by Franzheim had been "scrapped," and "entire new plans" were drawn by the El Paso firm Carroll and Daeuble. The new design shared some similarities with the Franzheim proposal, in terms of general massing and fenestration, but the original box grill surrounding the north window wall was reduced to a series of vertical fins separating the window bays. The article noted that the planned $4 million building would bring an "ultra-modern touch to the area" and "will have resemblance somewhat to the United Nations building in New York." The article also highlighted the building's modern features, including the aluminum fins, "specially treated to keep out sun, prevent glare inside the building, and prevent reflection without." Another highlighted modern feature was the cooling system, giving the building status of being El Paso's first air-conditioned office building.[9] The proposed building was described further in a 1953 article in the *El Paso Times*:

> The building will be of structural steel frame, with exterior covered at the base with crystal grey granite to the second floor. From the second floor up it will be covered with light buff tapestry brick at the four corners. The glass areas on all four sides will be constructed of folding t-type aluminum windows, and on three sides they will be separated with vertical aluminum fins running the full length of the building and projecting two feet beyond the sash. The aluminum will be specifically treated by oxidation so as to prevent glare both from within and without.[10]

The construction contract was awarded to general contractor Robert E. McKee in January of 1953 with an expected construction schedule of 18 months.[11] The estimated cost of the building at the time of construction, including the site acquisition costs was $4,500,00"[12] The construction progressed quickly and with few delays – the biggest problem was

[8] "Date Set to Start Downtown Building," *El Paso Herald Post,* Dec. 9, 1950.
[9] "Gas Company Okays Downtown Building," *El Paso Herald-Post*, Nov. 15, 1952. Other newspaper articles credit the design to Carroll and Daeuble in association with a building committee.
[10] "Award Contract;18 months Set for Completion," *El Paso Times,* Jan. 9, 1953.
[11] Ibid..
[12] "El Paso Natural Gas Building Will Dominate City's Skyline", *El Paso Times*, Nov. 8, 1953.

a high water table that required water be regularly pumped out of the 31 foot deep excavation for the concrete pour of the six foot deep floating slab foundation system. In less than eleven months, when steelworkers from Mosher Co. of Dallas had topped out the steel frame of the building, building superintendent G.L. Robinson was quoted as saying "We haven't had a bit of trouble during construction. There haven't been any serious injuries."[13] When construction of the building's steel frame was completed in December 1953, the *Herald-Post* reported on what would take place in the coming year, noting that work on the building would employ skilled workers for almost through September 1954. The article indicated that the entire building would be occupied by EPNG employees except for spaces on the ground floor. Building superintendent Robinson proudly stated that the completed building would be "the tallest building in El Paso, 229 feet high, and it will have the most modern equipment available…There isn't an office building anywhere, regardless of size, which will be better that this."[14]

McKee completed the building in December 1954, and through January 1955 El Paso Natural Gas relocated its employees from eleven separate rented locations throughout downtown. The building was formally dedicated with an opening ceremony on March 4, 1955, followed by an open house over the ensuing days, attended by more than 6,500 persons from the region and 325 out-of-town visitors.[15] The *El Paso Herald-Post* marked the grand opening with a special edition that featured over 30 full pages of articles and congratulatory ads purchased by local companies, including several that worked on the building.[16]

The public spaces were finished with fine details and materials. The floor was finished with grey Minnesota granite, and the El Paso Natural Gas Co. logo was inlaid in the grey terrazzo floor of the main lobby. The lobby walls and all the elevator lobbies of the upper floors were covered with a buff Italian marble, offering continuity throughout the building. Each elevator had a 19-passanger capacity and was capable of making a round trip in about two minutes.[17] The fifth floor of the building was dedicated to an auditorium and coffee shop operated by four attendants dispensing over 2,500 free cups of coffee to employees each day. The 99-seat auditorium was equipped with facilities for handling the showing of films, exhibits, departmental meetings and other company activities. One of the most utilitarian and thoroughly modern features was the building's movable interior partitions. With its open floor plans at every level, office space could be easily reconfigured as needs changed in the various departments.[18] For the initial occupancy of the building EPNG used EBASCO Services Inc., a space planning firm from New York, to maximize efficient use of space in the building in the initial layout of the movable partitions. [19] Meanwhile, the executive offices on the 16th floor were sumptuously paneled with Philippine mahogany.[20]

A 21-foot-tall flame made of Plexiglas and stainless steel was erected at the top of the city's tallest skyscraper.[21] "The flame was put up as a service to the community to give people a sign as to what the weather was going to be," said John McFall, a gas company spokesman.[22] The flame was lit by the same operator who called the National Weather Service every night for nearly 40 years to determine what color to light the flame. A verse was published by EPNG to help El Pasoans remember the signals on the weather beacon:

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[13] "Steel Work Completed on New Building; Plan to Finish Structure in September", *El Paso Herald Post*, 3 Dec 1953.
[14] Ibid. The height of the building was variously reported in newspaper articles. Per the historic building elevations, it is 231'-5" to the top of the parapet of the highest portion of the building from ground level.
[15] El Paso Natural Gas, Annual Report, 1954, p19-20.
[16] "Public 'Ohs' and 'Ahs' on Tour of Gas Building," El Paso Herald-Post, March 5, 1955.
[17] "The Inside Story: El Paso Natural Gas Company Home Office Building Opening, 1955."
[18] Ibid.
[19] "Award Contract; 18-Months Set For Completion", *El Paso Times,* 9 Jan 1953.
[20] "The Inside Story: El Paso Natural Gas Company Home Office Building Opening, 1955."
[21] Villalva, Maribel. "Marking the past & present." El Paso Times, 1 Jan 2000, p. 1D.
[22] Ross, Erin. "One-of-a-kind weathervane will weather building change." El Paso Herald-Post, 21 Sep 1971, p. B1.

When the flame is BLUE, no change is due.
When the flame is RED, warmer weather's ahead.
When the flame is GOLD, cooler weather foretold.
A FLICKERING flame means wind, snow, or rain.[23]

The flame was constructed in Chicago by Federal Sign and Signal Company, and was turned on for the first time on Sunday evening, March 27, 1955 and glowed red, indicating warmer weather for the following day. Because of the El Paso Natural Gas building's predominance on the El Paso skyline, the flame was instantly visible at night in almost all parts of the city. From that night forward looking the weather beacon became a nightly habit of El Pasoans.[24] The flame atop one of El Paso's tallest buildings not only helped distinguish EPNG'S "Blue Flame" building as an El Paso landmark for generations, but also implanted the iconography of a significant work of architecture in the minds of El Pasoans. As years passed, the icon atop the mid-century skyscraper was responsible for the building becoming commonly known as the "Blue Flame Building."

Architectural Significance

The El Paso Natural Gas Company Building is nominated under Criterion C in the area of Architecture because its distinctive physical characteristics of design and form clearly place it as a significant local example of mid-20th century modern architecture that grew from the International Style.

Following the Second World War, modern architecture in the U.S. increasingly reflected the influence of prewar movements, most notably the International Style, which was highlighted by a 1932 exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and popularized through publication of its catalog by Phillip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock. The movement embraced advances in building technology, emphasized the use of modern materials, and rejected historical references and ornament in architecture. The common characteristics of the style are rectilinear forms, taught plane surfaces stripped of applied ornamentation and decoration as well as glass and steel as the primary materials of construction. Combined with new construction technologies and advances in structural steel and glass production, the style gave architects the ability to express function and technology in a building's form and exterior envelope.

Economic expansion during the early 20th century led to the formation of new corporations of unprecedented size which led to giant corporate headquarters in city centers. Corporations desired tall buildings and American architects would soon begin experimenting with this modern representation. George Howe and William Lescaze designed the first American skyscraper in this new vocabulary, the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society (PSFS) building completed in 1932.[25] The building's image was modern, efficient, and functional in its spatial concept, and in its formal and structural articulation.[26] The lower floors contained commercial spaces and subway access and finished with marble veneer and chrome. After World War II, tenets of the International Style increasingly took form in American skyscrapers. Notable examples include the Equitable Building in Portland, Oregon (Pietro Belluschi, 1948), 860-880 Lake Shore Drive in Chicago (Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1951), Lever House in New York (Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, 1952), and the United Nations Secretariat Building (Oscar Niemeyer and Le Corbusier, 1952). Such buildings served as models for tall office buildings across the U.S., which could be built economically, function efficiently, and appeal to clients' desire to appear modern. The upper floors were bright, with open offices, and the comfort of air conditioning.

[23] Villalva, Maribel. "Marking the past & present." El Paso Times, 1 Jan 2000, p. 1D. Weather beacons such as the blue flame are found around the world. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weather_beacon#United_States.
[24] El Paso Natural Gas, The Pipeliner, Summer 1955, p. 42-43.
[25] Curtis, William J.R. *Modern Architecture since 1900*. New York. Phaidon Press Inc. 2002, p.238.
[26] Ibid.

The EPNG Building's strict rectangular form lacks the setbacks common to El Paso's prewar tall buildings, resulting in a slab-like composition commonly found in tall Texas buildings of the 1950s, with blank brick end-walls bracketing expanses of gridded glass and aluminum curtain walls. Although Kenneth Franzheim is not credited as the architect, the completed building nevertheless shares similarities with his work of the mid-1950s, particularly the 1955 Texas National Bank building at 1300 Main Street in downtown Houston (which also was topped by a large sign with a color-changing weather forecast globe). The EPNG building is a singular rectilinear volume with taught plane surfaces rendered in brick masonry. There is a strong expression of verticality in the design combined with the horizontal planar expression of the floor plates in the articulation of the punched windows and aluminum transoms. There is also a differentiation between the lower commercial floors and the program of the upper floors as the design aims to express its function. Of special interest are the vertical aluminum fins designed to shade the glazed openings, indicating a consideration of environmental issues not previously emphasized in the International Style, but concerns for which began to emerge in modern architecture in the 1950s and 60s. The building is rather expressive, following a trend to break up sheer curtain walls by the introduction of metal panels, colorful spandrels, and stone veneers. This is visible in the building's corrugated aluminum transoms and rich granite, terrazzo, and marble finishes.

Carroll and Daeuble, Architects

The El Paso architectural firm Carroll and Daeuble was established in 1945 by Edwin Winford ("Ed") Carroll (1912-2000) and Louis Daeuble (1912-1992). The firm later expanded to become Carroll, Daeuble, DuSang, and Rand after George DuSang and Patrick Rand joined the partnership in 1967.

The firm gained numerous high-profile commissions in the City of El Paso and El Paso County, but is also credited with projects throughout the southwest United States and Mexico. The commission for the El Paso Natural Gas was especially noteworthy, as the building was – at the time of construction – one of the tallest and most visible (both day and night) in the city. In the early 1950s, the firm had designed the El Paso Times Building (1950), and schools throughout the county, including the Hacienda School in Ysleta (1952), Fort Bliss Elementary School (1952), Biggs Air Force Base School (1952), as well as various schools for the Diocese of El Paso. The firm continued to design public schools, including Bel Air High School in Ysleta (1956-60), Bassett Junior High School in El Paso (1957), and Parkland High School in Ysleta (1957). Principal works include several buildings at the University of Texas El Paso (UTEP) campus, including the Liberal Arts Building (1960), Sun Bowl stadium (1963), and the Engineering Science Complex (1976). The firm provided addition designs for the various EPNG projects, including various offices, housing and industrial buildings in the late 1950s. The firm's prominent local commissions continued well into the 1970s, including El Paso National Bank (1963), the Texas headquarters building for Mountain Bell (1971), the El Paso Civic Center (1972), Hotel Dieu School of Nursing expansion (1972), and La Villita Shopping Village (1972). In 1963, the firm collaborated with George Dahl on the El Paso National Bank tower at 201 E. Main, a $12 million building that - at 250 feet - surpassed the height of the El Paso Natural Gas Building.

Edwin Carroll was born on March 6, 1912 in Elizabeth, Louisiana, son of Rupert A. and Maude Marie (Ping) Carroll. He received his Bachelor's degree in Architecture from the University Texas in 1936. He moved to El Paso after graduation and worked as a designer and draftsman for Trost & Trost from 1936 to 1941. He served as an architect and Superintendent of Buildings for El Paso Public Schools (1941-1945), before establishing his firm with Louis Daeuble in 1945. Carroll, FAIA, was President of the Texas Architectural Foundation (1958-59, and 1978-79), Chairman of the AIA national border planning committee (1964-66), and President of the Texas Society of Architects (1954). He received the TSA's Llewellyn Pitts Award in 1983.[27]

Louis Daeuble was born on June 7, 1912 in Leavenworth, Kansas, son of Louis and Mary Frances (Flynn) Daeuble. He was educated in El Paso public schools, then received his Bachelor's degree in Architecture from Texas A&M University in 1932. After graduation, Daeuble worked as a designer and draftsman for various El Paso firms, including

[27] "Edwin Winford Carroll." http://prabook.com/web/person-view.html?profileId=603698

the office of Percy McGhee and Guy Lewis Frazier. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Air Corps, achieving rank of lieutenant colonel, and upon return to civilian life, he established his firm with Carroll. Daeuble served as Chairman of the Texas Board Architectural Examiners, a member of the El Paso Planning Commission City (1958-1962), and Vice President of the TSA (1960). In 1977, Daeuble established his own firm (Louis Daeuble, Architect).[28]

1982 Tower

The El Paso Natural Gas Company housed its employees in the Blue Flame Building until 1978 when the company announced plans to build a second 18-story office tower building connected to the first by a ground floor walkway to house the growing corporation. The ground floor connection consists of an extension of the original lobby from the rear of the lobby where a large 10' x 20' backlit color transparency screen once depicted company operations through images that were changed out periodically.[29] Beyond what was the back of the original lobby where the transparency screen once stood, separated by a rolling steel fire door, is what now serves as the main lobby of the second tower located at 100 N. Stanton Street. Excavation work began as early as July 1979[30] and the full building permit for the new $20M skyscraper was issued on August 1, 1979.[31] The second 18-story tower, was completed and dedicated in March 1982 and was named after the company's founder, Paul Kayser who had died in 1980. National Register staff at the NPS has confirmed that the 1954 tower may be nominated and listed without including the 1982 tower and connecting hyphen.[32]

Post-EPNG Occupancy of the Nominated Building

In 1996 El Paso Natural Gas Company moved its headquarters to Houston and the two buildings were vacated. The building was donated in the same year to El Paso Independent School District who would move administration offices into the building in mid-1997.[33] The school district's use of the building only lasted a short number of years and by March 2001 the newly formed El Paso Central Business Association formed a committee of downtown business leaders to begin assisting the school district in the sale and reuse of the now vacant building.[34]

In April of 2004, El Paso businessman Bob Jones purchased the Blue Flame Building for a reported $1.63M from EPISD with plans to locate at least 300 employees of Access Administrators into the building with other tenants. [35] A cloud of corruption hangs over this piece of the building's history as Jones would later be convicted on federal corruption charges for Jones and other Access executive's involvement in bribery of public officials for contracts with the school districts in El Paso including EPISD. In February of 2011, Bob Jones was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison and ordered him to pay $68 million in restitution after pleading guilty to corruption charges. "Jones, 65…was named one of the leaders of the Access HealthSource enterprise, which bribed and threatened elected officials as a way

[28] "Louis Daeuble." http://prabook.com/web/person-view.html?profileId=607789; "Daeuble Gets Architectural Fellowship." *El Paso Herald-Post*, April 2, 1975.
[29] "The Inside Story: El Paso Natural Gas Company Home Office Building Opening, 1955."
[30] Thompson, Bill. "Union contract tiff halts construction." El Paso Herald Post, 30 July 1979.
[31] "Building Total Gains," *El Paso Herald Post*, August 2, 1979.
[32] Email correspondence, Paul Lusignan (NPS) to Gregory Smith (THC), May 30, 2017. On file with THC.
[33] Ramirez, Cindy. "El Paso district moves to Blue Flame." El Paso Times, 23 June 1996, p. A1.
[34] Breitinger, Michael E. Letter to President of the Board of Trustees of EPISD from Central Business Association. March 15, 2001.
[35] Volenc, Vic. "Bob Jones buys Blue Flame Building." El Paso Times, 9 April 2004

to obtain government contracts for Access, a health-care provider."[36] Bob Jones is currently incarcerated at Fort Worth FCI, a low security federal correction institution, with a projected release date of November 2, 2019.[37]

A little over two years after Bob Jones purchased the building from EPISD, El Paso businessman Paul Foster purchased the Blue Flame building through the company Blue Flame Acquisition LP, in a packaged real estate deal with the Mills Building and the Mulligan [Luther] Building. Foster's real estate group, Franklin Mountain Investments LP purchased the buildings in May of 2006 and has cared for the vacant Blue Flame Building since while working to find an appropriate end use for the structure. Franklin Mountain Management's offices are located in the Mills-Centre office building complex that the company restored in a previous historic preservation effort that now provides Class A office space to downtown El Paso.

[36] Chavez, Adriana M. "Ex-NCED CEO Bob Jones sentenced to 10 years in prison, ordered to pay $68 million." El Paso Times, 17 February 2011.
[37] Robert Edward Jones, inmate # 16434-280, Federal Bureau of Prisons, U.S. Department of Justice. https://www.bop.gov/inmateloc/

Bibliography

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Chavez, Adriana M. "Ex-NCED CEO Bob Jones sentenced to 10 years in prison, ordered to pay $68 million." *El Paso Times*, 17 February 2011.

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"FRANZHEIM, KENNETH | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)". Tshaonline.org. Retrieved 2017-05-02.

"Gas Company Okays Downtown Building," *El Paso Herald-Post*, November 15, 1952.

Handbook of Texas Online, John H. McFall, "El Paso Natural Gas Company," accessed April 20, 2017.

McFall, John. Letter to Robert W. Lee. Nov. 27, 1978.

Ramirez, Cindy. "El Paso district moves to Blue Flame." *El Paso Times*, June 23, 1996.

Robert Edward Jones, inmate # 16434-280, Federal Bureau of Prisons, U.S. Department of Justice. https://www.bop.gov/inmateloc/

Ross, Erin. "One-of-a-kind weathervane will weather building change." *El Paso Herald-Post*, 21 Sep 1971.

"Steel Work Completed on New Building; Plan to Finish Structure in September," *El Paso Herald-Post*, Dec. 3, 1953.

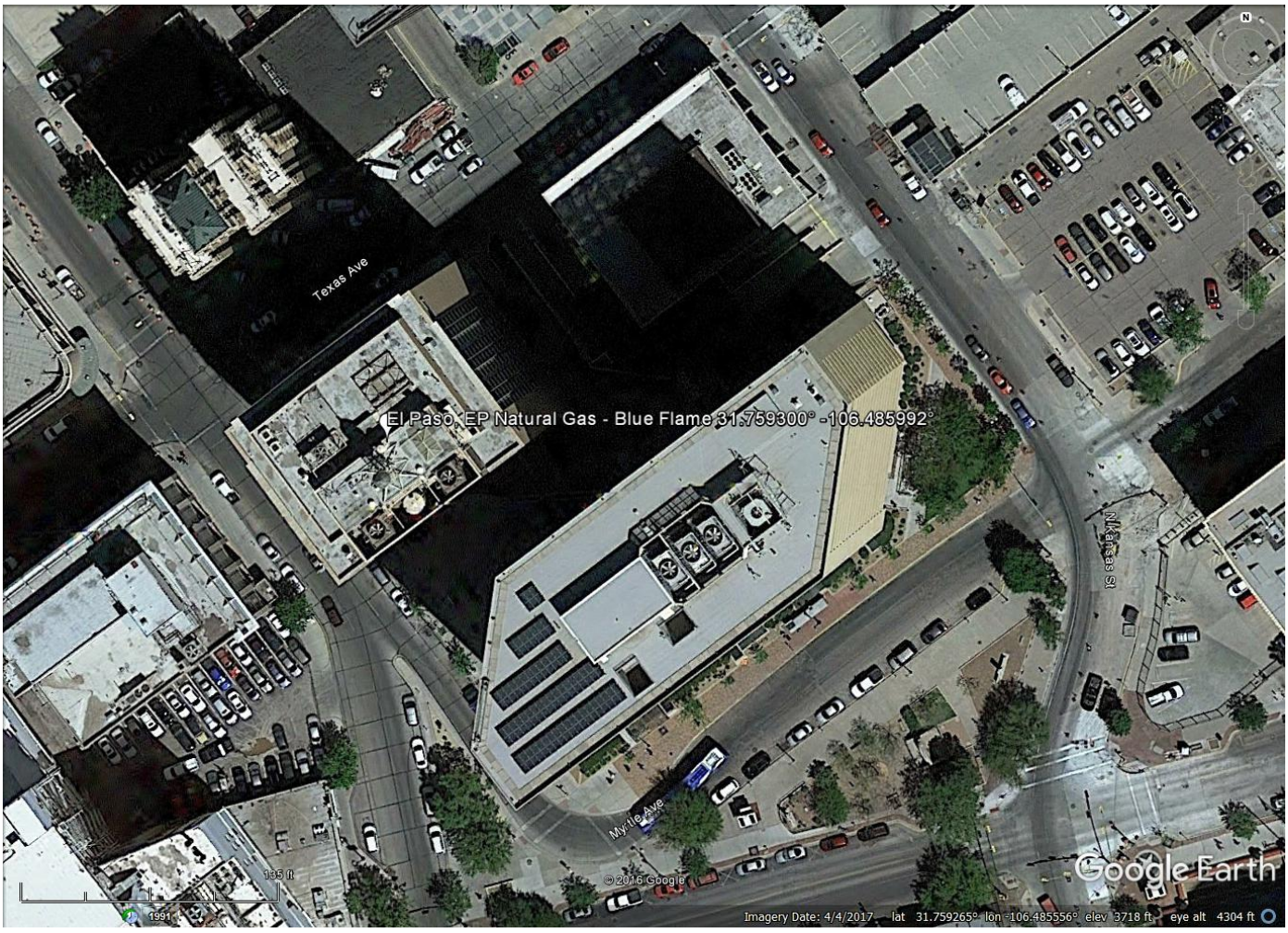
Thompson, Bill. "Union contract tiff halts construction." *El Paso Herald Post*, July 30, 1979.

Villalva, Maribel. "Marking the past & present." *El Paso Times*, Jan. 1, 2000.

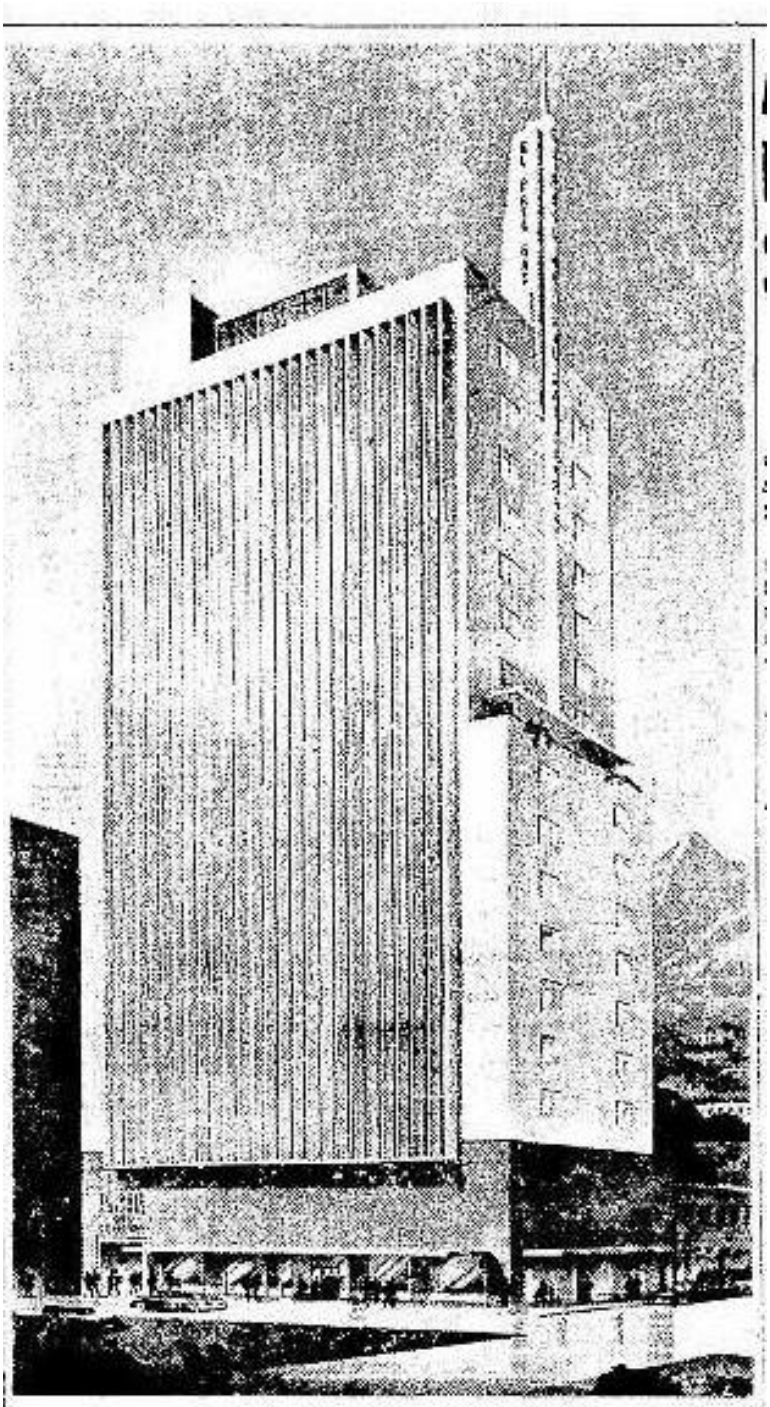
Volenc, Vic. "Bob Jones buys Blue Flame Building." *El Paso Times*, April 9, 2004.

Location Map

Source: Google Earth, accessed June 1, 2017.
Latitude: 31.759300° Longitude: -106.485992°

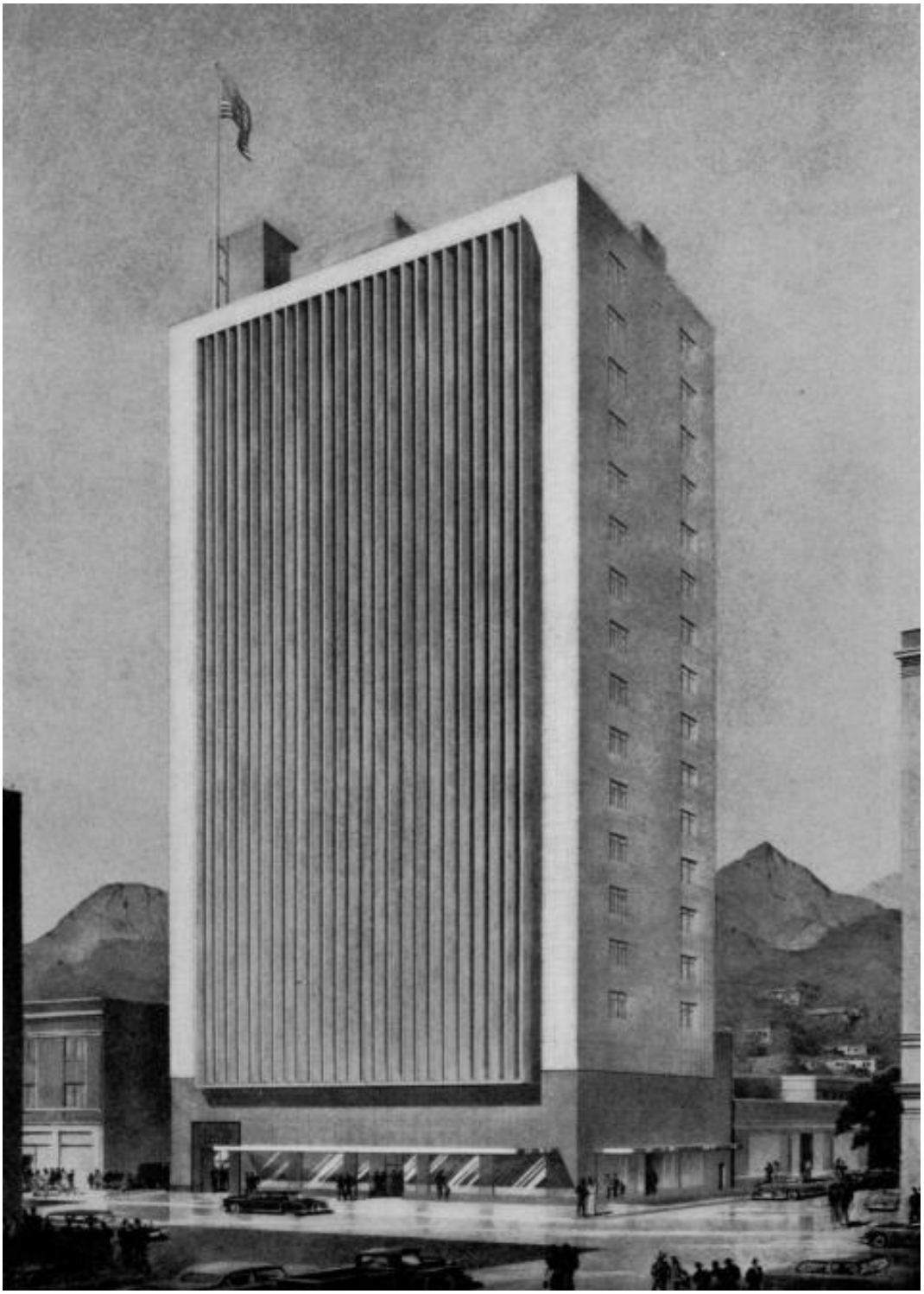


Rendering published in the *El Paso Herald-Post* (December 19, 1950), showing a mast that serves as a signboard.

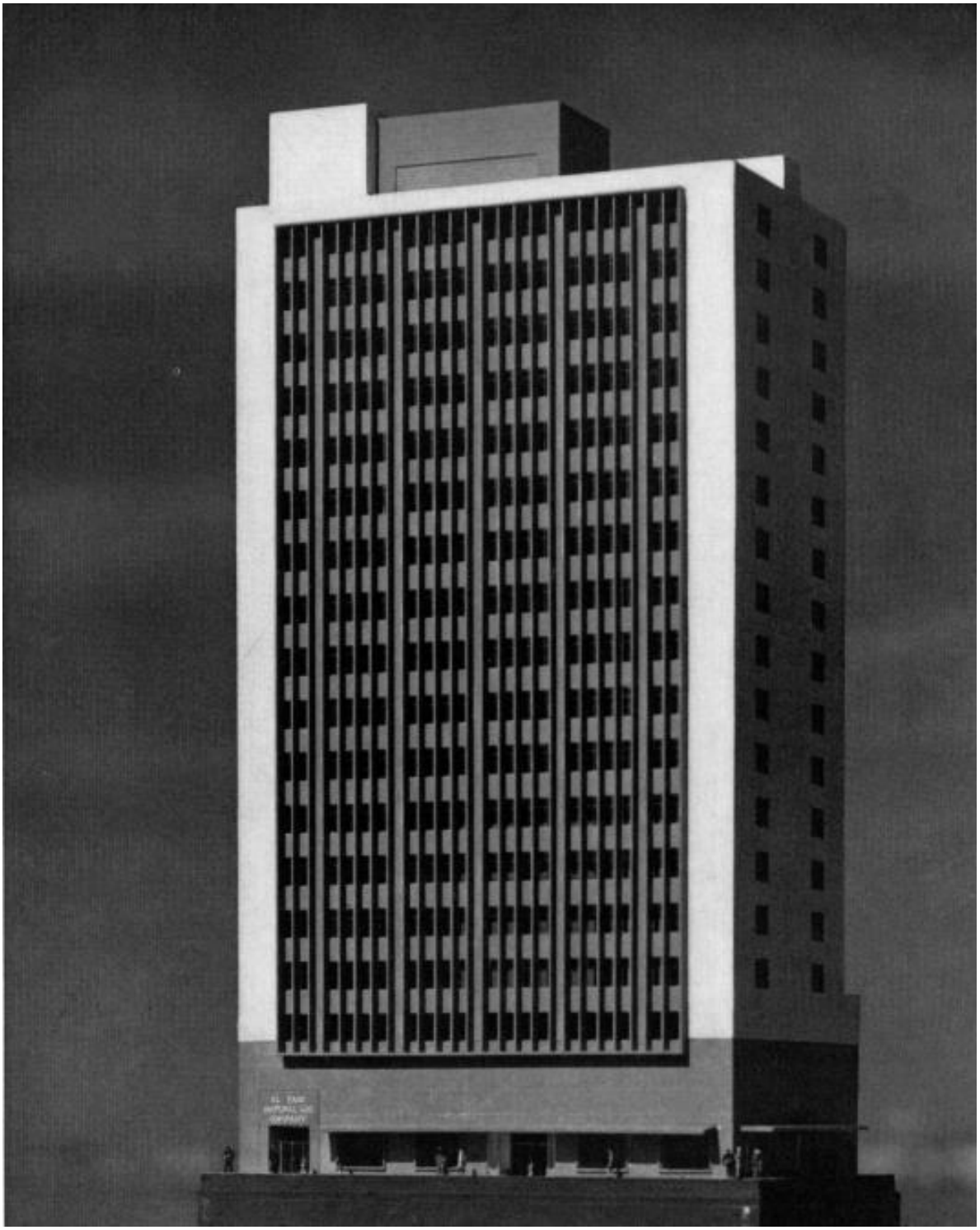


NEW EL PASO SKYSCRAPER—This architect's drawing shows how 18-story El Paso Natural Gas Co. building will look. Kenneth Franzheim of Houston is architect, and Carroll and Daeuble of El Paso are associate architects. Site is at Texas and Stanton streets.

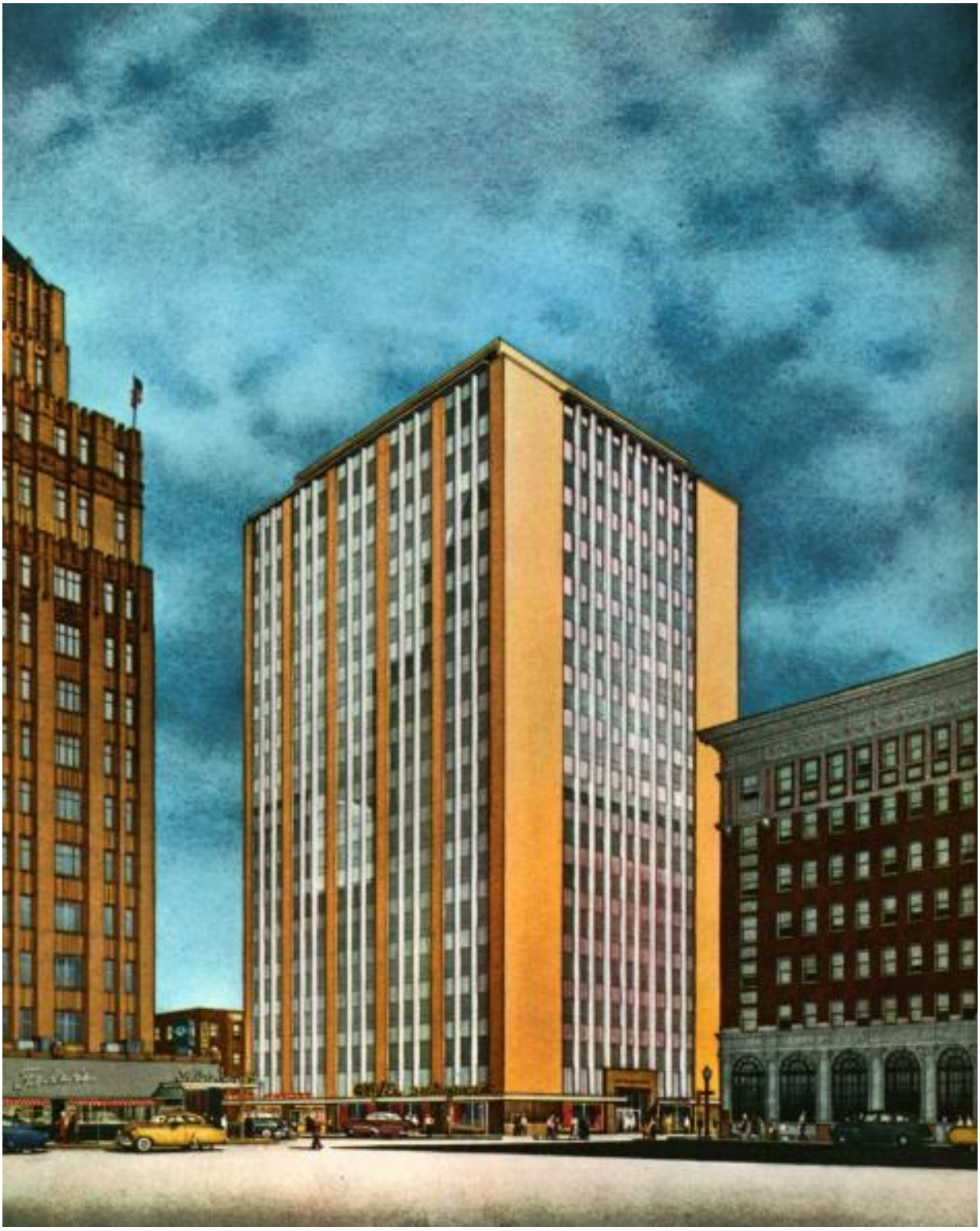
Rendering (1952) - Kenneth Franzheim Archive, University of Houston



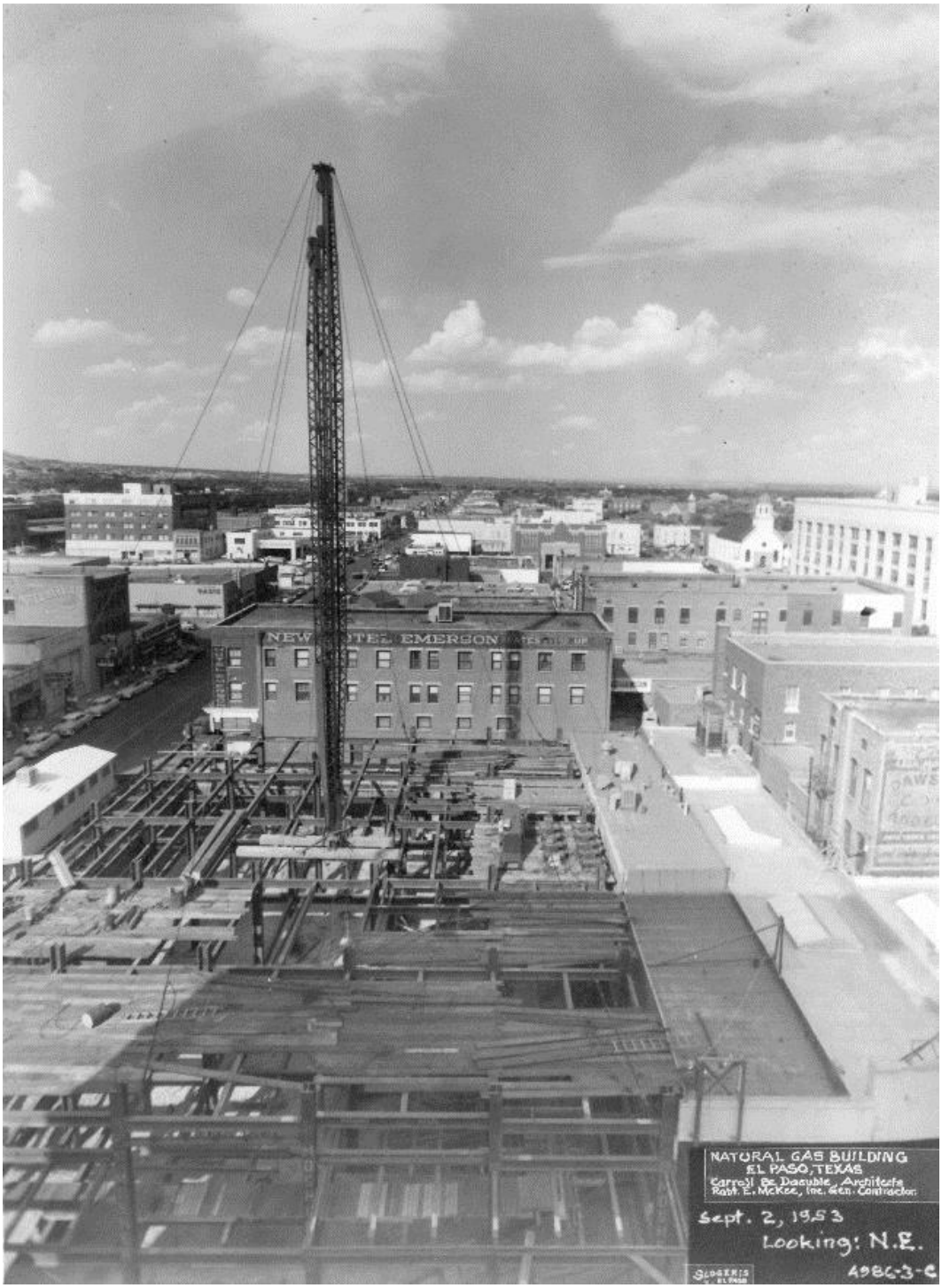
Model (1952) - Kenneth Franzheim Archive, University of Houston



Rendering (1952) - Carroll & Daeuble Architects Source: El Paso Natural Gas Company Annual Report 1952



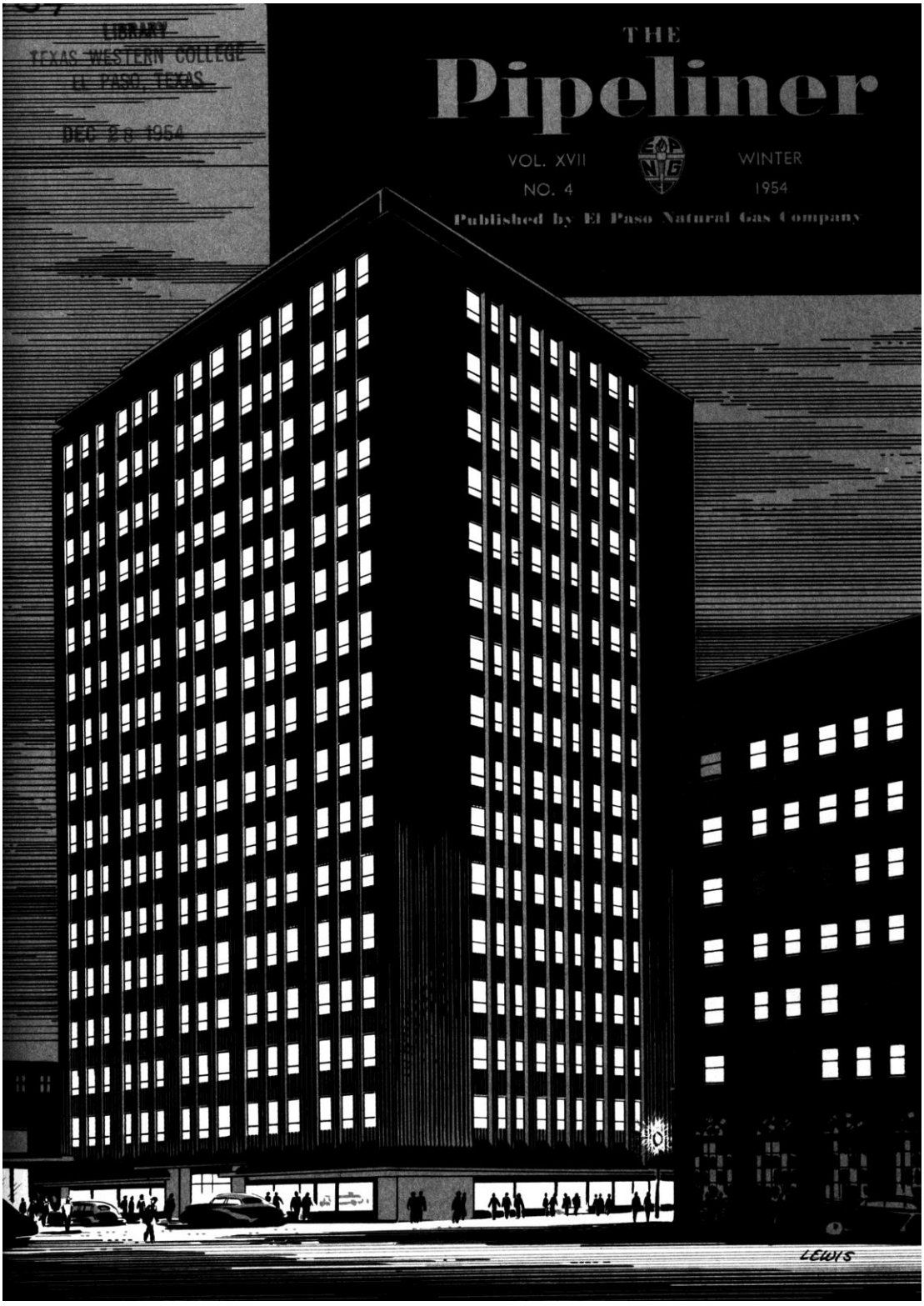
El Paso Natural Gas Co. Building Under Construction, Sept. 2, 1953
Source: Photo courtesy of the Robert E. and Evelyn McKee Foundation



El Paso Natural Gas Co. Building Under Construction, Oct. 31, 1953
Source: Photo courtesy of the Robert E. and Evelyn McKee Foundation

El Paso Natural Gas Co. Building Under Construction, Feb. 9, 1954
Source: Photo courtesy of the Robert E. and Evelyn McKee Foundation

The Pipeliner magazine, Winter 1954, featuring the new EPNG building on the cover.



El Paso Natural Gas Co. Building, c.1955

Source: Photo courtesy of the Robert E. and Evelyn McKee Foundation

El Paso Herald-Post, Saturday, March 5, 1955, page 11.

El Paso Herald-Post

will tell the story of

THE EL PASO NATURAL GAS COMPANY

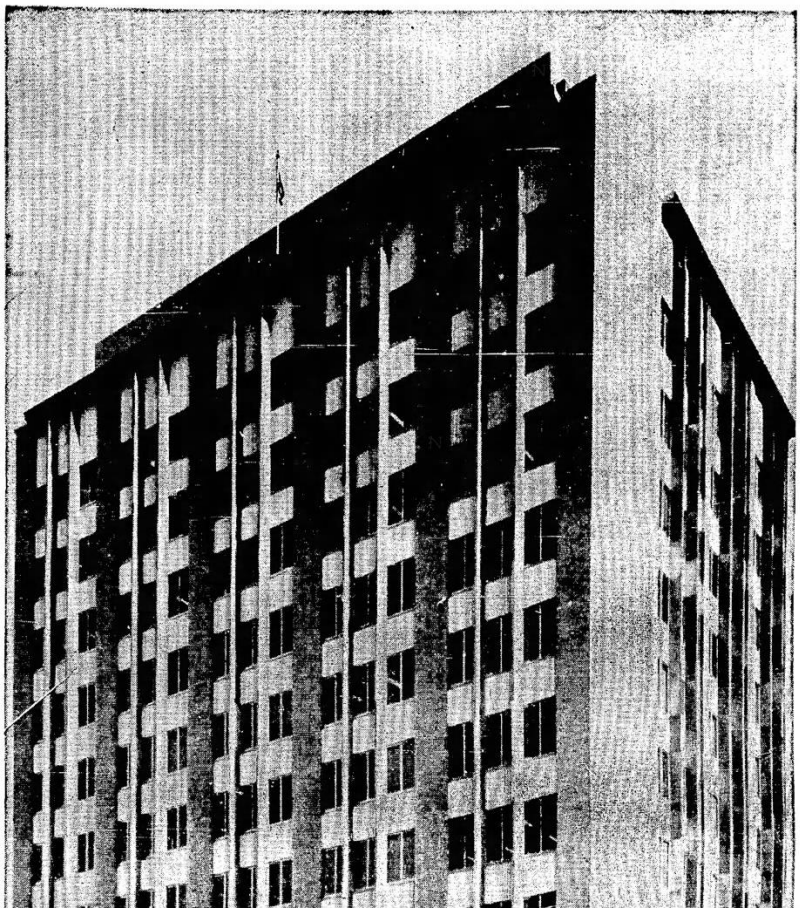
In News and Pictures

Saturday, March 5, 1955

This edition will feature the amazing story of the El Paso Natural Gas Company from its beginning in 1929. It is a story of interest to everyone. Mail it to your friends and business acquaintances.

El Paso Herald-Post, Saturday, March 5, 1955, page 13.

Simplicity Dominates New E. P. Natural Gas Co. Building



18-Story, $5 Million Skyscraper Combines Efficiency, Modern Styling

The new $5 million, 18-story home office building of El Paso Natural Gas Co. is one of the nation's most modern buildings.

With a contemporary type of architecture, the structure emphasizes simplicity and efficiency.

Towering 230 feet, the building dominates El Paso's skyline. It is constructed of buff brick designed with aluminum fins between the window banks, which accentuates its height and aid in reducing the glare of the sun.

The main entrance on Texas street is faced with crystal grey Minnesota granite. A double battery of glass doors leads to the lobby where the company emblem in red and yellow terrazo is centered in the grey terrazo floor. Walls of buff colored marble, quarried in Italy, express the beauty and refinement of the building. The same marble faces elevator lobbies in overhead floors.

A huge 10 by 20 foot color tranparency covers the wall at the end of the lobby between elevator banks.

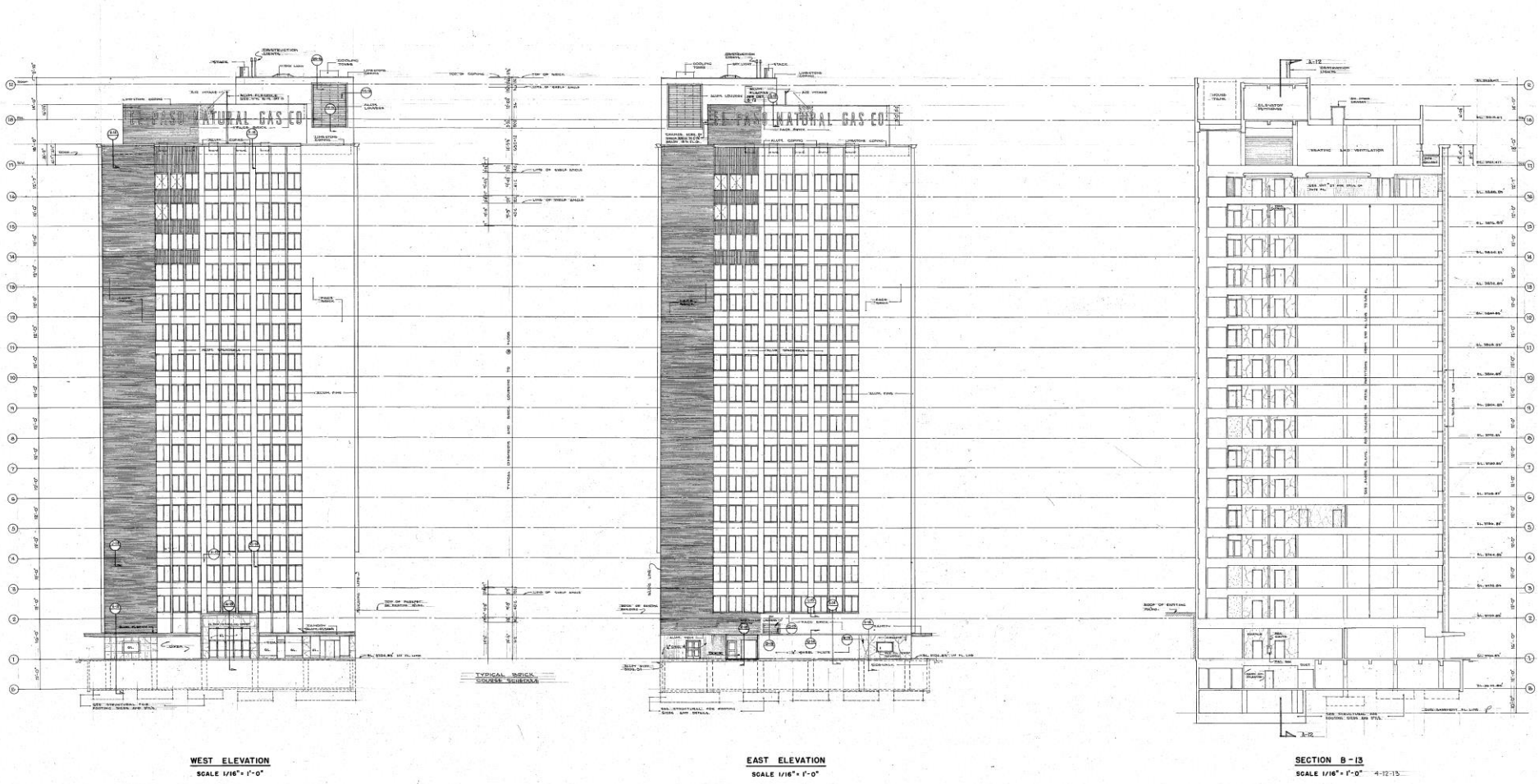
In the lobby alcove are a scale model of the company's Midkiff, Tex., plant and seven color tranparencies, 20 by 20 inches, which depict company operations. A six by 10 foot U. S. map, designed with colored lights, shows the company pipeline system and installations. A receptionist at an information desk directs visitors to various offices.

Designed by Carroll and

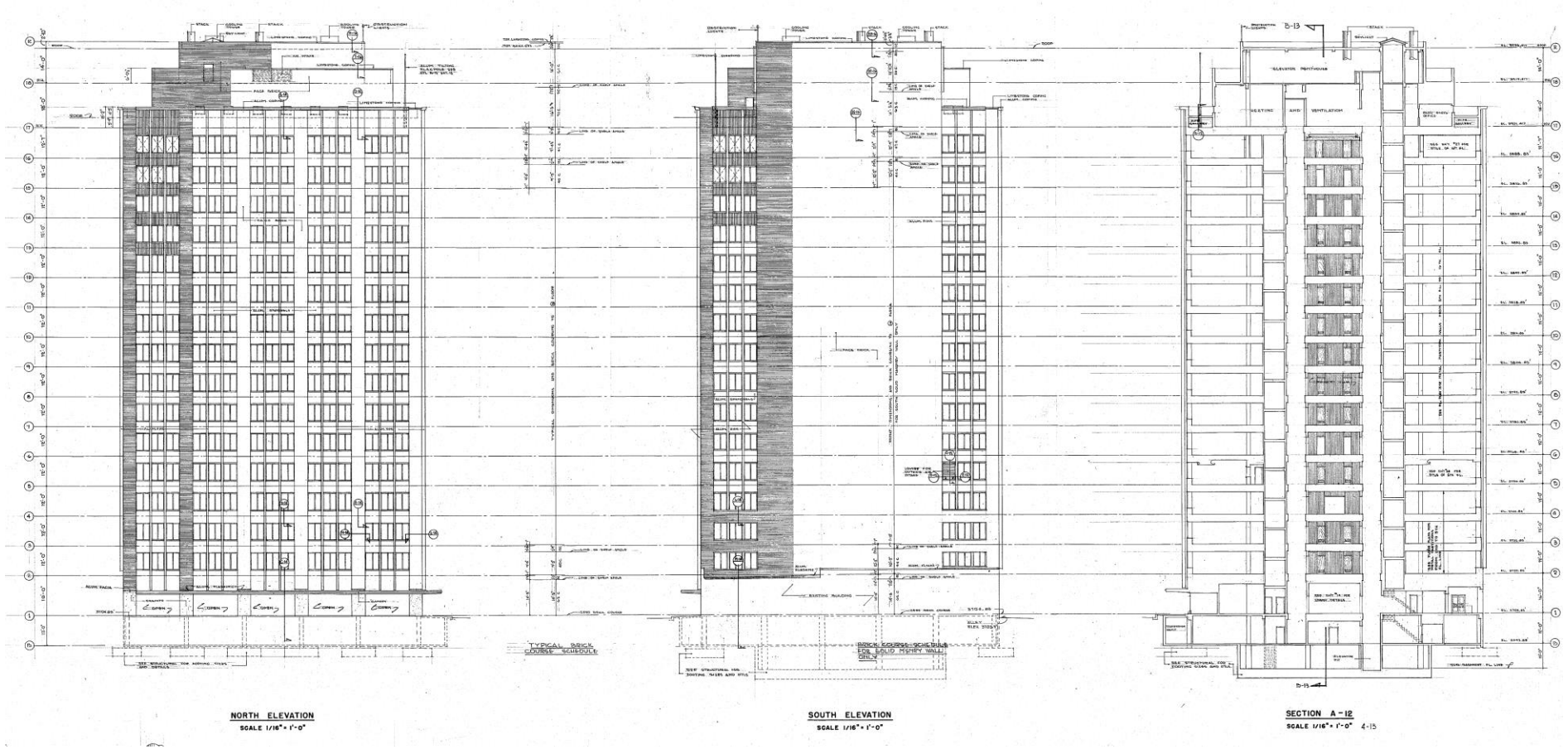
(Continued on Page 2-B, Col. 1)

Selection of congratulatory ads from the special edition of the *El Paso Herald-Post* (Saturday, March 5, 1955).

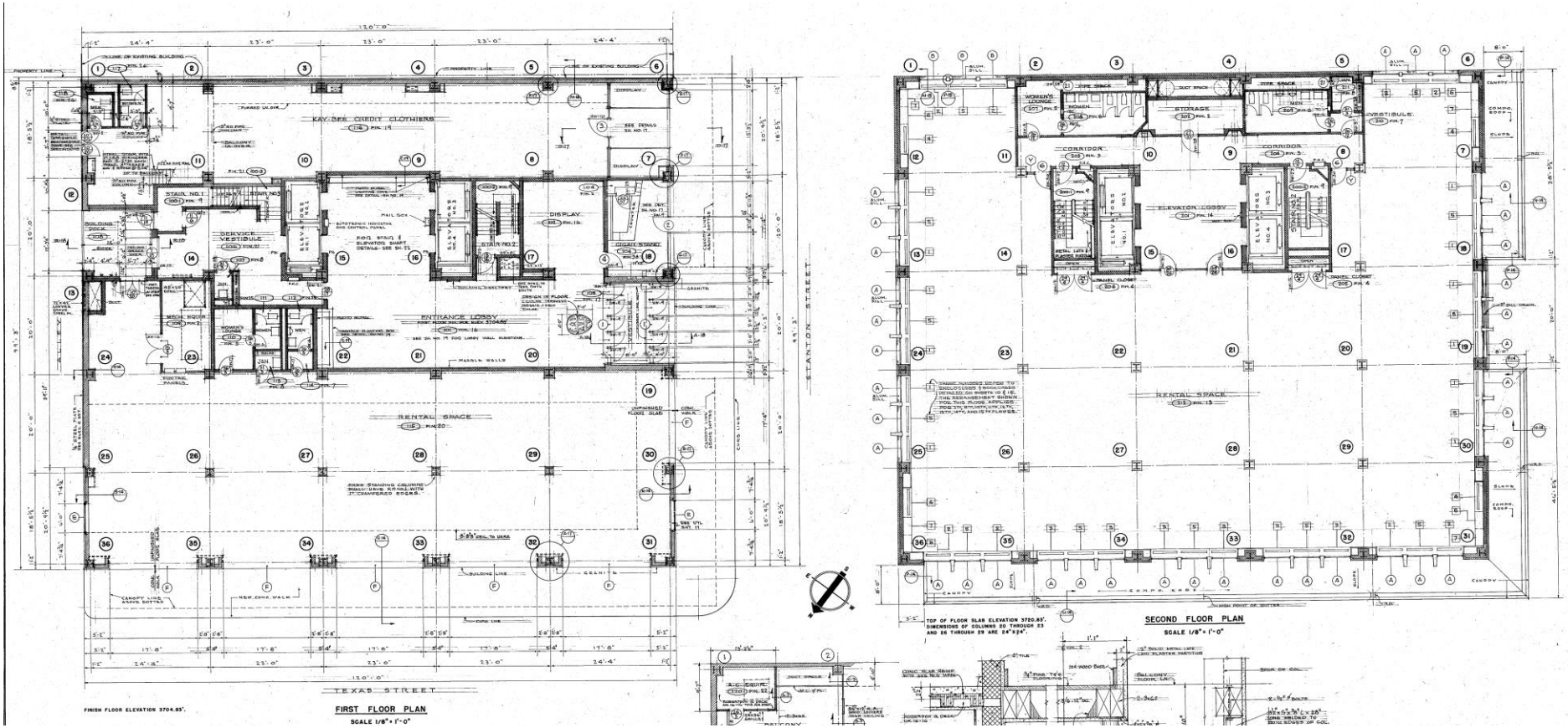
Historic Construction Documents (1952)



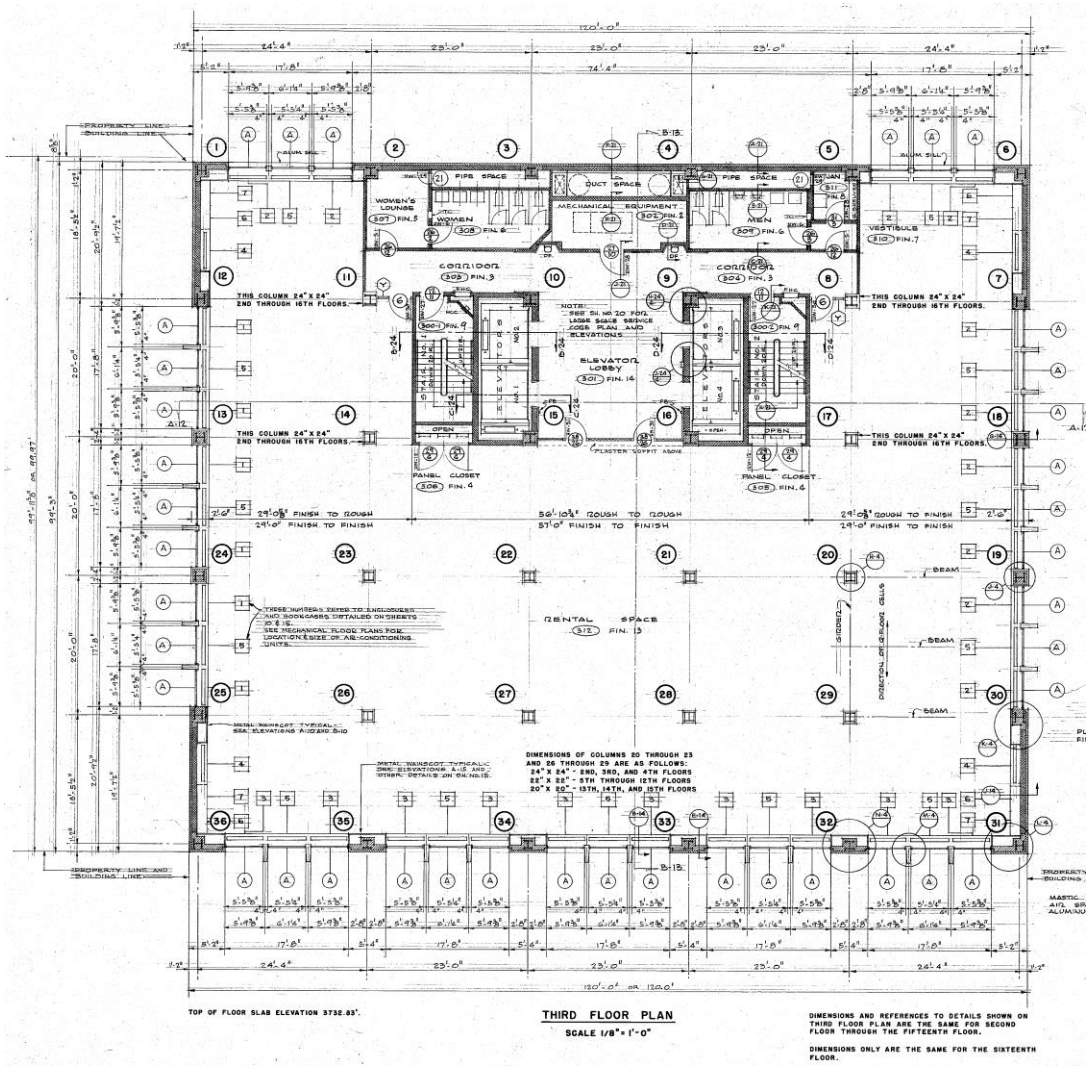
Historic Construction Documents (1952)



Historic Construction Documents (1952)



Historic Construction Documents (1952)



Current Photographs

Photo 1
North Side, from Stanton Street
Camera facing south

Photo 2
West Side, from Texas Avenue
Camera facing east

Photo 3
East Façade
Camera facing west

Photo 4
Northwest Corner
Camera facing southeast

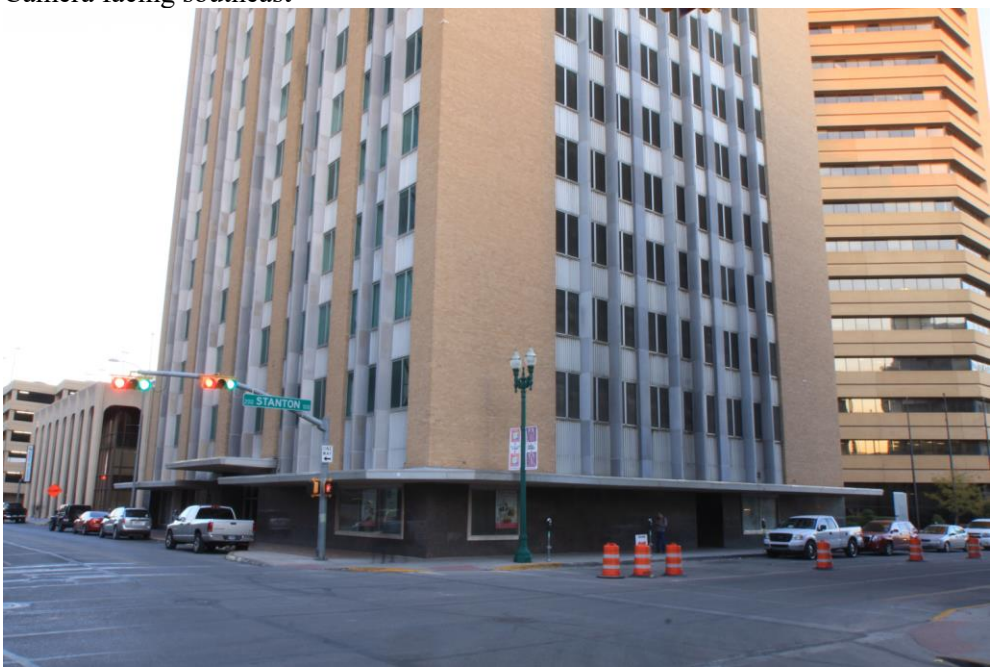


Photo 5
North Façade, looking up
Camera facing south

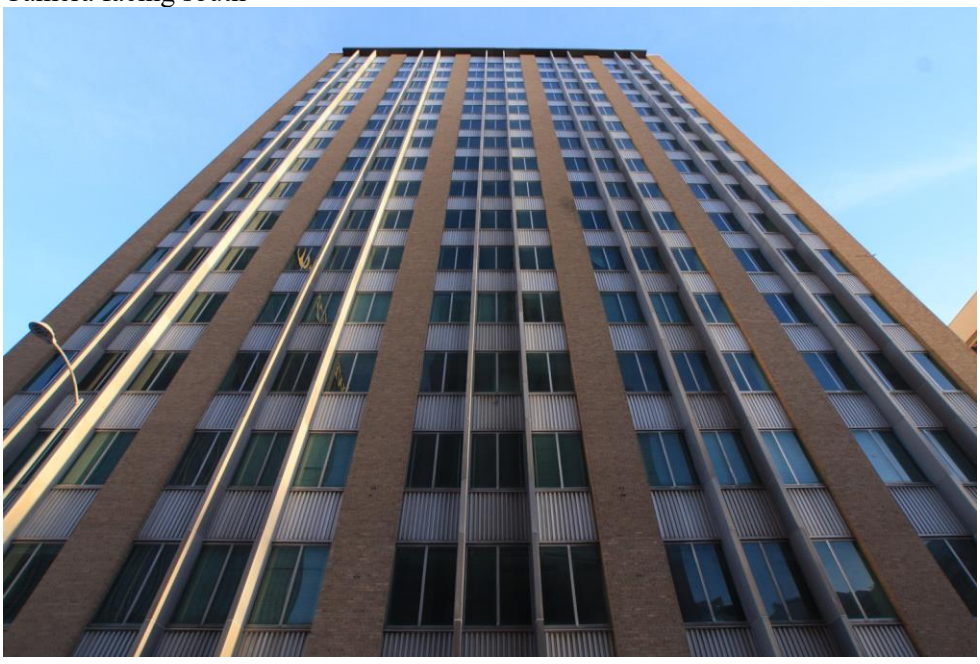


Photo 6
East Façade, looking up
Camera facing west

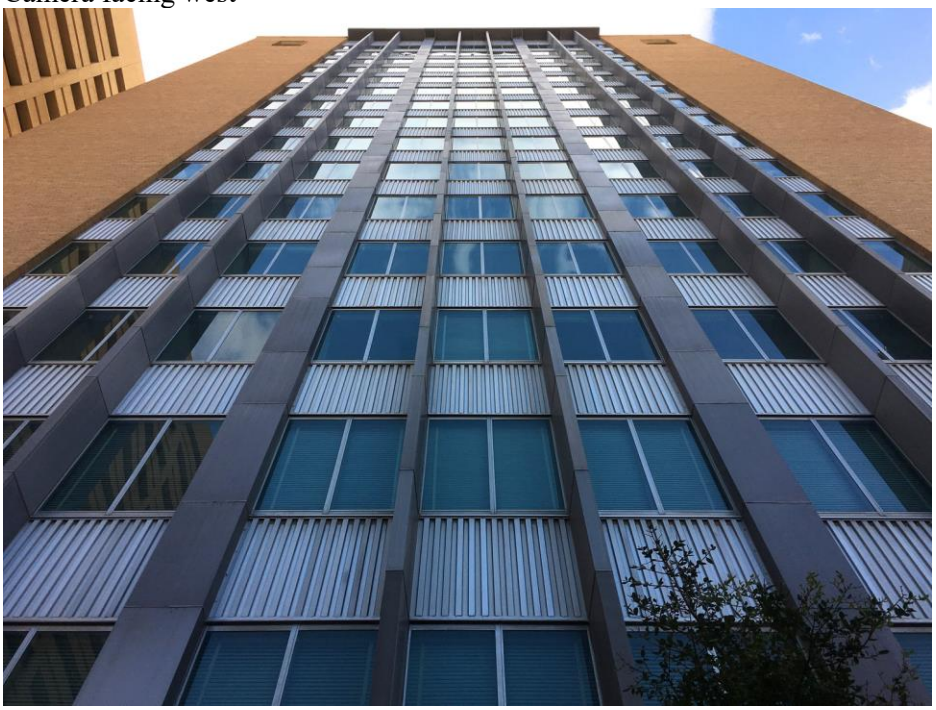


Photo 7
South elevation (east side), looking up
Camera facing north

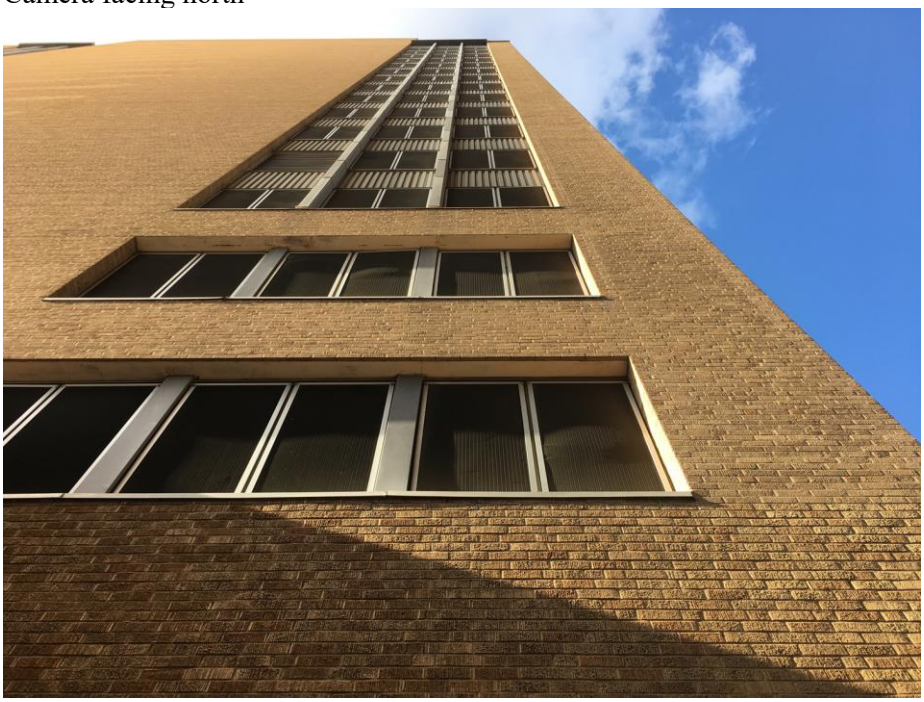


Photo 8
South elevation, looking up
Camera facing north

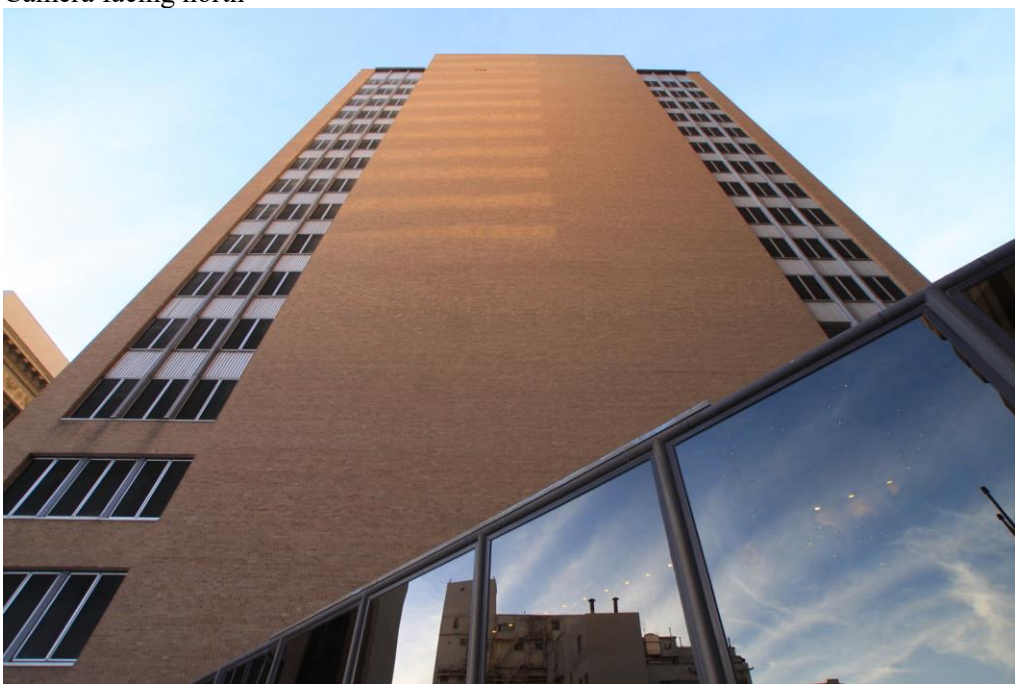


Photo 9
West elevation, looking up
Camera facing east

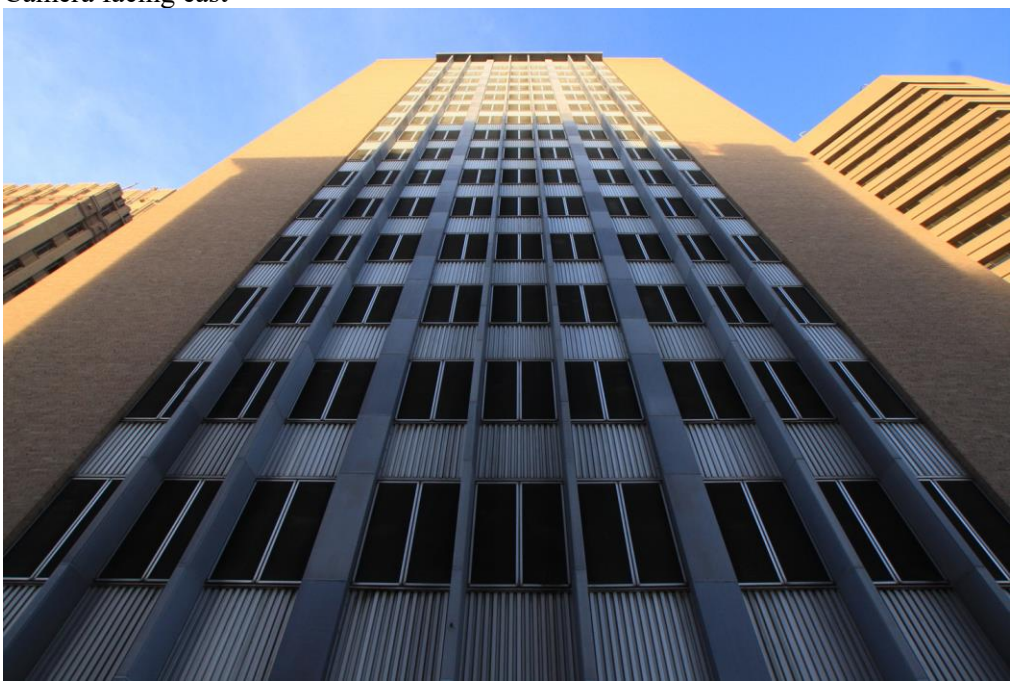


Photo 10
Main Entry, north side
Camera facing southeast

Photo 11
Ground floor at northeast corner
Camera facing southwest

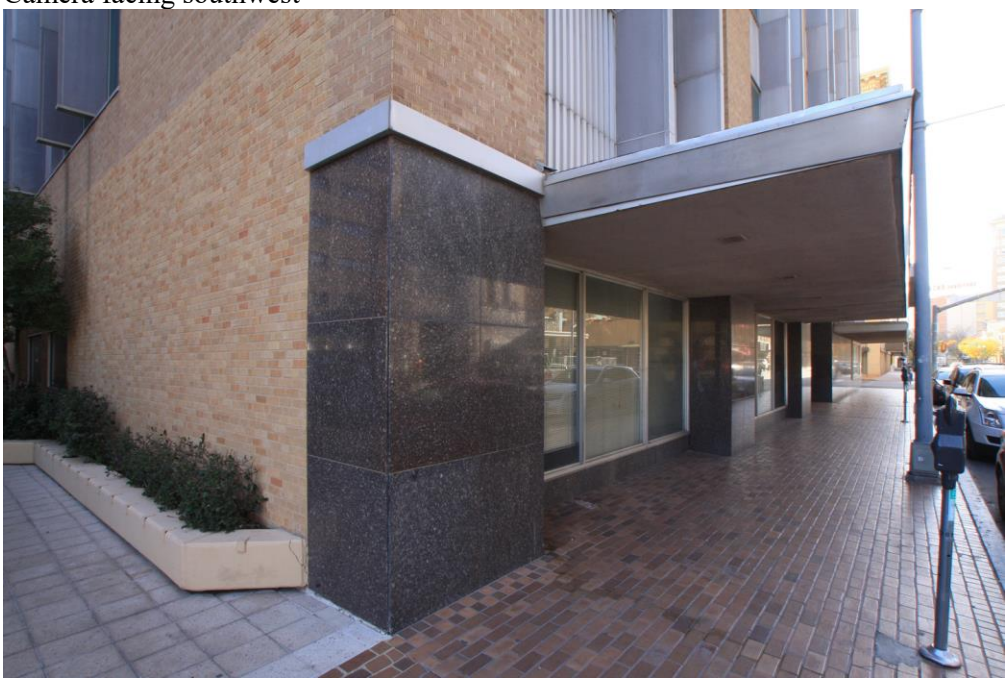


Photo 12
Ground floor at northwest corner
Camera facing southeast

Photo 13
Ground floor at southeast corner (connection to hyphen on left)
Camera facing northwest

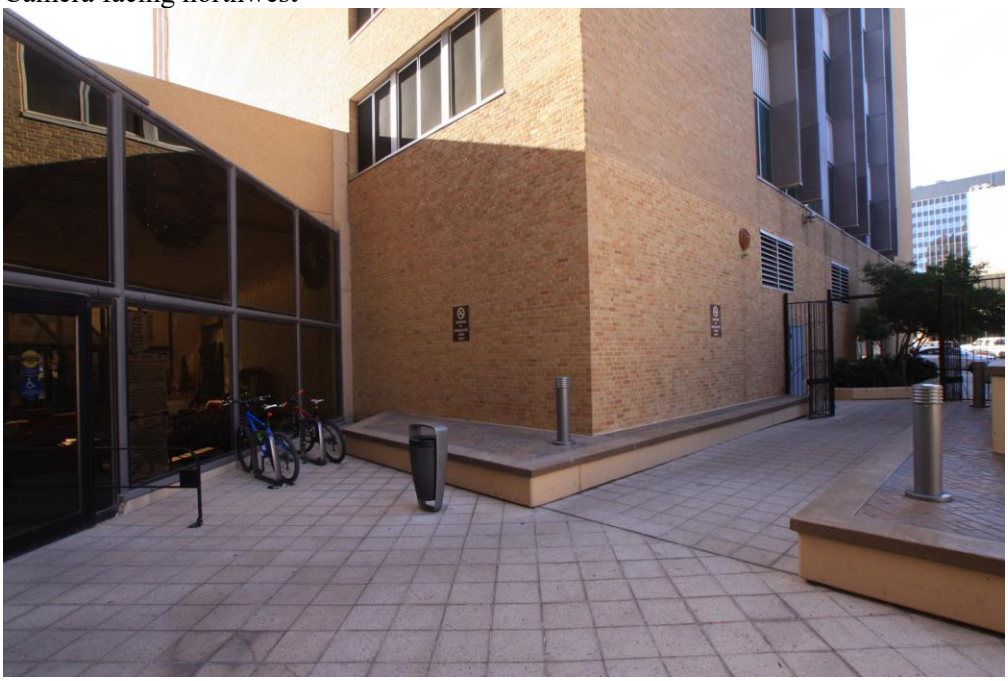


Photo 14
Southeast corner at left; hyphen center
Camera facing east

Photo 15
South elevation with hyphen
Camera facing north

Photo 16
Flame Weather Beacon, looking up from roof

Photo 17
Flame Detail, looking up

Photo 18
South end of the lobby
Camera facing south

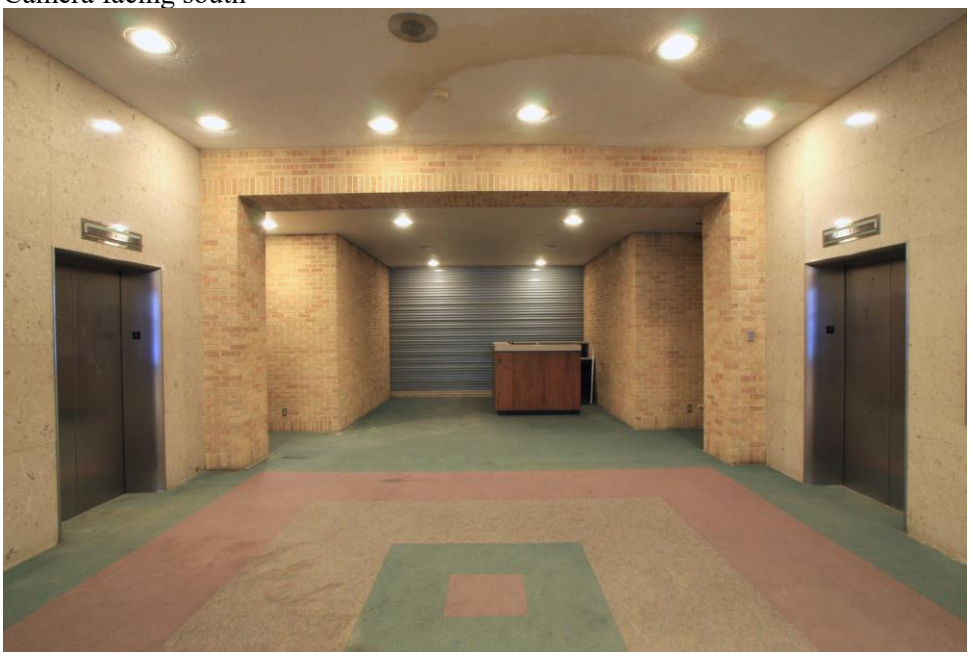


Photo 19
South Side from inside hyphen
Camera facing north

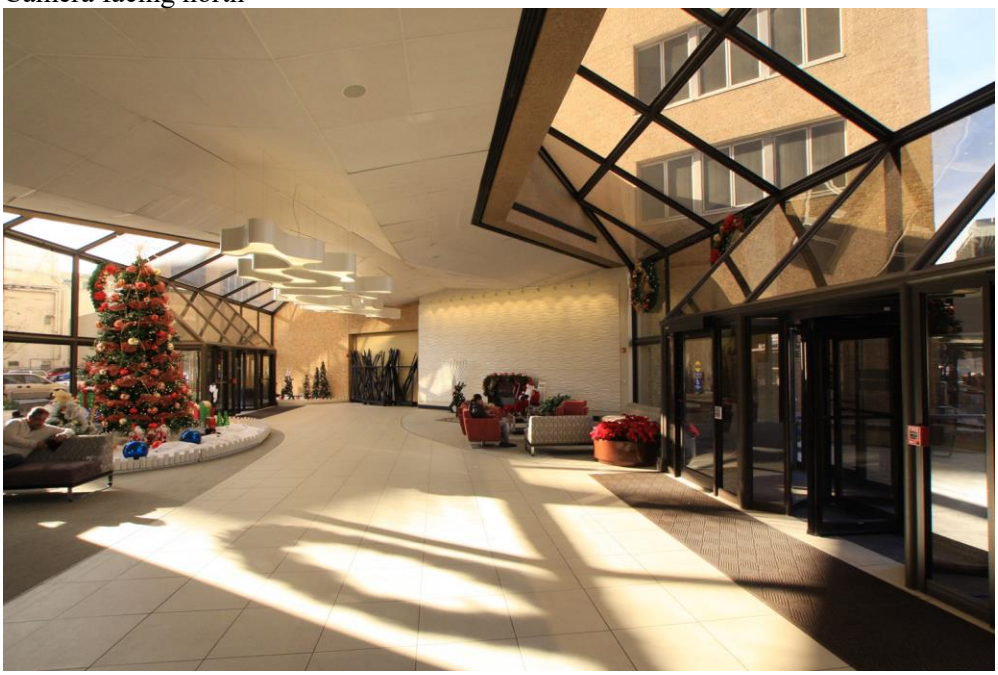


Photo 20
Main Lobby
Camera facing south

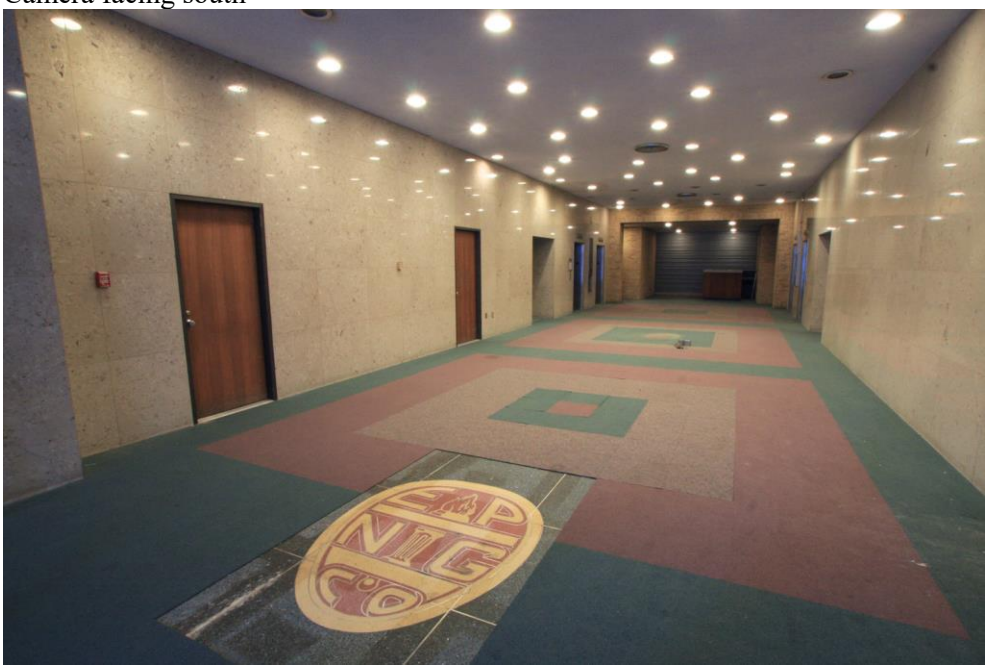


Photo 21
Terrazzo EPNG logo in lobby floor

Photo 22
Fourth Floor, Typical Upper Lobby without Glass

Photo 23
Thirteenth Floor, Typical Upper Lobby with Glass

Photo 24
Thirteenth Floor, Typical Upper Lobby

Photo 25
Thirteenth Floor, Typical Upper Lobby

- end -


OFFICE
DISTRICT
DOWNTOWN
EL PASO


RGO
200 MESA


STANTON
ONE WAY


304
TEXAS
304


DOWNTOWN
EL PASO
GOVERNMENT
DISTRICT


Stanton
Tower


ZAP
NIG
GO


EPNIG

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination
Property Name:	El Paso Natural Gas Company (Blue Flame) Building
Multiple Name:	
State & County:	TEXAS, El Paso

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
1/9/2018	1/29/2018	2/13/2018	2/23/2018	2/16/2018

Reference number:	SG100002129
Nominator:	State

Reason For Review:

__ Appeal	**X** PDIL	__ Text/Data Issue
__ SHPO Request	__ Landscape	__ Photo
__ Waiver	__ National	__ Map/Boundary
__ Resubmission	__ Mobile Resource	__ Period
__ Other	__ TCP	__ Less than 50 years
	__ CLG	

__**X**__ Accept _____ Return _____ Reject __**2/13/2018**__ Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:	All procedural requirements have been met; The nomination form is adequately documented; The nomination form is technically and professionally correct and sufficient.
Recommendation/ Criteria	ACCEPT

Reviewer Edson Beall Discipline Historian

Telephone _____ Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

8

TO: Edson Beall
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

From: Mark Wolfe, SHPO
Texas Historical Commission

RE: El Paso Natural Gas Co. (Blue Flame) Building, El Paso, El Paso County, Texas

DATE: December 20, 2017

The following materials are submitted:

X	Original National Register of Historic Places form on disk. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the National Register of Historic Places nomination of the *El Paso Natural Gas Co. (Blue Flame) Building, El Paso, El Paso County, Texas*
	Resubmitted nomination.
X	Original NRHP signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
	Multiple Property Documentation form on disk.
	Resubmitted form.
	Original MPDF signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
X	CD with TIFF photograph files, KMZ files, and nomination PDF
	Correspondence.

COMMENTS:

___ SHPO requests substantive review (cover letter from SHPO attached)

___ The enclosed owner objections (do__) (do not__) constitute a majority of property owners

___ Other: