

United States Department of Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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SEP 7 1994

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting ~~determinations for individual~~ properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Security Bank

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 903 Oregon Street N/A not for publication

city or town City of Oshkosh N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Winnebago code 139 zip code 54901

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey W. Dan
Signature of certifying official/Title
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

8/29/94
Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Security Bank
Name of Property

Winnebago County, Wisconsin
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined not eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Edson H. Beall 10-7-94

Entered in the
National Register

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include listed resources within the count)

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

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

STONE

roof SYNTHETICS

other WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Security Bank
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Winnebago County, Wisconsin
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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the
criteria qualifying the property for the
National Register listing.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from
instructions)
Architecture

A Property is associated with events
that have made a significant
contribution to the broad patterns of
our history.

B Property is associated with the lives
of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive
characteristics of a type, period, or
method of construction or represents
the work of a master, or possesses
high artistic values, or represents a
significant and distinguishable entity
whose components lack individual
distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to
yield, information important in
prehistory or history.

Period of Significance

1926-1927

Significant Dates

1926-27

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is
marked above)

N/A

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or
used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or
structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age achieved
significance within the past 50 years.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Dreger, Julius, architect
Meyer, C.R., builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Security Bank
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (NPS):
___ 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:
 State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository:
WI Inventory of Historic Places

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/7/6/3/2/0</u>	<u>4/8/7/3/9/7/0</u>	3	<u>/ / / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>
	Zone Easting	Northing			Zone Easting	Northing
2	<u>/ / / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>		4	<u>/ / / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>
	Zone Easting	Northing			Zone Easting	Northing

___ see continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth L. Miller, Consultant (608-233-5942) for
organization Burns Development (Brian Burns) date 1-12-1994
street & number P.O. Box 266 telephone 414-731-3535
city or town Appleton state WI zip code 54912-0266

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

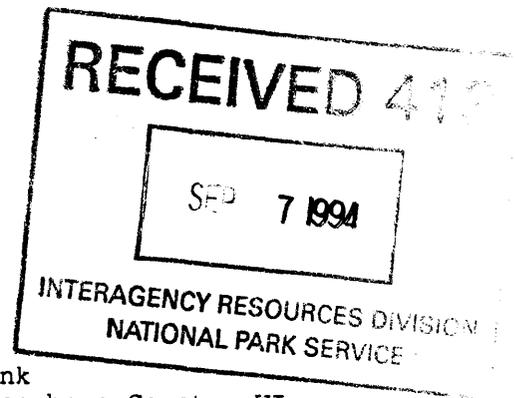
NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 3/87)

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Security Bank
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI



Introduction

Security Bank is located on the southwest corner of Oregon Street and Ninth Avenue in Oshkosh's south side commercial district. The city's central business district lies on the north side of the Fox River. The bank is a two story load-bearing brick structure with both stone and brick veneer on a concrete basement. Portions of the rear (west) exterior wall, and of the south wall abutting a neighboring building, date from the 1907 commercial brick vernacular structure that stood on the site. That building was gutted, and the street facades built, in 1926-27. Prominent Oshkosh architect Julius Dreger redesigned the building in the NeoClassical Revival style. Behind the brick parapet, the roof combines shed (on the east end) and flat (west end) surfaces. The interior spaces, which date from 1926-27, consist of a large bank lobby in the center of the first floor, with two floors of offices (first and mezzanine) east and west of it; and a series of 11 office suites opening off a central I-shaped corridor on the second floor. In the 1960s, the interior was remodeled slightly. This remodeling does not affect the integrity of the bank; its 1927 appearance is intact. Security Bank has been vacant since 1991, but is in good condition.

Description

Security Bank is a two story NeoClassical Revival structure. It is of load-bearing brick construction on a poured concrete basement. There is Bedford limestone veneer at the first story on the east (Oregon Street) facade, and two-thirds of the way down the north (Ninth Avenue) facade. The rest of the street facades are veneered with cream brick in running stretcher bond. The rear and side walls are of slightly darker cream brick in common bond up to parapet level. The brick which forms the parapet appears to match the veneer on the street facades. The east end of the building is shed roofed. It slopes down and to the west, and then is flat. There is a drain where the roof slopes meet. The whole roof was recently clad with a rubber membrane. Portions of the rear (west) exterior wall, and of the south wall abutting the neighboring building, date from an earlier commercial brick vernacular

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structure.¹ The earlier structure was built for T.S. Whitely in 1907,² for the Topliff Dry Goods Company.³ The building was subsequently used as factory space by an overall manufacturer. The Security Bank of Oshkosh bought the building in 1926,⁴ and commissioned prominent local architect Julius F. Dreger to redesign the building. C.R. Meyer and Sons, a very active Oshkosh firm, was the contractor.⁵ The bank opened for business on August 8, 1927.⁶

Security Bank is rectangular in plan and measures 52 feet north-south (along Oregon Street) and 125 feet east-west (along Ninth Avenue). Where there is limestone veneer, it is enriched with a water table, and a series of stone fluted Doric pilasters that frame each bay of windows. There is a mezzanine level between the first and second floors at the east and west ends of the building. It is one bay deep at the east end, and three bays deep at the west end. Above mezzanine level, corbelled courses of brick, finished with a limestone belt course, suggest a frieze and cornice the full length of the street facades. The belt course forms a continuous sill for the second floor windows. There is a similar entablature effect above the second floor, with projecting courses of brick and a metal cornice with modillion blocks. Above the cornice there is a brick parapet with a stone coping.

The main entrance is on the east facade, facing Oregon Street. It is centrally placed and deeply recessed within an opening (or entry) that rises the full height of the tall first story. The

¹"Modern Building to be New Home of Security Bank," Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, (ODN), August 3, 1927, p. 15.

²Tax Assessor's Records, City of Oshkosh.

³Oshkosh City Directory for 1908, (Oshkosh: John V. Bunn and Company, 1908).

⁴"Modern Building to be New Home of Security Bank."

⁵Ad, ODN, August 3, 1927, p. 14.

⁶Ibid., p. 13.

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main entrance is composed of a pair of double metal and glass doors (not original) in a simple limestone surround. Above the door is a stone frieze, carved "SECURITY BANK," and a cornice on consoles. There is a pair of small, wood double hung sash windows in a one-over-one configuration above the cornice at mezzanine level. On the side wall on the south side of the main entrance there is a single metal and glass door surmounted by a wood double hung sash window. The entry opening is framed with fluted Doric pilasters. There are six of these pilasters on the east facade. On either side of the entry, each pair of pilasters frames two floors of windows. The upper windows light the mezzanine, and are wood one-over-one double hung sash. On the first floor there are wood single light fixed windows. On each of the first and mezzanine levels, the windows are set in stone panels, which fill the space between each pair of pilasters. Between the first and mezzanine level windows, the stone is enriched with a prominent keystone, and a band of recessed squares. At the second floor, there are four bays of paired, wood double hung sash windows in a one-over-one configuration. There is a cornerstone, inscribed "1927," on the northeast corner of the building below the water table.

The north (Ninth Avenue) facade is nine bays long. At the first story, there is limestone veneer on the eastern two-thirds of the facade. In this section, there are first floor and mezzanine windows in the easternmost bay, their configuration and setting identical to those on the east facade. In each of five of the remaining six bays of the stone veneered section there is a tall, round arched multipaned window inset with a three-pane operable awning. Toward the west end, there is a secondary entrance in one of these bays, installed during the 1960s remodeling. This entrance was placed within the existing round-arched window frame and so has a minimal impact on the bank's integrity. It is composed of a single glass and metal door, with a flat metal canopy suspended on chains, and a round arched multipane fixed transom above. At the west end, there are two bays of paired double hung sash windows with stone sills at each of the first floor and mezzanine levels, and a half bay with a single metal and glass door (not original) surmounted by a single window. There are nine bays of paired double hung sash windows at the second story.

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The south facade abuts the neighboring building. It is undecorated. There are eight regularly distributed wood double hung sash windows in a one-over-one configuration at the second story. West of these windows, there is a double brick chimney with an exterior and an interior stack.

The west (rear) facade is six bays wide. Openings in the northern two bays have all been infilled with brick; two other first floor openings have been similarly treated. It is uncertain whether these alterations date from the 1926-27 reconstruction, or were done more recently. The remaining openings are all windows. They are regularly distributed. Most are wood double hung sash in a one-over-one configuration. All have stone sills.

The interior of the bank was completely gutted in the 1926-27 redesign. The configuration of the previous plan is unknown. The 1926-27 layout is completely intact. The first floor plan is composed of a large, central lobby with a 20' high ceiling, and mezzanine levels at the east and west ends of the building. Two flights of stairs rise to the mezzanine level at the west end of the lobby. The second floor is reached by way of two other flights of stairs, accessible from the street. One is located on the east end of the building, the other on the west end. The second floor plan consists of a series of 11 office suites along an I-shaped corridor. Throughout the building, the walls and ceilings are finished with smooth plaster. Most of the second floor offices have dropped acoustical tile ceilings; a couple have wood paneling on the walls. The interior was slightly remodeled in the 1960s. These changes probably date from that time, but do not adversely affect the building's integrity. The floors on the first story and west mezzanine are of steel reinforced concrete, finished with gray terrazzo (in some places covered with carpet). The second floor and east mezzanine are of wood construction, finished with narrow boards (some second floor offices), linoleum (corridor) or carpet (remaining offices). There is a mix of incandescent and fluorescent lighting in the building. Original light fixtures include opaque, ceiling mounted globes in some hallways, and, in the bank vault, ceiling mounted sockets enriched with floral motifs. The original simple dark wood window and door surrounds have been retained, as have most of the porcelain plumbing fixtures

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in the rest rooms, and the many ornamented cast iron stand up radiators.

The basement has an open plan, punctuated only by the concrete bank vault, and three rows of piers supporting the first floor. The central row consists of large brick piers, with a coat of concrete. These may date from the 1907 building. The outer rows contain smaller piers of poured concrete. The basement floor and most of the walls are exposed concrete. Toward the rear (west) of the building there is a section of brick, and one of structural clay tile. The basement has a very low ceiling (about 5 feet) and has been used only for storage.

The first floor and west mezzanine level were confined to bank use. The lobby is of particular note. Two rows of five square piers running east-west divide the lobby into three sections. Each pier is set on a square marble-veneered pedestal, and is enriched on each face with a fluted Corinthian pilaster with a bead-and-reel echinus. The piers, and similar pilasters on the walls, appear to support the beamed ceiling. Each beam is enriched with a stylized acanthus leaf molding. There is marble wainscoting on the south and east walls, and low marble-veneered walls between the piers on the south side of the room. Behind these low walls are eight tellers' booths (two between each pair of piers). Originally, the tellers' windows were glass, trimmed with bronze. These have been replaced with particle board, and formica counters. The small first floor room on the south side of the entrance, in the section that has a mezzanine, was originally a "cozy room furnished for the convenience of women patrons."⁷ It is currently empty. In the northeast corner of the lobby, a balustrade between the piers cordons off a small area with a raised platform, where the bank's officers had their desks. The original balustrade was replaced with a chrome and wood panel one in the 1960s remodeling. Through a glass and metal door (not original) east of this area is a small office, originally for the bank president. On the north side of the lobby, west of the bank officers' area, there is a glass and steel vestibule approximately 9 feet high which projects into the room. West of this is a partition wall of the same height,

⁷"Modern Building to be New Home of Security Bank."

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creating three very small rooms within the lobby. The vestibule and rooms, like the aforementioned balustrade, date from the 1960s remodeling. None of these changes compromise the integrity of the lobby.

On the west wall of the lobby is the original bank vault. Manufactured by the Mosler Safe Company, the vault rests on a solid concrete foundation 16 feet thick. The walls around the vault are also reinforced concrete, 16 inches thick, and measure 20 feet long and 20 feet wide. The vault door is round, varies between 16 and 22 inches in thickness, and weighs more than 30 tons. The vault was state-of-the-art for its time, "controlled by two bronze case-side shaft-combination bank locks capable of one million combinations...[and featuring a] special anti-dynamite device."⁸ The alarm system, installed by the Duplex Electric Company of New York, was also state-of-the art. The system consisted of a network of electrical wires, with a constant flow of current, embedded in the concrete walls, floors and ceilings. Any attempt to tamper with the vault, or interrupt the current, would set off the two 18' riot alarm gongs that are still located on the front of the building above the main entrance.⁹ The alarm system is still functional.

North of the vault, there is a dogleg staircase with terrazzo treads and a plain wood balustrade leading to the mezzanine. At the mezzanine level above the vault were the bank director's office (north end), telephone operators' office, and a room "for socials (south end)."¹⁰ Except for the telephone operator's office being used as a storage room, these uses were retained until Firststar Bank (which acquired Security Bank in 1937) moved out of the building in 1991. In the wall overlooking the bank lobby there are three pairs of multipaned casement windows with wood frames and metal mullions.

⁸"Weight of the Huge Vault Door More Than 30 Tons," ODN, August 3, 1927, p. 14.

⁹"Alarm Systems of Latest Type Installed in Bank," ODN, August 3, 1927, p. 15.

¹⁰"Modern Building to be New Home of Security Bank."

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The bank's accountants had offices on the first floor north of the vault. South of the vault a straight staircase with terrazzo treads rises from the lobby to the mezzanine. There are six cubicles tucked under the stair for the use of safety deposit box customers.

The second floor offices housed various tenants over time, and were never used by the bank. Long time tenants included the South Side Businessmen's Club, and a beauty shop. At the west end of the building, there is a wood dogleg staircase. A concrete and terrazzo dogleg staircase rises to the second floor on the east end. Both of these stairs are directly accessible from secondary street entrances. There are two rest rooms on the second floor at the west end of the building. The floor is slightly higher at this end of the building because of the presence of the vault; the corridor floor slopes accordingly. The original wood two-panel doors have been retained throughout the second floor. In many of these doors, the upper panel is glass. Above each door is an operable opaque glass transom. Many office suites, divided into front and rear offices (perhaps to provide space for a receptionist), have interior fixed windows to light the front offices. There are also several groups of operable "skylights" in the ceiling; one in the corridor and two in south end offices. These skylights do not provide light, but rather, open into the attic for ventilation.

The alterations that have been made to the Security Bank, dating from the 1960s remodeling, have very little affect on its integrity. The exterior is completely intact, reflecting its 1926-27 rebuilding. The interior plan is unchanged. Despite the addition of a glass vestibule and small rooms inside the bank lobby, and the loss of the original tellers' windows and balustrade, the basic fabric of the lobby is intact, and special features, most notably the vault, remain. The second floor also shows very good integrity.

Security Bank is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Oregon Street and Ninth Avenue, in Oshkosh's south side commercial district. There are one to three story brick buildings in the four blocks to the north, between the bank and the Fox River. The Morgan Products Limited industrial complex is

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(Rev. 8-86)
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located in the block closest to the river; the remaining blocks are commercial. Across the street are commercial buildings. South of the building, there is a mix of one and two story commercial (mostly frame), residential and church structures which continues for many blocks. To the rear (west) is a residential area, primarily composed of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century frame vernacular houses.

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Summary

Security Bank is architecturally significant at the local level under National Register criterion C. It is a fine local example of a NeoClassical Revival commercial building, and retains excellent integrity. Its current appearance is the result of a design by Julius Dreger, a prominent Oshkosh architect.

Historical Context

Although the fur trade brought a handful of pioneers of European descent to Winnebago County as early as 1818, it was not until the Treaty of the Cedars was signed that the area that is present day Oshkosh was truly opened up for settlement. With this treaty, the Menominee ceded to the United States government all the land north of Lake Butte des Morts and the Fox River between the Wolf River and Lake Winnebago. Settlers were quick to arrive and begin farming. Within 15 years all traces of the fur traders disappeared.¹¹

Oshkosh grew slowly during the late 1830s and early 1840s. In 1846, settlers began arriving in earnest to take advantage of Oshkosh's location on the navigable Fox River and near the pine forests to the north and west. In 1847, two steam lumber mills were established, and the industry that would spur Oshkosh's phenomenal growth was born. In early 1849, the population of the village reached 500. By 1850, Oshkosh had become the county seat, and its population had nearly tripled, standing at 1,392. In 1853, Oshkosh incorporated as a city.¹²

The city grew rapidly during the 1850s, but it was not until the arrival of the railroad in 1859, vastly improving the

¹¹James I. Metz, ed., Prairie, Pines and People: Winnebago County, A New Perspective, Oshkosh: Oshkosh Northwestern Company, 1976, pp. 131-135.

¹²Ibid.; and Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff, (HNTB), Final Report of the Intensive Historic Resource Survey for the City of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, September, 1981, pp. 4-6.

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transportation network for delivering lumber products, that Oshkosh really began to expand. As a result of improved transportation and an increased need for lumber products brought about by the Civil War, Oshkosh boomed during the 1860s. In 1860, the city's population was 6,086. By 1870, the population had more than doubled, reaching 12,663. Despite a nationwide recession, Oshkosh continued to boom during the 1870s. In 1875, the population was 17,000.¹³

By the end of the 1870s, the growth of the lumber industry in Oshkosh began to slow. The clearing of the forests closest to the City meant that raw materials were further and further away from the mills in Oshkosh. The sawmill industry followed. As the importance of the lumber industry declined in Oshkosh, other industries began to appear. For example, the Paine Lumber Company became the city's largest employer and the world's largest sash and door factory. As Oshkosh's industrial base changed, the demographics of the population changed as well. The early settlers were primarily Yankees. Following the Civil War, German and Irish immigrants arrived to work in the city's factories. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, many Poles, Scandinavians and ethnic Germans from the Volga River region of Russia settled in Oshkosh. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Oshkosh was second only to Milwaukee in population in the state.¹⁴

Oshkosh's oldest and largest bank is First National Bank (now called Firststar Bank). It was founded as a private bank on August 10, 1852 and was called Darling, Wright, Kellogg and Company. It was chartered by the State of Wisconsin as the State Bank of Oshkosh in 1857. In 1863, it received a federal charter as the First National Bank of Oshkosh. Oshkosh's most prominent business and professional men, including Philetus Sawyer, Edgar P. Sawyer, Moses Hooper, Gabriel Bouck, Robert McMillan and Seymour Hollister, served on this bank's Board of Directors. First National Bank was

¹³HNTB, pp. 4-6 and 16.

¹⁴Ibid.

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also very active in acquiring smaller local banks, eventually including Security Bank.¹⁵

There had been commercial and industrial development on the south side of the Fox River since at least the 1860s. Among the businesses on the south side were (Richard T.) Morgan Millworks, and Buckstaff Brothers and Chase (lumber and shingle mill). By the early 1890s, businessmen with south side interests felt the need for a south side bank. On June 13, 1892, the South Side Exchange Bank was organized. This bank was located on the corner of Eighth Avenue and South Main Street (then Kansas Street). Joseph Kloeckner served as president for many years.¹⁶

On May 2, 1903 a second south side bank was organized. Founded by R.T. Morgan, J.Y. Hull and W.K. Rideout, among others, the State Bank of Oshkosh was located on the northeast corner of Ninth Avenue and Oregon Street.¹⁷ At that time, Oregon Street south of Ninth Avenue was still residential, although the transition to commercial was beginning. The home of James Chase, co-founder of Buckstaff Brothers and Chase, stood on the southwest corner of Ninth Avenue and Oregon Street, where it had been built c.1876. By 1907,¹⁸ Chase's home had been demolished, and replaced with a two story brick commercial vernacular building erected for the Topliff Dry Goods Company.¹⁹

On April 1, 1921, the State Bank of Oshkosh and the South Side Exchange Bank merged. They relocated to 913 Oregon Street (extant)

¹⁵Clinton F. Karstaedt, editor, Oshkosh: One Hundred Years a City, (Oshkosh: 1953), pp. 174-76.

¹⁶"Lay Cornerstone of Bank Building with Ceremonies," ODN, Januray 15, 1927, p. 3; and "History of Bank Goes Back Over Extended Period," ODN, August 3, 1927, p. 17.

¹⁷Ibid.; and Oshkosh Weekly Northwestern, May 9, 1903, p. 5.

¹⁸Tax Assessor's Records, City of Oshkosh.

¹⁹Oshkosh City Directory for 1908.

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and named the new concern the State Exchange Bank. The Boards of Directors also merged, and elected William J. Glatz president.²⁰ From that time on, there was only one bank on the south side of Oshkosh. On May 3, 1923, the bank was reorganized under a new charter as the Security Bank of Oshkosh. William J. Glatz was again elected president.²¹

By 1926, Security Bank had outgrown its quarters in the small two-story Romanesque Revival building at 913 Oregon Street. In June of that year, the Bank announced it had purchased the building on the southwest corner of Oregon Street and Ninth Avenue at a cost of \$35-40,000. The building, which had been built for Topliff Dry Goods, had been used as factory space by the Hilker and Wiecher Manufacturing Company, makers of overalls, from approximately 1914 to 1925. By 1924, the name had been changed to Signal Shirt Company. Signal moved to Racine in 1925, leaving the building vacant.²² When Security Bank bought the building in 1926, noted local architect Julius F. Dreger was commissioned to redesign the building.²³ Portions of the rear (west) exterior wall, and of the south wall abutting the neighboring building from the earlier structure were retained, but Security Bank was otherwise completely rebuilt.²⁴ The bank opened for business on August 8, 1927.²⁵

At the time the Security Bank moved into its new quarters, there were six banks in Oshkosh. The largest of these, with a net worth

²⁰"New Bank Elects Officers and the Merger is a Fact," ODN, April 1, 1921, p. 4.

²¹"Security Bank of Oshkosh Opens to Public and Event is One of Moment," ODN, May 3, 1923, p. 4.

²²"South Side Bank to Have New Home on Corner," ODN, June 8, 1926, p. 4.

²³Ad, ODN, August 3, 1927, p. 14.

²⁴"Modern Building to be New Home of Security Bank."

²⁵Ibid., p. 13.

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Security Bank
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI

of \$8.8 million, was the First National Bank. Next largest was City National Bank, with a net worth of \$4.4 million. The New American Bank was third largest, with a net worth of \$3.05 million. The Security Bank ranked fourth at \$2.6 million. Two other institutions, the Paine Thrift Bank and the First Trust Company, were smaller.²⁶ Security Bank was already associated with the First National Bank by this time, although in what way is unclear.²⁷ As a smaller bank, Security Bank probably did not have as large an impact on Oshkosh's economy as the larger banks had. Security Bank continued as the south side's only bank until 1937, when it was acquired by First National Bank. The building was then operated as the south side branch of the First National (Firststar) Bank until 1991.²⁸ Security Bank has been vacant since that time.

Architecture

Security Bank is architecturally significant at the local level under Criterion C, as a good local example of a NeoClassical Revival commercial design with excellent integrity.

According to Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin (Wyatt), the NeoClassical Revival style was inspired by the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Built between 1895 and 1935, NeoClassical Revival is characterized by formal compositions with a symmetrical facade, monumental columns (Greek Order), and decorated moldings, entablatures and cornices surmounted by a parapet or balustrade.²⁹

²⁶ODN, January 15, 1927.

²⁷Ad placed by First National Bank congratulating Security Bank on its new home and expressing best wishes for continued success in their association, ODN, August 3, 1927, p. 18.

²⁸HNTB, pp. 43-44.

²⁹Barbara L. Wyatt, ed., Cultural Resource Management In Wisconsin, (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 2:2-18.

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The Security Bank is a locally significant example of late NeoClassical Revival. It illustrates the increasing simplification of traditional architecture in the late 1920s and 1930s due to the influence of the modern movement and a general shift in popular tastes from the opulent styles of the late nineteenth century. The "new classicism," as this later phase was sometimes called, became increasingly popular for both public and institutional buildings. The style manifested itself in buildings of classical form and proportion with frankly classical mouldings and cornices, but generally exhibiting very restrained ornamentation. Classical orders are either absent, or abstracted and simplified. Although the Security Bank is a rather simple NeoClassical building in comparison to other examples in the city, it is a fine representation of this later phase of NeoClassicism. It represents an attempt to define an "American" NeoClassicism, expressive of modern culture.³⁰

The 1981 survey of Oshkosh recorded six classically detailed nonresidential buildings in the city, including Security Bank. No other NeoClassical Revival nonresidential buildings have been identified in Oshkosh. Of the six buildings surveyed, the other five are all more elaborate, high style versions of NeoClassical Revival. All are also entirely stone veneered. The First Baptist Temple (1901) and the Oshkosh Public Library, both designed by Oshkosh architect William Waters, feature domed rotundas. The old U.S. Post Office (1929) and the Paine Thrift Bank (1925) are both simpler rectangular temple type compositions. The Daily Northwestern Building (1930, Auler and Jensen, NRHP) is a tile roofed example. While Security Bank is not among the most elaborate and high style variants, it is a good local example of the NeoClassical style, and retains excellent integrity.

Although Wyatt does not list Julius Dreger as someone who meets National Register criterion C as a "master" architect, he was very prominent in Oshkosh. Dreger (1877-1961) was born in Wisconsin and educated in Kaukauna. He had an office there from at least 1891 until 1910. In 1910, Dreger relocated to Oshkosh. Little is known

³⁰ Talbot F. Hamlin, "A Contemporary American Style," Pencil Points, February 1938, pp. 99.

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Security Bank.
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI

about what Dreger designed in Oshkosh, except for the Riverside Chapel (at Riverside Cemetery) and Security Bank. He was associated with Armin W. Knoop and Bernard Knobla from 1934-39. In 1951, he formed Auler, Dreger, Wiley and Wertsch.³¹ At the time of his death, Dreger was still retained by that firm as a consultant.³²

³¹HNTB, p. 150.

³²Obituary, ODN, January 3, 1961.

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Security Bank
Name of Property

Winnebago County, Wisconsin
County and State

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Burns Development (Brian Burns)
street & number P.O. Box 266 telephone (414) 731-3535
city or town Appleton state WI zip code 54912-0266

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

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Verbal Boundary Description

Security Bank is located in the City of Oshkosh, Winnebago County, Wisconsin, and is legally described as follows: North 50' of Lots 10, 11 and 12, Block 53, Original Plat of Oshkosh, excluding the West 15' of Lot 10.

Verbal Boundary Justification

This property includes the entire parcel that is historically associated with Security Bank.

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Security Bank
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Photo 1 of 10
Security Bank
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, December 1993
Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
East and south facades

The information is the same as the above for the following photos,
except as noted:

Photo 2 of 10
East (front) facade

Photo 3 of 10
East and north facades

Photo 4 of 10
North facade

Photo 5 of 10
West (rear) and south facade

Photo 6 of 10
Lobby looking west from main (east) entrance

Photo 7 of 10
Lobby showing closeup of bank vault

Photo 8 of 10
Lobby looking east from west end

Photo 9 of 10
Lobby looking southeast showing tellers' windows

Photo 10 of 10
Second floor office looking from rear into front office space,
showing interior windows and door