

Parcel #: 11-052-13
Acreage: Less than one acre.
Location: 204 North Virginia Street
City: Reno State: Nevada County: Washoe

Current Owner: First Interstate Bank
Address: 200 North Virginia Street, Reno, Nevada 89501

Data Prepared by: Rainshadow Associates Date: 06/27/83
Address: P.O. Box 352, Carson City, Nevada 89702

Property Information

Original Use: Bank and offices
Present Use: Bank and offices
Condition: Good
Architect: Frederick J. DeLongchamps
Builder: Unknown
Construction/Modification Dates: 1915
Building Type: Commercial, bank
Architectural Style: Classical Revival

Physical Description

The Reno National Bank building is an impressive and exceptional Classical Revival style terra cotta structure with extensive, low relief sculptural ornamentation. This building is four stories and is divided by horizontal bands into a three-part composition. It is situated on a corner lot and divided into five bays on the west side and eleven bays on the south side. The facade is highlighted by a two-story portico with Ionic columns. The central entrance has a highly ornamented foliated door surround and a heavy cornice with a crowning oval medallion. The south wall is articulated by two-storied pilasters.

A belt course (composed of a foliated cornice and a frieze interspersed with rectangular panels decorated with putti and flowers) separates the first two stories from the third. A different course separates the third and fourth stories, this one more elaborated by a cornice with lion's head antifixes, modillions, dentils, and a narrow frieze. The roof is low or flat. The roofline is enriched with several fanciful, horizontal bands arranged from top to bottom in the following pattern: a palmette motif row, a plain row, a decorated row, a Greek Key motif row, and a garland motif row.

Window openings are original, however, many of the original lights have been altered. The first story window openings are tall and topped by radiating terra cotta lintels. At the top of the building where the west and south walls join, is a large, oval medallion crowned with a large eagle. Despite the alteration to the building's windows, the structure retains its overall architectural integrity and is in a good state of preservation.

Statement of Significance (Criteria B, C)

The Reno National Bank is significant as an intact example of the formal, Beaux Arts design characteristic of the early work of Nevada architect, Frederick J. DeLongchamps. The building is also significant for its direct historical association with Nevada financier and political figure, George Wingfield.

Frederick J. DeLongchamps was a noteworthy Nevada architect who practiced between 1907 and 1965. The designs for over 500 public, commercial, and residential structures

have been credited to DeLongchamps. The Reno National Bank is one of the few intact examples of commercial design surviving from the architect's early career. Please refer to the nomination cover form for a detailed discussion of DeLongchamps' significance.

George Wingfield was a 20th century entrepreneur who was historically important in the economic and political development of the State of Nevada. A native of Fort Smith, Arkansas, Wingfield moved to Nevada via Oregon in 1896 and in 1901 joined the rush to the State's newest mining boomtown, Tonopah. In Tonopah, he became Vice-President of the Tonopah Banking Corporation.

With the Goldfield mining discoveries in the early 1900's, Wingfield became one of the first financial entrepreneurs to heavily invest in the area. In conjunction with his partner Nixon, Wingfield absorbed dozens of smaller mining operations and by 1906, formed the Goldfield Consolidated Mine Company. The Goldfield mines became some of the richest in the world and the profits realized by Wingfield and Nixon were tremendous. In a span of few years, these two men became powerful figures in Nevada's financial and political circles.

The Goldfield boom ended with the panic of 1906 and in 1908 Wingfield moved to Reno where he invested the money in livestock, hotels, real estate, and a chain of 12 banks. He built the Reno National Bank in 1915 as part of this chain. The Reno National Bank was the only financial institution constructed by Wingfield. In addition, Wingfield maintained his personal offices and headquarters in the building.

Throughout his prominent years, Wingfield played a very strong and active role in Republican political affairs. On the death of Senator George Nixon in 1912, Wingfield not only acquired Nixon's extensive banking interests, but was also offered an appointment to complete the Senatorial term. He refused this offer as he did the push in 1926 to have him run for Governor of the State. He appeared much happier to stay in the political background acting as a power broker. He held one public office, that of Regent of the University of Nevada in 1928.

Following the 1929 crash, Wingfield made every effort to support and bolster the troubled local cattle industry. By October of 1932, he had overextended the limits of his banking chain, a "banking holiday" was declared and the banks closed. Wingfield was forced into bankruptcy in 1935, recovered in subsequent years, and enjoyed financial, political, and social affluence until his death in 1959.

Bibliography

Elliott, Russell R., History of Nevada, University of Nebraska Press, 1973, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Hamrick, James and Ana Beth Koval, George Wingfield House National Register Nomination; Reno, Nevada, April 2, 1982.

Nylen, Robert A., "Reno's Premier Architect," Heritage Herald, May/June 1983, pp. 4-5.

Legal Description: Reno Original Townsite, south 14 feet Lot 1, Block P, and Lot 2, Block P.

BUILDING #2: Reno National Bank/First Interstate Bank

Page 3 of 3

Location of Legal Description: Washoe County Courthouse, 117 South Virginia St.,
Reno, Nevada 89501

Representation on Existing Surveys: Reno Cultural Resources Survey, 1983,
Local survey deposited at the Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology,
Carson City, NV

UTM References: Zone 11, E 258850 N 4378580.

JUN 26 1983