

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet Inventory N. 7613

Item number

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PROPERTY NAME: Wilmington Savings Fund Society  
838 North Market Street

The Wilmington Savings Fund Society Building was built in 1920. The interior of the building was renovated in 1959, and an office wing was added to the south side of the building in 1963.

Verbal Boundary Description:

Quadrangle Name: Wilmington South  
Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000  
UTM Coordinate: 18-453000-4399320

Description and Justification: The area nominated includes parcel 26 035.20 101, which is .29 acres, and is described as follows: Beginning at a point on the southeast corner of North Market Street and East Ninth Street; thence southerly along North Market Street 86.6 feet; thence easterly along property line 210.5 feet; thence northerly along North King Street 86.6 feet; thence westerly along East Ninth Street 210.5 feet to beginning point.

OWNER: Wilmington Savings Fund Society  
838 North Market Street  
Wilmington, DE 19801

DESCRIPTION:

Location: 838 North Market Street  
CRS No.: N.7613  
Built: 1920

Three-story, Neo-Classical bank in a rectangular plan. Fireproof construction with bearing wall masonry construction faced with limestone. Granite water table on foundation. Portico with Egyptian Revival columns on north, east and west facades. Solid corners of smooth ashlar limestone. Large recessed metal frame windows behind columns. Market Street entrance: Limestone door surround with orante lintel with denticulated pediment. Twin stainless steel frame glass doors. Limestone denticulated cornice with sign band below cornice engraved with name of bank on Market Street facade. Rosettes along sign band over columns. Flat roof with balustrade. Three-story office wing built in 1963 on south end of building with large aluminum frame central window.

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Flat roof with parapet wall and ornate cornice. The Office Wing is made compatible with the original design by use of similar materials.

Interior details: High paneled ceiling with egg and dart pattern cornice. Pilasters on north, east, and west walls. South wall has 60-foot by 90-foot mural titled "The Apotheosis of the Family," by N.C. Wyeth, that symbolically depicts the importance of the family as the basic unit of society. In the center of the mural is a family, surrounded by scenes of men working, women nurturing children, children playing, young couples getting started, and older couples enjoying their retirement. A new mezzanine was added in 1959 with aluminum railing with rippled glass panels and offices with translucent glass partitions.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Wilmington Savings Fund Society (WSFS) Building, located at 838 North Market Street, is being nominated under Criterion C, since it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Neo-Classical Revival style. The general massing of the building is that of a Greek temple, featuring colossal Egyptian Revival columns along with a cornice and balustrade. On the South side of the building is a modern addition that is distinct from the original building but sympathetic in design and materials. The interior of the building has been renovated and a mezzanine added; however, it still retains the original massing and scale. Especially notable is the large mural, titled "The Apotheosis of the Family," by N.C. Wyeth, on the south wall of the lobby.

The bank was built in 1920, replacing an earlier Norman style bank, built by WSFS in 1886, which had occupied approximately half of the present lot. The 1920 structure was designed by the Hoggson Brothers, an architectural firm located in New York City. In 1932, a 60-foot by 90-foot mural, painted by N.C. Wyeth, titled "The Apotheosis of the Family," was installed in the lobby. It was commissioned to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the bank's founding, and it is one of the six largest murals in the United States.

Due to the increasing need for office space and a fire on the bank's interior, the interior of the bank was renovated in 1959, with a new foyer, mezzanine, and offices being added. Despite these changes, the lobby retains the original paneled ceiling and pilasters on the walls.

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By 1963, the recurrent need for more office space led to the purchase of the adjacent store, which was converted into offices. A new facade was added that was compatible with the bank, through the use of similar material and an elaborate cornice. George Clark of New York City was the architect for these alterations.

The WSFS Building is a Wilmington landmark of 9th and Market Street and is a significant example of the Neo-Classical style.