



## United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H32(2280)

FEB - 1 2018

Dear Colleague:

Recent issues regarding certification of tax credit part 1 applications for properties in historic districts highlights the necessity for more detailed guidance related to contributing resources. The National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, provides a two-part definition for what constitutes a contributing resource in a nominated property:

A contributing building, site, structure, or object adds to the historic associations, historic architectural qualities, or archeological values for which a property is significant because:

- it was present during the period of significance, relates to the documented significance of the property, and possesses historic integrity or is capable of yielding important information about the period; or
- **it independently meets the National Register criteria** (Identify contributing resources of this type and explain their significance in section 8).

Enclosed is further guidance on the second condition for determining contributing status and the expected level of documentation necessary for new National Register submissions or for additional documentation of previously listed properties.

Thank you for your interest in the National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

J. Paul Loether, Chief  
National Register/National Historic Landmarks, and  
Keeper of the National Register

Enclosure

## Additional guidance addendum to the National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*

### Contributing Buildings Outside the Period of Significance for a Listed Property

#### Purpose

Beginning in 1986, all National Register nominations submitted for listing have been required to enumerate the resources within the property boundaries and to classify them either as contributing or noncontributing to the significance of the property. For historic districts, resources that are not associated with the nominated district's area(s) of significance or that do not represent the district's period of significance are generally classified as noncontributing. The exception is for resources that independently meet the National Register criteria. This guidance will address amending older district nominations, or submitting new district nominations, to recognize as contributing those individually eligible resources that are otherwise not related to the area(s) or period(s) of significance for the district. The documentation submitted must demonstrate that the property is individually eligible for listing, and, on acceptance, will result in contributing status for the property. This guidance expands on the determination of contributing resources section of the National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*

#### Background

The National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* indicates the basis for determining contributing and noncontributing resources thus:

A **contributing building, site, structure, or object** adds to the historic associations, historic architectural qualities, or archeological values for which a property is significant because:

- it was present during the period of significance, relates to the documented significance of the property, and possesses historic integrity or is capable of yielding important information about the period; or
- it independently meets the National Register criteria. (Identify contributing resources of this type and explain their significance in section 8).

By definition, all resources contained within the boundaries of a National Register property are listed in the National Register. The necessity for identifying which resources *contribute* to a National Register property was brought to the fore first by the creation of the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives (Tax Act) in 1976 and its 1986 amendments. Properties listed in the National Register, including those that “contribute” to the listing, became eligible for the

rehabilitation tax credit and other incentives as “certified historic structures.” Nominations submitted prior to the Tax Act did not necessarily include information on all resources within the property boundaries. Historic districts sometimes had many categories for resources, including terms such as “pivotal,” “conforming,” “non-conforming,” and “intrusion.” One problem that was quickly recognized was establishing the eligibility of resources for the full credit as certified historic structures located in districts listed prior to enactment of the Tax Act. Resources had to be evaluated based on the stated significance and (sometimes implied) area of significance and classified as “contributing” or “noncontributing.” This still did not account for the status of resources whose significance did not reflect that of the listed district, or whose period of significance was outside of the listed district’s period of significance, and whose significance and integrity qualified the building for individual eligibility.

Guidance on evaluating previously listed historic districts for individual resources’ eligibility for the tax credit was first issued in 1981. Final guidance on amending nominations was issued in 1984 as National Register Bulletin 8, “Use of Nomination Documentation in the Part 1 Certification Process.” Pertinent to the issue of individual resources that achieved significance outside of the listed district’s stated period of significance, the 1984 guidance indicated that providing additional documentation to supplement the original nomination could meet the needs of tax act eligibility:

*The documentation may show that an individual property outside a district's period or areas of significance adds to the district because that property or group<sup>1</sup> of properties is important in its own right. It may be a distinctive example of an important architectural style or type, or it may be associated with persons or events that occurred outside the themes or periods of significance identified in the nomination form but that made important contributions to the history and development of the locality. In these cases documentation should focus specifically on the individual property or group in question and show that it possesses a degree of importance that is essentially the same as that required for individual listing in the National Register. If the intent is to qualify a single building (an Art Deco theatre in an 1860-1910s commercial district, for example) the State has the option of submitting either continuation sheets or an individual nomination (following the complete nomination process) for the single building.*

## Guidance

Older nominations, especially historic districts, may be due for re-evaluation, and efforts should be made to re-examine the property and the documentation. The information in older nominations often does not meet current documentation standards, and criteria as well as areas and periods of significance were often not fully fleshed-out. In re-evaluating older nominations, all potential criteria and areas of significance should be examined; the period of significance re-defined if necessary; and the integrity of the resources re-evaluated. Such a re-evaluation will

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<sup>1</sup> “Group” in this case would refer to functionally related buildings, such as a factory complex or an apartment complex, where the buildings are historically and functionally related.

define the contributing status of resources. Changes to the re-evaluated area(s) and period of significance may change the status of resources previously considered noncontributing. Absent the effort to re-evaluate the entire district, the course of action necessary for considering a single resource as contributing that is located in a previously listed district remains as described in the 1984 guidance. The nominating authority may elect to prepare an individual nomination for the property, or submit “additional documentation” for the original nomination that addresses the individual significance of the resource. This additional documentation may be submitted on continuation sheets.

In such a submission, the description of the resource for Section 7 would need to include an evaluation of integrity as it relates to the resource’s individual significance; this might include a description and evaluation of the interior. The additional documentation for Section 8 would need to provide sufficient information to demonstrate that the resource independently meets one or more of the National Register criteria for evaluation. The evaluation of the resource would be within an appropriate context; if the context differs from that of the listed property, the context will need to be included as part of the resource’s narrative statement of significance. The amount of information provided will vary depending on the necessary contextual development, but should be sufficient to make a reasoned case for individual eligibility.

When establishing the individual eligibility of a resource that is outside of the period of significance for the district, the period of significance for the original district remains unchanged. In Section 8, the discrete period of significance for the individually eligible resource would be added, as well as the area(s) of significance associated with that resource.

Using this method, the resource would *not* be individually listed but would be considered a contributing resource in the previously listed property.

It is recommended, but not required, that the additional documentation be presented to the state review board.

The nominating authority may elect to submit an individual nomination for the eligible resource. This option would follow the standard nominating procedures found in 36 CFR 60. The property would then be recognized as individually listed.

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#### Examples:

##### Governor’s Mansion Historic District, Pulaski County, Arkansas

The Governor’s Mansion Historic District in Little Rock, Arkansas, was listed in the National Register in 1978. The district, primarily residential, focused on some of the city’s best examples of Victorian era and early twentieth century architecture. The district’s namesake, completed in 1950, was constructed outside of the period of significance. In 1993, the SHPO submitted Additional Documentation to change the status of the Governor’s Mansion from noncontributing to contributing. The submitted documentation

included a detailed description of the mansion, both exterior and interior, and a three-page statement justifying the individual significance of the property under criteria A and C. This additional documentation did not change the period of significance for the district as a whole, but acknowledged the contributing status of the property based on its individual significance.

#### Beaumont Commercial District (Boundary Increase), Jefferson County, Texas

The Beaumont Commercial District was originally listed in 1978 with an undefined period of significance whose ending date could generously have been taken up into the 1930s. In 2007, the SHPO submitted documentation to establish the end of the period of significance as 1958, and to expand the boundaries of the district to better reflect historical development during this period. The additional documentation for the original district also sought to establish the contributing status of the First Security National Bank, which was constructed in 1963 and was considered noncontributing in the original nomination. The submitted documentation included a detailed description of the building and an extensive statement of both the individual and exceptional significance for the bank under criteria A and C. The period of significance for the district was therefore defined as c. 1890-1958, 1962-63; the bank was accepted as a contributing resource.

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Attachment: Copies of the pertinent sections of the Governor's Mansion Historic District and the Beaumont Commercial District nominations

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### Amendment to the Governor's Mansion Historic District

This nomination seeks to change the status of the actual Governor's Mansion (PU 1162) from noncontributing to contributing to the National Register historic district which bears its name. The resulting resource count is thereby changed from 508 contributing and 178 noncontributing properties to 509 contributing and 177 noncontributing properties.

#### Summary

Constructed from 1948-1950, the Governor's Mansion is a two-story brick masonry structure with a two-story central portico and flanking dependencies. The building is virtually unaltered since construction.

#### Elaboration

Located at 1800 Center Street on six-and-a-half acres, the Governor's Mansion is a two-story brick masonry structure constructed from 1948-1950 to serve as Arkansas's first official governor's residence. Charged with designing a "Southern Colonial"-style structure by the mansion commission, the firm of Ginocchio & Cromwell turned to the Early Classical Revival, or Jeffersonian, style for inspiration. As was common with the original style, the Governor's Mansion presents the appearance of a Georgian or Adamesque-style house with a colonnaded, Classical portico grafted onto the front facade. The brick foundation consists of 20" thick basement walls, which support 16" thick exterior brick walls. Both are of cavity wall construction with a running bond. Over 300,000 bricks were used in the construction and almost all were taken from the old Blind School that had previously stood on this site (a few bricks used for the interior wall were taken from an extant wall of a former prison building on Roosevelt Road). Steel joists and concrete slabs were utilized for the first, second, and, interestingly, the attic floors. The composition-shingled gable roof has a 6/12 pitch (6" drop for each foot in length) and is anchored on each end by an exterior brick chimney. Underneath the closed eave of the roof, the narrow cornice is adorned with a dentil course. The apparent lack of a frieze (or a deeper cornice) is due to the original intent to paint the brick white, and not from a design flaw or an attempt to save money.

The front, or northern, elevation is dominated by the central portico which is supported by four evenly spaced Roman Tuscan columns with two square pilasters. The gable roof projects from

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below the ridge of the main gable roof and forms a pediment that rests upon an entablature of appropriate proportions. Outlined by a raking cornice, the interior of the pediment is covered with stucco and features a relief of the state seal in the center.

Underneath the portico, the front entrance is composed of a wide (4'), eight-panelled wood door that is surrounded by three-pane sidelights and an elliptical fanlight. Above, a small balcony with a simple wrought-iron balustrade is accessed by narrow double-leaf doors with eight-pane glazing. Four-pane sidelights assist with the interior lighting of the room on this floor.

On either side of the portico, the facade is fenestrated by two bays of multiple-pane wood-frame windows. The four first-story windows are triple hung with each individual sash containing eight panes. The upper-story windows are a more common eight-over-eight double-hung type.

A hipped-roof, single-story wing is attached to each end elevation. The brick cornice detail is copied from the Noland House at the Arkansas Territorial Restoration. Fenestration on the front elevation of each wing is accomplished by two twelve-over-twelve double-hung windows. The east wing was originally meant to have been a screened porch; however, during construction it was decided to enclose it for use as a living room. The wings are not identically constructed; the west wing has an inset wrap around porch supported by elaborate wrought-iron columns at the rear elevation.

In 1949, the state legislature approved two additional appropriations to include the two curved hyphens and dependencies and the interior furnishings. These hyphens are curved so that the single-story dependencies present a front gabled appearance. Both hyphens are open walkways that are covered by a shallow-pitched gable roof with a front brick wall that has a semi-circular arched brick doorway in the center that is flanked on each side by three oculus openings. The roof is supported at the rear by seven Tuscan columns. The western hyphen is distinguished by having an additional hipped-roof covered walkway supported by ten Tuscan columns that is perpendicular to the hyphen and leads to the arched entrance. Both dependencies feature interior brick chimneys and are largely fenestrated by six-over-six double-hung windows.

The rear, or southern, elevation of the house is more complex than the front elevation but still retains a semblance of symmetry. A brick terrace encircled by wrought-iron railing stretches across the entire ground floor and provides the roof for the exposed basement on this elevation. The exposed wall projects from the center of the terrace and is flanked on each side by a brick staircase. Entry into the basement is gained through a central arched opening that leads to a pair of French doors. Two identical arches are placed to either side but contain two-pane windows. Interestingly, simple ten-pane double-leaf doors are used for the central first-floor entrance,

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while the second story is adorned by a massive Palladian entrance with the sidelights and double-leaf doors of uniform size and glazing (each has four large panes). Again, a small balcony with a wrought-iron balustrade is employed.

To the east of center, there is a first-story porch with a shallow flat roof supported by two wrought-iron columns. Originally this roof protected three adjacent eight-over-eight-over-eight triple-hung windows; however, the center window was later replaced by the current twelve-pane double-leaf doors. The upper story is fenestrated by two symmetrical eight-over-eight double-hung windows. The facade west of center is dominated by the two-story bay window that is fenestrated on the first story by a tall, 36-pane stationary window in the center flanked by two eight-over-eight triple-hung windows. The second story contains a shorter 30-pane stationary window in the center with two eight-over-twelve double-hung windows. This bay was designed to provide a little more interior room and also to balance the facade since the placement of the adjacent elevator shaft (the elevator was never installed) precluded the proper symmetrical placement of the windows. A small, multiple-pane oculus window adorns the stair landing between the bay windows and the center entrances at the junction of the two stories. Also of note on the rear elevation is the large eighteen-over-eighteen window on the east wing.

The interior of the house features a central staircase that spirals upward from the basement. At the time of construction, a carpenter skilled in wooden staircase construction could not be secured, and a simple concrete staircase with a wrought-iron railing was installed. In the late 1980's during the Bill Clinton governorship, a wood staircase with a delicate turned spindle balustrade was installed. Hanging in the staircase well at the first-story level is a chandelier that originally hung in the dining room. It was moved to its current location because it was deemed too overpowering in conjunction with the 9 1/2' ceiling (the second-story ceilings are one-half foot shorter). The door, window, and cornice moldings are of appropriate Classical designs, and the cornices are unusual in that they are executed in plaster. Also molded from plaster is the large, ornate circular relief on the ceiling of the first-story hall.

The Governor's Mansion Commission selected Bill Heerwagen to decorate the interior of the new mansion. A fitting choice, for Bill's grandfather, Paul, had been the interior decorator of the new state capitol building. Heerwagen decorated the two downstairs "public rooms" with seafoam green paint, carpet, wallcoverings, and nylon damask draperies.

Although the house was not initially constructed with air conditioning, provisions were made to house the chiller and cooling tower (only commercial units were available at the time). During the Orval Faubus administration, a gas air conditioning system was installed, but this system was upgraded by a more modern and conventional unit during Winthrop Rockefeller's tenure in the



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mansion.

The Governor's Mansion is still used for its original purpose and is virtually unaltered since construction.

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**Summary**

Pursuant to National Register Bulletin 22 (Criteria Consideration G), this nomination seeks to change the status of the Governor's Mansion from noncontributing to contributing to the National Register historic district which bears its name.

**Elaboration**

The Governor's Mansion is the first official residence constructed for the governor of the state of Arkansas. Constructed from 1948 to 1950, the Governor's Mansion occupies the original site of Rosewood, the home of the last Territorial governor, William Savin Fulton. Fulton came to Arkansas from Maryland in 1829 when he was appointed secretary of the territory by President Andrew Jackson. He became governor in 1835 and then served as a U.S. Senator until his death in 1844. Rosewood, a one-and-a-half story vernacular Greek Revival house, was constructed c. 1840 and was then considered in the country about a mile south of Little Rock. In 1869, Fulton's widow sold the house and eight acres to the State of Arkansas for the use of the Arkansas Blind Institute, which was founded in 1859 in Arkadelphia.

The Blind Institute immediately constructed a new two-story brick building with a mansard roof at what is now the southeast corner of Eighteenth and Spring Streets. An 1870 description of the site noted the land:

. . . [is] situated on and composes an elevation at the head of Center Street, with the Capitol Building (Old State House) in full view at the other end, connected and approached by a beautiful avenue one mile in length. The surface of the land is so cut and laid as to present a flat of great beauty and utility; enclosed with a stout, durable fence, and admirably laid off in walks and carriage roads, in the order of landscape gardening . .

By 1885, additional facilities were needed, and the state allocated \$20,000 for the construction of a new School for the Blind building about where the Governor's Mansion now stands (the existing building continued to be used). Designed by Benjamin J. Bartlett, the impressive new structure had a three-story main office and classroom building with a tall, central tower and flanking two-and-a-half story dormitory buildings connected by hyphens.

The Institute for the Blind moved to another location in 1939, and the Division of Vocational Education was established in the building. In late 1947, a Governor's Mansion building commission was appointed and was composed of Clyde E. Lowry of Little Rock, Jack Carnes

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of Camden, L. L. Baxter of Fayetteville, Ralph McDonald of Newport, Rufus Branch of Joiner, and Mrs. Earl Rhodes of Walnut Ridge. Governor Ben Laney and the 1948 state legislature appropriated \$100,000 to secure a site and construct Arkansas's first official governor's mansion. The commission selected the historic site at 1800 Center Street and decided on a "Southern Colonial style" residence. The architectural firm of Cromwell and Ginocchio was awarded the contract to design such a structure.

Edwin Cromwell, partner in charge, and John Truemper, project designer, designed the new mansion in a style faithful to the tenants of Thomas Jefferson's Roman Revival or Early Classical Revival style. Like the original style, the main body of the house is basically Adamesque, or Federal, in massing and detail, and the front facade is balanced symmetrically with only the larger first-story windows to indicate that it is not an original example. Inspired by the fenestration of Jefferson's Monticello, Truemper specified the distinctive triple-hung sash for these first-story windows (a feature that is also found occasionally in original Greek Revival-style houses in Arkansas). The central portico is also appropriate to the original concept with evenly spaced Tuscan columns and proper massing. In 1949 while under construction, two additional appropriations were made to add the flanking dependencies and interior furnishings. The dependencies were added to provide additional room, approximately 1,200 square feet to the original plan's 10,000 square feet. When completed, the Governor's Mansion was still relatively small compared to neighboring state's governor's mansions such as Louisiana (25,000 sq. ft.), Tennessee (15,000 sq. ft.), and Oklahoma (13,500 sq. ft.). The total cost of the construction including demolition of the Blind School, furnishings, and site improvements was \$197,000.

Although Governor Laney initiated the construction of the Governor's Mansion, his term ended before completion, and Sid McMath was the first governor to reside in the new mansion. His wife, Anne, influenced the final design of the house by requesting that the east wing, originally designed to be a screened porch, enclosed as a living room. The Governor's Mansion was only occasionally used for public functions during the tenures of McMath, Francis Cherry, and Orval Faubus. During Winthrop Rockefeller's two terms as governor, however, the mansion became more accessible to the public and was utilized more often for public functions. To accommodate this increased usage, the air conditioning system was reworked, the basement was finished, and additional, bigger restrooms were installed.

This nomination seeks to change the status of the Governor's Mansion from noncontributing to contributing to the National Register District which bears its name. According to National Register Bulletin 22, a property less than fifty years of age can contribute to a historic district if it is considered an "integral part" of the district. The Governor's Mansion Historic District

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is a predominantly residential area that encompasses the south-central portion of the Original City of Little Rock and parts of three additions that were platted a few years after the Civil War. The district is characterized by a typical 19th century grid pattern of development imposed on generally flat terrain. Throughout the district, broad tree-lined streets are bordered by curbs and sidewalks that date primarily from the early 20th century. The architectural character of the district is predominantly from the early 20th century; however, a sizable minority of the district's buildings were constructed in the late 19th century.

The district contains a number of Colonial Revival/Classical Revival-style residences that range from the late 19th century one-story transitional cottages to the large Classical Revival mansions such as the imposing Hotze House (NR 8/11/75) to the more correct "Georgian Revival" period houses of the 1930's. The architectural style of the Governor's Mansion fits nicely into this spectrum and is, in fact, the perfect anchor for the last phase of the Colonial Revival/Classical Revival style in Little Rock. Constructed from 1948 to 1950, the Governor's Mansion is the last example of its style to be constructed in the district, and though less than fifty years of age, its appearance is clearly the result of the conservative, pre-World War II mindset of the Governor's Mansion Commission.

Not only is the Governor's Mansion architecturally compatible with the historic architecture of the district, but it is the acknowledged focal point of the district. Just as the School for the Blind influenced the development of the surrounding residential neighborhood, the Governor's Mansion has influenced the more recent restoration efforts of the surrounding district by adding prestige and stability to the area. Because neighborhood residents used the Governor's Mansion as a landmark for identifying where they lived, the name "Governor's Mansion" was applied to both the original and amended district nominations.

As it is clear that the Governor's Mansion is indeed an integral part of the district which bears its name, it is being nominated under the guidelines set forth in National Register Bulletin 22 as a contributing resource to the district.

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Governor's Mansion Historic District  
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Pulaski County, ARKANSAS

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION ACCEPTED

Patty S. Chismar 11/22/93

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Beaumont Commercial District (Boundary and Period of Significance increase)  
Beaumont, Jefferson County, Texas

### Change in status from "Non-contributing" to "Contributing"

The First Security National Bank is exceptionally significant, merits individual listing, and is the primary reason why a second period of significance is being added to the nomination.



06-032  
First Security National Bank, 1963  
505 Orleans  
Contributing

The First Security National Bank, not mentioned in the original nomination, was submitted to the Texas Historical Commission and the National Park Service for evaluation as a federal tax credit project in 2006. In August 2006, the NPS approved Part 1 of the Investment Tax Credit application for the building, with the concurrence that the building would contribute to the district if the period of significance were extended to include the 1963.

The First Security National Bank building was designed by Beaumont architect Llewellyn W. Pitts of the firm Pitts Mebane & Phelps. The bank was founded in 1889 when Beaumont had a population of 3,200 citizens and its economy was based on lumber, railroads and cattle. The discovery of the nearby Spindletop oil field in 1901 overwhelmed the bank, and that same year the American National Bank was established and remained a competitor.

The building is a steel-framed structure with glass walls screened by a cast concrete sun screen designed by Herring Coe and accented with small marble chips and marble dust. Jonathan W. "Jack" Evans, of Evans-Monica, Inc. of Houston produced the interior design that included original artworks, woven wall hangings from Mexico and Japan, and imported furnishings and decorative arts from Sweden, Italy and Norway. When then Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnston visited Beaumont in September of 1963, he was photographed in front of the building. A Texas Historical Commission subject marker was placed in the ground floor entry lobby on November 7, 1966 noting its importance as the oldest bank between Houston and the Louisiana border. True to many financial institutions, the bank experienced a series of purchases and mergers and went under during the oil bust of the 1980s. The building was vacant between 1993 and 2006, but is undergoing rehabilitation is partially occupied. A more extensive history of the bank and the building is included in Section 8 of this nomination.

### 1963 First Security National Bank - Description

The First Security Bank building is located on the southeast corner of Orleans and Bowie in downtown Beaumont's Central Business District. The setting is urban and the corner site is surrounded by sidewalks. The five-story Formalist style building is composed of the three classical building elements: base, shaft and capital, expressed in the modern idiom with *pilotis* with glass infill (base), a sculptural concrete screen (shaft) and a recessed clerestory with dramatic cantilevered roof overhang (capital). The marble clad *pilotis* define the bay arrangement on the ground floor. Floors two through four largely read as a mono-façade with regularly-spaced vertical aluminum structural members that support the textured concrete screen. The fifth floor clerestory is a running band of windows supported by aluminum framing with a

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Beaumont Commercial District (Boundary and Period of Significance Increase)  
Beaumont, Jefferson County, Texas

projecting roof. There is an elevator penthouse set back from the edge of the roof as well as a full and partial sub-basement. The building was designed to be six stories and was changed to five during construction.

The building is reminiscent of the architectural detailing of Edward Durell Stone, architect of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., the United State Pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair, the US Embassy in New Delhi, India and the "Lollipop Building" at 2 Columbus Circle in New York City, site of a recent mid-century modern preservation debate. The structure of the Beaumont building is two thousand tons of structural steel and the element most evocative of Stone's influence is the concrete grille or solar screen that shields the building from the harsh Texas sun. The screen is made of concrete with white Portland cement and marble dust added and was sculpted by Herring Coe, a well-respected regional sculptor.

Clear expressions of the Modern movement include the building siting which is inset from the dominant block face of the adjacent 15-story San Jacinto building and the typical urban pattern of the surrounding neighborhood. Other modern features include the materials, graphics and hardware and the sophisticated incorporation of the parking garage within the rectangular urban footprint.

Only the first floor base of the building is inset from the dominant block face. The building returns to meet the established setback of its neighbor on floors two through four with a cantilevered sculptural concrete screen that provides a sun shade to the floor-to-ceiling window walls behind. At the fifth floor (capital), there is a clerestory window wall deeply setback from the main building plane and protected by a dramatically cantilevered flat roof slab that juts out just short of realigning itself with the mid-section (concrete screen) of the building.

The east façade faces a surface parking lot and is primarily brick with concrete curbs and metal railings that give a glimpse of the parking garage ramps. On the eastern-most corner of the north façade are two driveways leading in and out of the incorporated multi-level parking garage. The south façade shares a party wall with the adjacent San Jacinto building. There are three flag poles at the eave that are hung perpendicular to the façade far above the main set of entry doors on Orleans.

The ground floor of the building is composed of white marble clad steel *pilotis*, or free standing columns, on a regular grid with floor-to-ceiling aluminum framed glass wall infill. There is a continuous 5-inch running band of grey granite under the window walls, a detail typical of the Modern era that enhances the weightless and transparency of the glass wall. The pedestrian level is protected by a continuous projecting canopy that is the under story of the concrete screen.

Largely cast from molds, the concrete screen panels each measure approximately 9 feet x 5 feet, and also have some removable elements attached with adhesive. Continuous metal dowels run continuously through each panel and the vertical aluminum support framing and are anchored at the building corners. The screen design is very three-dimensional and sculptural and composed of a repetitive triangular shape with a deeply recessed center void with stylized florets on each projecting corner.

The main building entrance is on Orleans and consists of two sets of paired aluminum framed doors with a small narrow fixed window between them. The door set is flanked by large fixed aluminum framed glass panels evoking sidelights. Above the doors is a single light transom with the building name in Bank Gothic font.



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Beaumont Commercial District (Boundary and Period of Significance Increase)  
Beaumont, Jefferson County, Texas

The building appears to be a symmetrical rectangle yet close inspection at the ground floor reveals a flexible design of the bays to accommodate changing use. A typical bay on the ground floor is divided into three aluminum framed glass panels per bay. Variations to this standard include four or eight panels, as well as secondary public and service doors. The parking garage, an urban necessity by the 1960s, is cleverly incorporated into the building with access from driveways on the eastern-most end of the Bowie façade. The trapezoidal-shaped parking attendant booth is aluminum framed and in-filled with clear and black glass.

The interior includes a sub-basement, basement, lobby, banking lobby, mezzanine deck, and office suites. The fifth floor originally housed the Trust Department and the Beaumont Club. The ground floor lobby is primarily a transition space with several offices partitioned by aluminum framed glass walls and doors. There are two escalators that connect to the second floor main banking lobby, the main ceremonial space of the building. The banking lobby is a large and dramatic space with terrazzo floors, a 20-foot ceiling height and corresponding window walls. The lobby is open plan and receives natural light filtered by the exterior concrete screen. The banking teller stations are laminated wood grain wainscoting with a thick white marble. The ceiling has an elaborate continuous chandelier made up of small metal cards hung in a regular grid pattern. Alterations from the early and late 1970s partially obscured the expansive view out of both window walls yet the experience and volume of the space has not been diminished.

Originally the mezzanine was to overlook the banking lobby, however this was changed during the original construction and the space was reutilized for air handling equipment. The remaining upper floors are nondescript office use with period detailing and hardware, floor-to-ceiling windows and varying wood veneers. The fifth floor originally housed the Trust Department and the Beaumont club and has a higher ceiling than the typical office floors. Modern detailing such as aluminum air-conditioning floor grates and wooden wall panels are original, as are the wooden doors. The original furr downs are pushed back from the window walls and the ceiling is textured.



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**(06-001) Coale Building**

The Coale building is an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century commercial building in the heart of the historic African-American business district. The building is a good example of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century two-part commercial block. In the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century, the northern half of Block 51 in downtown Beaumont where the Coale building is located, was residential and Sanborn maps show single-family frame dwellings on the site until 1902 when they were replaced with two-story frame commercial buildings. In 1904, the frame commercial buildings on the site of the present Coale building were clad in masonry or metal and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial tenants included barbers, clothes cleaners, saloons, restaurants, pool halls and tailors. City directories from 1909 through the early 1920s list the tenants as African-American. A Sanborn map from 1923 shows no building on the site and a new masonry structure, the current building, appears by 1931.

Ray Coale was born in Beaumont and attended Beaumont schools until he went into the Navy during WWI. Upon his return, he founded the Coale Lumber Company and operated the company for over 40 years. The lumber company was located at what is now MLK Blvd and Fannin. He also owned and operated Coale's Appliances. City directories confirm that the "Appliance/Refrigeration Department" of the Coale Lumber Company operated a showroom in the Coale building in the 1950s.

**(A-9) The Antioch Baptist Church**

The Antioch Baptist Church was built in 1923 and designed by local architect and Louisiana native, A. Babin. The congregation grew out of a group of worshipers that held services in the Jefferson County Courthouse prior to the Emancipation Proclamation of 1865. Led by Reverend A. Venerable, services were moved from the courthouse to a live oak tree and in 1868, the group organized the Liveoak Baptist Church. Eighty-five members withdrew in 1894 and organized Antioch Baptist Church. On December 29, 1894, Rev. Venerable and his congregants purchased lot 412, Block 57 at 527 Forsythe Street from Charles Charlton, Sr., a former slave, for \$500.00. In 1896, the first sanctuary was erected yet it was lost in a storm due to its poor construction.<sup>23</sup>

In 1923-1934, the extant church building was constructed in phases as funds became available. The original cornerstone gives the construction date as A.D. 1923. A church history published by the congregants noted the phased construction. The architect was A. Babin, a Louisiana native who practiced locally. Babin is notable for his partnership with Fred C. Stone in the design of the 1931-32 Jefferson County Courthouse in Beaumont, a National Register of Historic Places listed property.

**Exceptional Significance of the First Security National Bank Building**

First Security National Bank, 1962-63  
505 Orleans  
Contributing, Exceptionally Significant

The First Security National Bank, not mentioned in the original National Register nomination despite its central location in the district, is exceptionally significant at the local level, and merits listing in the National Register as a contributing

<sup>23</sup> Antioch Missionary Baptist Church History. Beaumont: The Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, historical Research Committee, 1998, pages 1-6.

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building in the district. In August 2006, the NPS approved Part 1 of the Investment Tax Credit application for the building. The building is significant under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development for its association with renewed interest in establishing downtown Beaumont as a major regional banking center by the largest bank in the area, and Criterion C in the area of Architecture, as an outstanding example of a modern multistory multifunctional office building utilizing perforated concrete screens on its major elevations. The building was designed by Beaumont architect Llewellyn W. Pitts of the firm Pitts, Mebane & Phelps, the most prominent architecture firm in Beaumont throughout the mid-twentieth century.

The building is a steel-framed structure with glass walls screened by a cast concrete sun screen designed by Herring Coe and accented with small marble chips and marble dust. Jonathan W. "Jack" Evans, of Evans-Monica, Inc. of Houston produced the interior design that included original artworks, woven wall hangings from Mexico and Japan, and imported furnishings and decorative arts from Sweden, Italy and Norway. When then-Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnston visited Beaumont in September of 1963, he was photographed in front of the building. A Texas Historical Commission subject marker was placed in the ground floor entry lobby on November 7, 1966 noting its importance as the oldest bank between Houston and the Louisiana border. True to most financial institutions, the bank experienced a series of purchases and mergers and went under during the oil bust of the 1980s. The building was vacant between 1993 and 2006, but portions of it are currently occupied by offices (including the Beaumont Main Street program), the banking floor is used for large meetings and events, while spaces on the upper floors await rehabilitation by the current owner.

### History of the Bank and Construction of the 1962-63 Building<sup>24</sup>

The bank was founded (as First National Bank) in 1889 when Beaumont had a population of 3,200 citizens and its economy was based on lumber, railroads and cattle. In May 1891, the bank directors purchased a central city lot at 341 Pearl Street for \$1,200. The discovery of the nearby Spindletop oil field in 1901 overwhelmed the bank, and that same year the American National Bank was established and remained a competitor. Beaumont was awash with oil speculators and developers, some of whom became very rich in the process. In 1919, the bank merged with the Gulf National bank and became First National Bank of Beaumont and located its offices in the Gilbert Building. The bank moved into the building at 495 Orleans in 1937 (property A-46, contributing). Through the 1940s, the First National Bank and American National Bank remained tough competitors, roughly equal in assets (\$40 million and \$38 million, respectively, in the late 1940s), with the smaller Security State Bank a distant third.

In 1952, John E. Gray became Executive Vice-President and Director of the bank, and under his direction, the bank grew enormously. In 1959, Gray became bank president, just as the bank began to undertake its most ambitious building project.<sup>25</sup> When American National Bank announced its plans for the American Center complex in 1959, First National Bank countered with its own expansion plans, confirming that that bank had taken options on a large parcel on the block immediately south of its current headquarters. In August 1961, First National announced a merger with Security State Bank, approved by the comptroller of the currency in October. A groundbreaking ceremony took place on November 2, 1961, with director Gray and Security Bank founder Otis Fuller lifting dirt from the site from a trash can. A press release published in the *Beaumont Enterprise* gushed:

<sup>24</sup> This section adapted from Penny Louisa Clark, "The Historical and Architectural Significance of the First Security National Bank," Submitted as documentation for the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit Application, Part 1, June 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Clark, pp. 8-9.

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This consolidation will provide Beaumont and the Sabine Neches area with a bank of size and capital strength commensurate with the requirements of this rapidly developing area. The union of these fine old Beaumont Banking institution will bring together a vast amount of proven bank experience which will enable the new bank to substantially increase its service to the community and the area.<sup>26</sup>

The bank's 1961 annual report boasted that "this magnificent structure more than a year in planning will be an outstanding addition to the city of Beaumont. . . it will provide the finest banking facilities available anywhere."<sup>27</sup> In December of 1961 the bank announced the purchase of two properties adjacent to the San Jacinto Building. The construction would enable them to keep up with their competitor, the American National Bank. The 1962 annual report again extolled the new building, describing it as "a symbol of progress in the Beaumont area...it will be truly 'Enough Difference to make a Difference.' A Big Difference."<sup>28</sup>

The bank constructed an enclosed twelve-by-six-foot press box at the construction site so onlookers could safely watch the building in progress. It featured two bleachers which could seat fifteen people behind a plate glass window. Two thousand tons of A-36 high strength steel fabricated by Orleans Material Company of New Orleans went into the framework, and upon its completion in June 1962, and construction workers marked the occasion by mounting a ceremonial tree to the top of the frame.

During the last phase of construction in early 1963, solar screens designed to shield the floors from excess sunlight were installed. Designed by Matchett Herring Coe, the screens were made of precast concrete composed of white cement and marble dust. Each section was treated with a water-proofing material which made it impervious to the effects of weather. Encasing the building between the second and fourth floors, each section was hoisted in place by a crane and attached to steel uprights by stainless steel bolts. The uprights were covered with silver anodized aluminum mullion covers containing neoprene strips. The screens, which cover the upper floors on the Bowie and Orleans street elevations were made up of 361 individually cast panels weighing over 2,000 pounds each.

The new building provided the bank with more than three times the floor space of their previous building. The north half was devoted to the banking lobby and offices, while the southern half held the drive-in bank and 37,000 square foot parking garage, with room for 130 vehicles. The ground floor of the motor bank featured five drive-in windows and a special security area for large commercial deposits. The Beaumont Club, the premier local business and social club, occupied 19,000 square feet of floor space on the fourth floor above the parking garage. Founded in 1922, the Beaumont Club provided meeting spaces, a private restaurant and bar for its members in the new building. The fifth floor housed the Community Room and the Golden Triangle Room, two rooms designed for meetings, and the Trust Department. The Community Room featured a huge aerial map of Jefferson County which covered one wall. The Golden Triangle Room displayed a large metal and plastic map of the Golden Triangle of East Texas, showing the location of cities and industries in the area.

The completion of the bank brought praise from the local press. Upon its completion, the *Beaumont Enterprise* reported that the "pride and satisfaction are justified. The building, sheathed on the street sides in a unique solar screen would be a credit to a city thrice the size of Beaumont. It is in every way a masterpiece of modern architecture."

<sup>26</sup> Clark, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> "First Security National Bank of Beaumont, Annual Report, 1961." On file at the Tyrell Historical Library archives, Beaumont.

<sup>28</sup> "First Security National Bank of Beaumont, Annual Report, 1962." On file at the Tyrell Historical Library archives, Beaumont.



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The bank's interior was designed to illustrate the progressive thinking of the bank's leaders, and press releases noted that the new building was unlike banks of the past which featured "haughty and inaccessible bankers, iron grills around tellers, tin ceilings, and ceiling fans." Instead, the new bank featured open counters to make the customer feel "as if he were chatting with his next door neighbor across a back yard fence." The bank wished to present an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness. Bank president John E. Gray said, "We believe the bank is the heart of a community and as such it should be a place of warmth and efficiency."

Jonathan W. "Jack" Evans, president of Evans-Monica, Inc. of Houston was hired to design the decor of the new bank. Evans' design involved luxury goods imported from all parts of the globe, including included original paintings, wall hangings woven in Mexico and Japan, lamps with bases of teak, marble, and walnut, and ash trays imported from Sweden, Italy, and Norway. The safe deposit vault area had eggshell vinyl wall covering with accents of black, gold leaf and glistening stainless steel. The tables had white marble and oiled walnut tops and bases of stainless steel. The blue handwoven lower level lobby rug was imported from Puerto Rico. The first floor featured off-white vinyl wall coverings with teak and walnut paneling and off-white Venetian Terrazzo. The counter tops and columns were of the purest white marble. The counters and desks were of teak. The draperies, woven in Italy, were of natural linen net. The second floor featured walls paneled in teak. President John Gray's office featured cherry paneling, a teak desk and teak storage units.

One of the modern features of bank was its drive-in bank which provided protection against inclement weather. It included five teller windows, a night depository, and parking for commercial depositors. The bank boasted of a "self-parking system, unique among southeast Texas enables a customer to drive directly to a parking level near the floor where he has business and go directly to his appointment." An editorial in the *Beaumont Enterprise* proclaimed:

How banking has changed! It used to be a bare minimum of take-in-and-pay-out functions in a cell-block atmosphere of caged tellers...now it has become a department store operation -- a department store of financial service and spacious dimensions and elegant decor... I found space and airiness and marble and glass and escalator transport and quiet efficiency on its two main banking floors I found thick carpets, handsome drapes, modern art, furniture upholstered in warm hues, attractive customer lounges, and well appointed offices on three floors.

The editorial also praised the bank's use of modern art:

The presence of so many excellent pieces of modern art in the bank building it seems to me is a dual accomplishment—both for the bank and for the contemporary art form...Its an achievement for the newest in good art in that it has been accepted as a decorative motif for a conservative financial house....Its an achievement for the bank because it represents a progressive state of mind, a refusal to be fastened to the past, a recognition that we do indeed live in the 1960s, a willingness to blend cultural beauty with a cultural facility.

The *Beaumont Journal* praised the building as "gorgeous."

The bank proudly celebrated the opening of the luxurious new building with over two weeks of events. There were special private parties for the people who constructed the building, bank staff, directors, stockholders, media, farmers, and business and civic leaders. A group of twenty one women – bank employees dubbed the "Golden Girls" – gave tours, and

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lobby displays played up the new interest in modern design and related technologies. Lobby displays included experimental cars and a microwave oven. The bank gave every guest souvenirs, including a card with a brand new quarter attached and the message, "Welcome to Our Shiny New Quarters." The bank was officially opened to the public on June 22, 1963. President Gray gave the dedicatory statement, in which he expressed his faith in the future of Beaumont, explaining that "We have built this magnificent building because we believe in the future of Beaumont we believe in the future of Southeast Texas and we believe in the future of the bank."

### **Chorology of First Security National Bank, 1963-1993.<sup>29</sup>**

By the end of 1964, the bank had deposits in excess of one hundred million dollars, making it the first financial institution in Southeast Texas to achieve that milestone. The year also marked the beginning of an electronic data processing department, one of its kind in the southwestern United States. During the final months of 1964 First Security installed an NCR 315 computer.

A major event in the bank's history took place on September 30, 1969 when the Security National Corporation was formed. The one-bank holding company was the first company of its type headquartered in Southeast Texas. The corporation would in time grow to include five banks in Southeast Texas and five in the Dallas area. In 1970 the bank installed a third computer, a NCR Century 200, which enabled the bank to offer an on-line billing system for a major industrial customer. In 1971 the bank merged into the First Security National Corporation, acquiring several banks in southeast Texas, Dallas, and Fort Worth. In December 1972, the Corporation's total resources exceeded two hundred million dollars for the first time.

The data processing division continued to grow, processing the financial records of thirty savings and loans with 400,000 accounts and combined assets of 1.2 billion dollars. In 1972 First Security's data processing department became First Security Financial Systems, Inc., a subsidiary of the corporation. In 1975 the Electronic Data Processing division had once again made substantial gains, providing services to 45 savings and loans in Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana; 25 Texas banks, and 2 Texas credit unions. In January 1978, First Security National Bank became First Security National Bank of Beaumont, N.A. In October of that year, directors of First Security National Corporation and First City Bancorporation of Houston approved a proposed merger of the two corporations, with First Security to become a subsidiary of that corporation. The merger of First City Bancorporation and the First Security National Corporation made it the largest bank holding company in Texas.

In 1980 the bank announced plans to remodel the building at a cost \$700,000. They planned to refurbish and rearrange the bank's retail and commercial lending areas, and convert the old drive-in facilities to add 8000 square feet to the bank's first floor, which would enable the bank to move its installment loan facilities, tellers, and other consumer lending services to the first floor. In 1983, the First Security National Bank was renamed First City National Bank of Beaumont. Meanwhile, the parent company, First City Bancorporation of Texas encountered difficulties in the mid 1980s due to the crash the oil prices and real estate values in Houston, which would ultimately bring financial ruin to the entire corporation. In 1986 First City Bancorp reported a loss of \$232.4 million in the first quarter, a notable change from the previous year's first quarter when the corporation reported earnings of \$8.9 million. In May 1986, the First City Bankcorporation of Texas, Inc. sold the data processing center to Flserv Inc. of Milwaukee to raise badly needed cash. It had been the

<sup>29</sup> This section adapted from Penny Louisa Clark, "The Historical and Architectural Significance of the First Security National Bank," Submitted as documentation for the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit Application, Part 1, June 2006.

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computer nerve center for 220 banks and thrifts in Texas and Louisiana., processing the checks and deposits of 2.2 million accounts along the Gulf Coast. Located in the underground levels of the bank it included eleven mainframe computers and 118 disk drives.

In October 1986 the City of Beaumont held the bank responsible for the loss of twenty million dollars in investments. The City contended that the Bank had failed to obtain the required two signatures of top city officials to release funds. The Bank and the City reached an agreement with the bank agreeing to pay the City a million dollars in damages. Unfortunately, economic woes of the corporation only mounted. The Corporation lost \$402 million dollars in 1986.

In September of 1987, the FDIC announced a plan to bail out First City Bancorporation with \$500 million in privately raised capital and a billion dollars from the FDIC. Control of First City would pass to a group of investors headed by A. Robert Abboud, a banking executive from Chicago. While depositors were insured, the shareholders would own only 2.5% of the company's common stock after the changeover. FDIC chair, L. William Seidman explained that "This is no bailout for the old shareholders or the old bank management. For their purposes the bank failed." In 1990, the bank changed its name to First City, Texas. Financial woes continued to plague the organization. In October 30th of 1992 the FDIC declared First City Bancorporation of Texas insolvent. It seized and renamed all of the holding company's banks. First City's seizure represented the largest bank failure in the United States in 1992 and the eighth largest ever. In January of 1993 late January of 1993 the FDIC accepted the bid from Texas Commerce Bancshares to buy five First City banks in Beaumont, Houston, Dallas, El Paso, and Midland for a combined \$346.8 million. The Justice Department received several complaints about Texas Commerce's take over of the New First City in Beaumont including the potential for layoffs and an unfair advantage in the marketplace. Acquisition of First City in Beaumont would give Texas Commerce 28.1 % of all deposits in Beaumont. The Justice Department ordered Texas Commerce to divest itself of two branches in Beaumont and a half million dollars in commercial loans. On February 24, 1993 Texas Commerce Bank officially acquired the New First City, Texas Beaumont bank. In March 1993 the Texas Commerce Bank announced that it would vacate the downtown building at 505 Orleans in May. Dan Hallmark, chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Texas Commerce Bank, said that their bank at 510 Park could contain the banking operations previously housed at the former First City building. Hallmark said that "while no one wants to see vacant building in downtown Beaumont, I'm confident that the building won't be vacant long." The building, unfortunately, remained empty until 2006.

### Architectural Significance of the First Security National Bank

The First Security National Bank Building is exceptionally significant at the local level and merits inclusion in the historic district as a contributing property for many reasons. Designed by one of the most prolific and important architects in Beaumont, the building is an outstanding example of the work of Llewellyn Pitts, and represent his highest achievement in Beaumont at the pinnacle of his career. The bank was Pitts' largest project in Beaumont while he headed the firm Pitts, Mebane and White, and is the most prominent example of mid-century modern design in the city.

New Formalist Architecture, of which the bank is a prime example, emerged in the 1960s in response to the rigid forms of modernism, and represented an effort to merge 20<sup>th</sup> century building technology with classical architectural tenets regarding building proportion and scale. The movement embraced the reintroduction of highly stylized classical columns and entablatures, and the use of colonnades as a compositional devices, but also took advantage of advancements in concrete technology which allowed the cost-effective use of umbrella shells, waffle slabs and folded plates. Nationwide, the style was applied mainly to large-scale banking institutions and public buildings, including auditoriums, libraries, and museums. Buildings designed in the style have a carefully-organized hierarchy of space, with an exterior emphasis on the



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construction grid of the building, in the form of single volume. Many examples have an exotic flavor with rich exterior wall surfaces of cast stone, concrete, and marble.

The First Security Bank building is a clear expression of these architectural ideals successfully placed into Beaumont's late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century urban core. Modernist buildings such as these were typically placed outside of urban centers where they took advantage of the availability of new and previously undeveloped land. Site improvements usually included formal landscaping and surface parking - spatially a clear break from the space restrictions and uniform block face of the urban core. The architects of First Security Bank carefully allowed the building its modernist expression, accommodated the post-war need for on-site parking and cleverly fit the building into the urban streetscape. The recessed ground floor allows for a suburban and expansive feel at the street level due to the wider sidewalk and the transparency of the glass window walls. This clear break from the existing block face is rectified at the second level as the building cantilevers back out to reunite itself with its predecessors.

The building is distinctive in many regards, from its innovative attached multi-story parking (meant to facilitate easy access by the increasing number of customers who arrived in their personal cars), to its carefully-planned layout that accommodated numerous functions within a rectangular plan. Most important, however, is that the building employs one of the most extensive installations of perforated concrete solar screens in the state of Texas. From the late 1950s through the mid-1960s, perforated concrete screens were commonly utilized throughout the U.S. as inexpensive means to shade glass curtain walls, but their use was most common in sunbelt states such as Texas. Architect Edward Durell Stone is the American architect most commonly associated with perforated concrete blocks, as he employed them in many of his major commissions, including the 1954 U.S. embassy in New Delhi and the AIA-award winning Stuart Company headquarters in Pasadena, California. The use of this material dramatically increased in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as evidenced by numerous examples in both articles and advertisements in national trade journals, such as *Concrete Products*, but also in regional architecture journals, including *Texas Architect*, published by the Texas Society of Architects. Many Texas companies offered a variety of 1-foot-square mass-produced blocks that could be laid in simple grids, with 2-dimensional designs generally restricted within the square. By the early 1960s, tapered blocks became more common, with angled or curved sidewalls.<sup>30</sup>

The concrete screen on the First Security Bank Building, however, is distinguished from most installations of concrete solar screens because of the complexity and depth of the pattern, the size of panels, and the fact that the concrete panels were not mass-produced but designed by noted sculptor Herring Coe for use on only one building. Each cast concrete screen panel measures approximately 9 feet by 5 feet, and also have some removable elements attached to the back with adhesive. The screen design is very three-dimensional and sculptural and composed of a repetitive triangular shape with a deeply recessed center void with stylized florets on each projecting corner.

**Sculptor Matchett Herring Coe** (1907-1999) was born in Loeb (near present-day Lumberton), Texas and lived in the Beaumont area most of his life. He graduated from Lamar College, received additional training at the Cranbrook Academy. His works include the 1936 statue of Confederate hero Dick Dowling at Sabine Pass, Texas, commission by the State of Texas for the Texas Centennial commemoration, and the 1939 cenotaph memorial near the site of the New London, Texas school explosion, which killed nearly 300 students and teachers in 1937. Most of Beaumont's signature buildings of the 1930s were embellished by Coe's work, including the Jefferson County Courthouse, the Jack Brooks

<sup>30</sup> Anthony Rubano, "The Grille is Gone: The Rise and Fall of Screen Block," in *Preserving the Recent Past 2*, edited by Deborah Slaton and William G. Foulks. Historic Preservation Education Foundation, et al, 2000., pp 3-90 through 3-92.

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Federal Building, and the First National Bank. His best known work is probably the statue of Dick Dowling at Sabine Pass. His public sculpture also includes building reliefs at Houston City Hall (with Raoul Josset), the Fondren Library at Rice University, Lamar University, and buildings at the Houston Zoo. Coe also designed the statue of the Texas Confederate Veteran at the Vicksburg National Military Park in Mississippi. Herring Coe also created the statue of the Texas Confederate Veteran featured at the Vicksburg National Military Park in Mississippi. Coe exhibited works at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, and the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Coe's sculpture was largely representational, but his contribution the exterior of the First Security Bank Building – the building's most distinctive feature – demonstrates his talent in creating rich geometric forms.<sup>31</sup>

**Architect Llewellyn William "Skeek" Pitts** (1906-1967) was born in Uniontown, Alabama, and received a B.S. in Architecture at the Georgia School of Technology in 1927. In 1929 he joined Beaumont architect Fred C. Stone as a draftsman, and worked on major commissions including Beaumont's U.S. Post Office and Court House (at the north end of the district) and the Jefferson County Courthouse (NRHP 1982). In 1934, Pitts joined Stone in the firm Stone and Pitts, which quickly became the most prominent firm in the region. Projects completed in the 1930s demonstrated the firm's skill at producing modernistic designs, best exemplified in the Art Deco style City National Bank Building (just to north of the 1963 bank) and Greyhound Bus Terminal (demolished), but also moderne movie theaters in Beaumont, Kilgore, and Longview. Residences designed by firm during the 1930s – located most in an upper-class subdivision at the western edge of Beaumont – reflect more traditional revival styles popular at the time, including colonial and neoclassical.<sup>32</sup> During World War II, the firm designed the Riverside Housing Project in Orange (demolished), built to house shipyard workers. Pitts served as a Lt. Commander C.E.C. in the US Naval Reserve from 1942 through 1945.<sup>33</sup>

After the war, the firm of Stone & Pitts (and its successor firms) took on larger commercial, industrial and governmental projects, winning several awards in the process, and leaving its mark on downtown Beaumont and its immediate area, accounting for over two dozen original buildings and remodeling projects. Commercial and industrial projects from this period (through Pitts' death in 1967) utilized modern forms and materials, and included the White House Department Store, Rosenthal's Department Store (demolished), nineteen Coca-Cola bottling plants throughout the central United States, and numerous projects (mostly laboratories and office buildings) for petrochemical companies in southeast Texas, including ten buildings for Gulf Oil, two buildings for Mobil Oil, three buildings for Shell oil, and five separate projects for Texaco that included a 20-building research center. The firm also completed two college master plans, 37 buildings for five universities, numerous public school projects for seven independent school districts, and four banks.<sup>34</sup> Fred Stone retired in 1957, and the firm changed its name to Pitts, Mebane and Phelps. Aside from the First Security National Bank Building, the firm's other major commissions in the 1960s included the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City (with Brooks Barr Graeber & White of Austin), and the U.S. Department of Labor Building in Washington, DC.

Pitts was elected to the College of Fellows of the AIA in 1958. He served as president of the Texas State Society of Architects 1961, and director of the AIA's Texas Region from 1963 to 1966. He served as the governor-appointed chairman of the Architectural Advisory Committee to the Texas State Building Commission from 1959 to 1962. At the

<sup>31</sup> New London School Explosion website, <http://www.nlse.org/coe.html>, (accessed January 10, 2008). See also <http://www.plakainc.com/coegallery001.html>.

<sup>32</sup> Dorcy L.H. Walter, AIA Emeritus, "The Story of Stone & Pitts, Architects 1929-2003." On file at the Tyrell Historical Library Archives, Beaumont.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Walter's document includes a thorough project list, sorted by decade.



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local level, Pitts served as Director of the First Security National Bank, President of the Beaumont Country Club, Rotary Club, and a consultant to the Beaumont City Planning Commission.<sup>35</sup> Upon Pitts' death in 1967, the Texas Society of Architects named its highest award in his honor.

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<sup>35</sup> "L. W. Pitts, World Renowned Architect Dies." *Beaumont Enterprise*, June 24, 1967. Biographical Sketch (1965) on file with the Texas Society of Architects, Austin.