

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

For NPS use only

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

received DEC 20 1984

date entered

JAN 18 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Whitney National Bank (Poydras Branch); formerly Metropolitan Bank Building

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number Poydras & Camp Sts. (610 Poydras or 501 Camp) N/A not for publication

city, town New Orleans N/A vicinity of

state LA code 22 county Orleans Parish code 071

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Whitney National Bank Attn: Mr. Gaetano Ponti (504-586-7180)

street & number P. O. Box 61260

city, town New Orleans N/A vicinity of state LA 70130

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Department of Conveyance, City Hall

street & number 1300 Perdido

city, town New Orleans state LA 70112

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title LA Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Whitney National Bank Building (1909) is a seven story brick Beaux Arts commercial building located on a corner lot in the New Orleans central business district. The building's architecturally significant features were recently restored and are in an almost perfect state of preservation.

The bank features a rounded front corner with a corner entrance, which is a fairly standard commercial formula of the period. It derives distinction from its rich and occasionally flamboyant Beaux Arts styling.

The rusticated base contains a basilica style banking hall featuring rows of Roman Doric columns and an apse at each end. The hall is entered by means of an elaborate vestibule with heavy arches, large garland moldings, and a double frieze. The lower frieze contains fretwork, while the upper frieze contains boldly formed festoons. The vestibule is surmounted by a dome with egg and dart molded coffers and a garland molded oculus.

The banking hall is almost pure white with white marble columns and white painted decorative plaster. This majestic whiteness was the intended effect apparently. Brightness is increased by round arch glass openings. The columns have egg and dart bases and echini. The capitals are ornamented with fluting, medallions, and consoles. The ceiling is a system of paneled entablatures with modillion and denticular cornices as well as garlands. Atop each column is an elaborate brincade panel.

The upper stories of the building are more or less standard office spaces of various periods. As far as the State Historic Preservation Office is aware, there is nothing worthy of architectural note in the interior above the first floor.

With the exception of the base, the exterior of the building is mainly brick. The Baroque corner entrance, which is set in a grand niche, consists of free-standing Roman Doric columns, a curved entablature, and a large festooned cartouche. The niche itself is surmounted by cornucopia motifs, brincade, and an ornamental parapet. Most of the ground floor openings have Roman looking round arches surmounted by over-scaled consoles. The ground story also features brincade panels and a fretwork band.

Except for the seventh story and the large parapet, the upper stories are unadorned. The upper portion of the building is treated with a heavy undulating cornice supported by pairs of consoles set between the bays. The parapet consists of a set of flat niches surmounted by segmental pediments on consoles. Each niche contains a flame finial term.

Assessment of Integrity:

The only major change in the building since construction has been the gradual remodeling of the office spaces. This has not affected the building's main architectural elements--i.e., the exterior and the banking hall.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1909 **Builder/Architect** Architects: Diboll, Owen & Goldstein

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criterion C

The Whitney National Bank is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is an important example of the work of a noted New Orleans architectural firm and because it is a landmark in the architectural heritage of the New Orleans central business district.

When one considers the entire early twentieth century (1900-1930), Favrot and Livaudais and Emile Weil clearly emerge as the two most prominent architectural practitioners in New Orleans. But in the very early years of the century the firm of Diboll, Owen and Goldstein was a strong contender for architectural preeminence. Major Owen, one of the firm's principals, was editor of Architectural Art and Its Allies, the city's major architectural publication of the period. The firm designed the International House in 1906, which at that time was the city's tallest building. Other commissions include the Sacred Heart Academy, Notre Dame Roman Catholic Church on Carrollton, the City Hall Annex, the New Orleans Public Library, and the United Fruit Company Building, as well as various apartments and residences. There has never been a scholarly study to evaluate these large firms and their ultimate artistic worth. But suffice it to say that these eclectic practitioners represented the predominant taste of their day in New Orleans. Among them they created a body of work which was very influential in its time and set the tone for building throughout the city.

The Whitney National Bank is important as an example of Diboll, Owen and Goldstein's work because although it is not the grandest, it is the best preserved of the firm's commercial buildings. Moreover, the banking hall is thought to be the only example of a large pretentious commercial interior designed by the firm which survives intact.

The bank is also significant because it is one of a limited number of major examples of the Beaux Arts style in the New Orleans central business district. This can be seen in its rich exterior ornamentation and its impressive interior public spaces.

Historical Note:

The building in question was built to serve as the headquarters of the Metropolitan Bank. It was purchased in 1918 by the Whitney Bank (now the Whitney National Bank) and has been a branch of that bank ever since.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Plans and drawings of Metropolitan Bank Building prepared by Diboll, Owen and Goldstein, Published in Architectural Art and Its Allies, August, 1909, Copy in Register file, LA SHPO.

Personal communication with Michael Eversmeyer, Architectural Historian, New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property @1/4th of an acre

Quadrangle name New Orleans East, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to enclosed scale plat map. Boundaries were chosen to encompass the lot on which the building stands.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	National Register Staff Division of Historic Preservation	ASSISTED BY OWNER
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organization	State of Louisiana	date	October 1984
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street & number	P. O. Box 44247	telephone	(504) 922-0358
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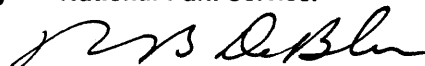
city or town	Baton Rouge	state	LA 70804
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12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

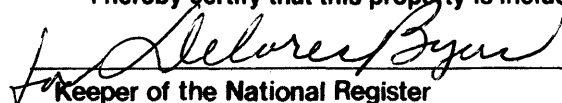
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

Robert B. DeBlieux

title	State Historic Preservation Officer	date	December 10, 1984
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For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

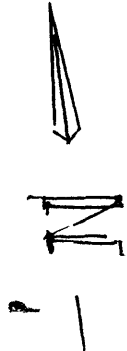
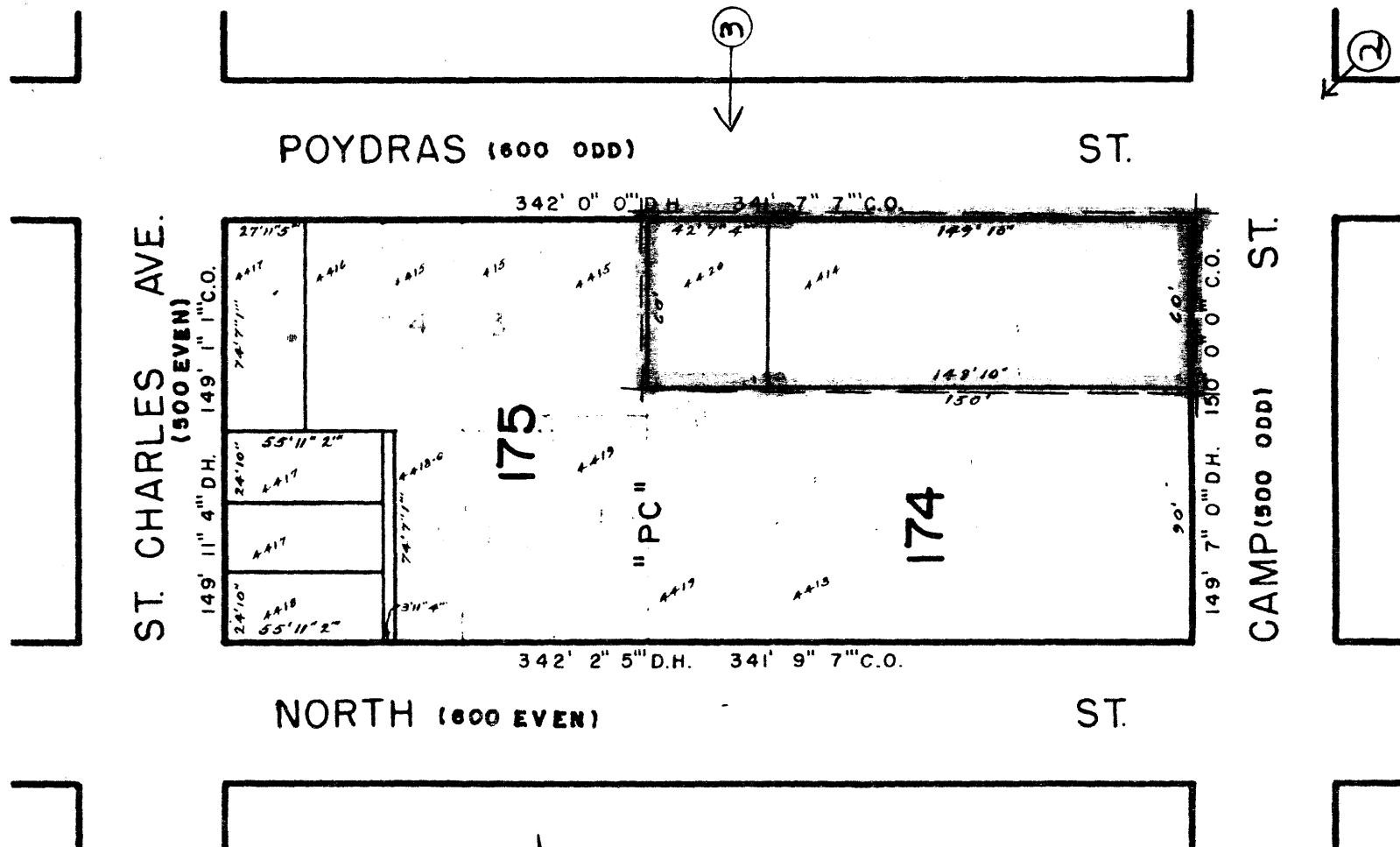
 Keeper of the National Register	Entered in the National Register	date	1/18/85
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Attest:	date
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Chief of Registration	date
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WHITNEY NATIONAL BANK (POYDRAS BRANCH)

New Orleans, LA



IM-3A SCALE 1" = 60'

BOUNDARY