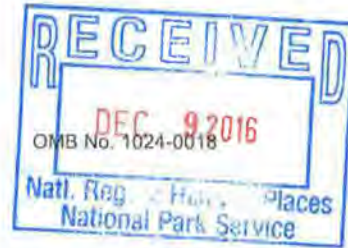


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NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building

other names/site number American Federal Savings and Loan Building, Catholic Pastoral Center

2. Location

street & number 601 Grand Avenue not for publication N/A

city or town Des Moines vicinity N/A

state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 zip code 50309

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally x statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

30 Nov 2016 Date

State Historical Society of Iowa State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.
determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register
other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Eason H. Beall

Date of Action 1-24-17

Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building
Name of Property

Polk, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

None

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STONE/limestone

METAL/steel

roof SYNTHETICS

other METAL/aluminum

GLASS

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1962

Significant Dates

1962

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Office of Mies van der Rohe, FAIA

Ringland-Johnson, Inc.

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building
Name of Property

Polk, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

(Enter coordinates to 6 decimal places; place additional references on a continuation sheet)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
1	<u>41.588162</u>	<u>-93.625735</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jennifer I. James, MAHP date 2/8/2016, revised 7/20/2016

organization Jennifer James Communications phone 515-250-7196

street & number 4209 Kingman Blvd. email jenjames123@gmail.com

city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50311

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps: A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) or similar indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative **black-and white-photographs** of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Diocese of Des Moines – The Rev. Bishop Richard Pates

street & number 601 Grand Avenue telephone 515-243-7653

city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50309

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
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Section 7 Page 1 Property name Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building
County and State Polk, IA

7. Narrative Description

Architect/Builder (continued)

Smith-Vorhees-Jensen / Architects Associated, associate architect
Ostrom, Belton C., Nelson, Ostrom, Baskin, Berman and Associates, structural engineer

Summary

Located in Polk County, Iowa, in the capital city of Des Moines, the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building of Des Moines (henceforth Home Federal) occupies a small half-block of land within the main western central business district. Designed to house the state's largest savings and loan institution with additional upper-story leasable office space, the three-story 1962 Modern Movement work is located on the northwest corner of Grand and Sixth avenues on an irregularly shaped lot. The flat-roofed building with penthouse rises to a height of 45 feet. As designed by innovative Modernist architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, FAIA, the symmetrical square building's primary mass (second and third floors) measures 121 feet 9 inches square; the recessed base (first story) measures 93 feet-9.5 inches square plus front (south) projecting elevator lobby and rear (north) 1-story drive-through banking canopied bump-out. The steel-and-glass facaded structure contains approximately 42,000 gross square feet and 40,000 square feet of finished area. (Polk County Assessor)

The site plan and building exterior and interior follow a 3-foot, 4-inch x 3-foot, 4-inch Miesian planning grid indicated as "units" on the drawings. Structural bays are 12 units equaling 40 feet. The building is set back from Grand Avenue on its irregularly shaped small half-block, with Grand Avenue oriented to the Des Moines River as part of the oldest portion of platted blocks in the City of Des Moines; the building is also set back from Sixth Avenue, which intersects Grand Avenue at an angle more closely aligned with plan north, creating the polygonal shape to the half-block. The building's set back allows for a granite-paved entry plaza fronting Grand Avenue that continues to the east along Sixth Avenue; granite pavers edge the west and south elevations under the "Covered Walk," created by the upper stories above the recessed first story area. (Mies van der Rohe: A4) (Note: All named areas from the original plans are listed in quotation marks upon first reference.) The primary mass of the symmetrical building — the second- and third-story steel-and-gray-tinted-glass curtain walls — is larger than the recessed clear-glass storefront and travertine marble-clad first-story walls. Steel columns support the upper stories, the underside of which serves as the first-story exterior covered-walk ceiling, which is plastered and has recessed square lights set on a grid. The full basement level extends under the paved plaza to the columns supporting the upper stories.

Materials used on the exterior are repeated on the interior, creating a seamless flow. The main entrance doors open from the Grand Avenue side into the first-floor "Entrance Lobby." The interior at the south end of the floor plan is organized with dual "S. East Core" and "S. West Core" (elevator/stair/ mechanical), which together create an elevator lobby on each floor. The first floor is largely as built: dedicated to an expansive open-plan "Banking Floor," with rear "North Core," (restrooms, private offices, and back-of-house "Teller Area" that connects to the drive-up/walk-up teller station bump-out). Upper level floors contain on the perimeters offices and conference rooms of various sizes, accessed by corridors; the original Home Federal

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Section 7 Page 2 Property name Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building
County and State Polk, IA

office space occupies the north half of 2nd floor. It is important to note that most of the upper floor space beyond the perimeter walls, ceilings, elevator lobbies, and mechanicals was not designed by Mies van der Rohe; rather, the majority of this square footage was left as unfinished rental tenant space, which has been developed and changed over time.

Over the decades, the building has been well maintained, occupied by Home Federal and its successor American Federal, plus various tenants—until the savings and loan crisis led to the financial institution going into receivership in 1990-1991. During the receivership process, original artwork and most custom-designed furniture were liquidated. The building was declared a local historic landmark by the Des Moines City Council in 1992. To save the building from demolition, a family purchased the building and deeded it in 1992 to the Catholic Diocese of Des Moines for use as the Diocesan Office, also known as the Catholic Pastoral Center. Under the Diocese's stewardship, Home Federal building's character-defining exterior and interior finishes and fixtures remain in place. The building's high degree of integrity strongly conveys its original location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. On the exterior, changes have been minor over the decades: The City of Des Moines installed a skywalk bridge on the west alley side of the building in 1982 as part of a central business district skywalk system; in late 2015, the city removed the skywalk due to the adjoining city-owned parking ramp being removed. A small number of broken travertine marble panels have been replaced on the facade with like material. Some broken granite pavers have been replaced with like material, and granite pavers in the south half of the alley have been replaced with pavement (the north half of the alley was originally pavement). The former Home Federal surface parking lot, located west of the alley, was vacated more than 40 years ago; from 1973-1974 through 2015, this additional land was part of the site of a city-owned parking garage which is being removed. These minor changes have not diminished the original architecture. In sum, the building clearly expresses its original Modernistic design as a late work of Mies van der Rohe.

Setting

The building site is situated on the mostly flat plain of the downtown west side central business district. During the twentieth century, this portion of the central business district became something of a financial and insurance district, with a number of buildings constructed for banks, savings and loans, and insurance companies located nearby; a number of these are Modernist works. To the south and directly across the street is the insurance-related 1923 Liberty Building (418 Sixth Ave.; NRHP 2010) and the bank-related Modernist 1973 steel-and-glass Ruan Center (666 Grand Ave), as well as bank- and insurance-related 1931 Art Deco Des Moines Building (405 Sixth Ave.; NRHP 2013). To the north and directly across the street stand the 1891 Romanesque Revival St. Ambrose Cathedral and 1927 Rectory (607 High St.; NRHP 1979). A non-extant savings and loan building was located across High Street west of the Rectory. Further north is the Modernist 1965 SOM-designed concrete-and-glass American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building (601 Sixth Ave., NRHP draft approved by SNRC 2015). As will be discussed under the Statement of Significance, the Home Federal building and American Republic building, located a block apart along Sixth Avenue, were declared in the mid 1960s press to be the new downtown Des Moines "Axis of Beauty," with the Miesian "black temple" and SOM "white temple" showcasing the best in Modern Movement architecture. To the west, across the public alley, is the site of the recently removed former city-

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Section 7 Page 3 Property name Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building
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owned parking ramp, which is slated to be redeveloped into a commercial building. To the east across Sixth Avenue is the 1980s glass-curtain-walled former Polk County Convention Center, newly remodeled into the YMCA with precast concrete and glass curtain-walled swimming pool addition completed in 2015.

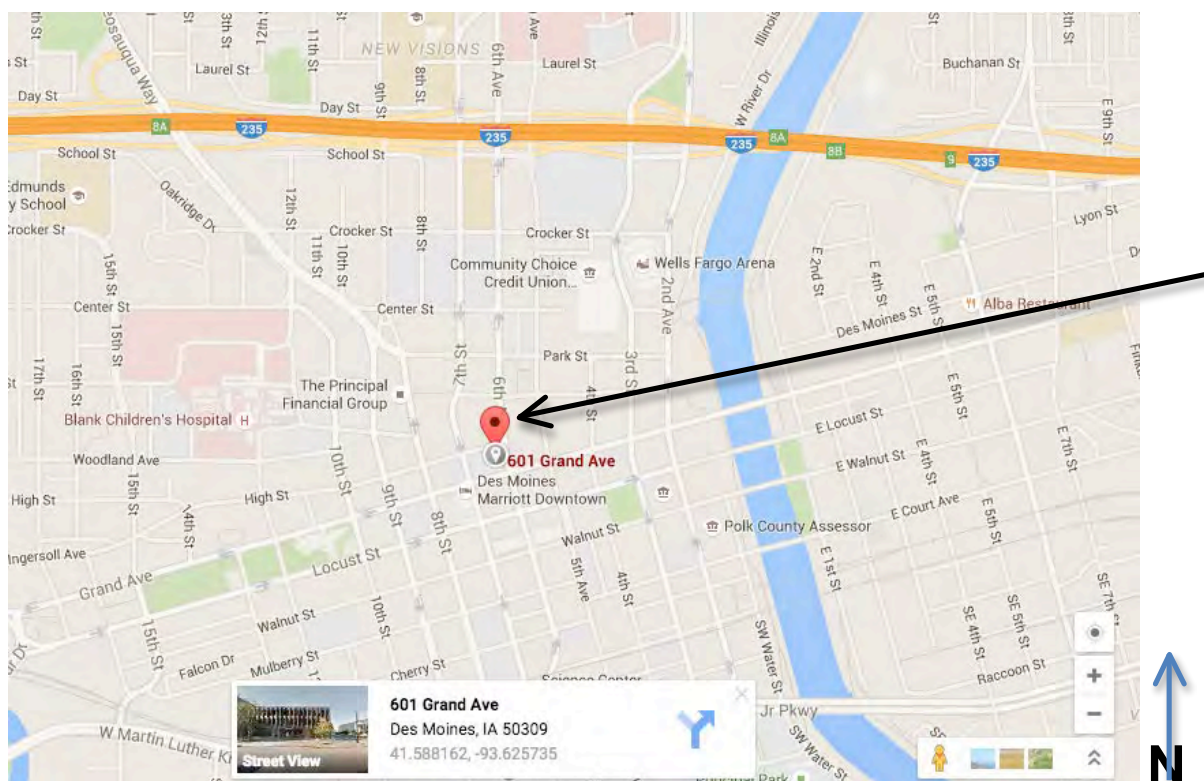


Figure 1: Location map showing the west side and east side commercial business districts, with arrow pointing to the Home Federal Building, 601 Grand Avenue, Des Moines. Latitude and longitude are included, as is a north arrow. (Source: Google Earth maps, 2015)

Site

As originally built, the Home Federal building occupies a prominent half block that consists of Lots 1, 2 and 3 in Block E Grimmel's Addition, bounded by major arterial Grand Avenue on the south, the angled Sixth Avenue to the east (the polygonal lot shape was created by Sixth Avenue's nearly true north orientation as it intersects the angled Des Moines River-oriented Grand Avenue from the north), High Street to the north, and the city-owned 16.5-foot-wide paved alley to the west. Home Federal Savings and Loan Association purchased these building lots in 1955 for the purpose of constructing its new building. Mies van der Rohe's site plan for the building lists the following site dimensions: 133.1 feet on the south, 161.1 feet on the north, 193.7 feet on the east, and 191.58 feet on the west. (Mies van der Rohe: A1) The building site is largely flat,

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Section 7 Page 4 Property name Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building
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with High Street sidewalk and road in the rear and the alley at the northwest being a higher grade. The building is set back from the intersection of Grand and Sixth avenues, with the southeast column standing about 19 feet from Grand Avenue and the southeast corner of the recessed first floor standing back 28 feet; the building hugs the western alley and High Street in the rear. In locating the building parallel to but also setback from Grand Avenue and set back from the angled Sixth Avenue, Mies van der Rohe created a striking view corridor from Grand Avenue north to St. Ambrose Cathedral. The siting also created the open space necessary for the two-sided plaza on the south and east sides. The granite-paved plaza extends to the Grand and Sixth avenues (there is no concrete public sidewalk along these streets). A public concrete sidewalk abuts the High Street north end of the property where the drive-through teller is located.

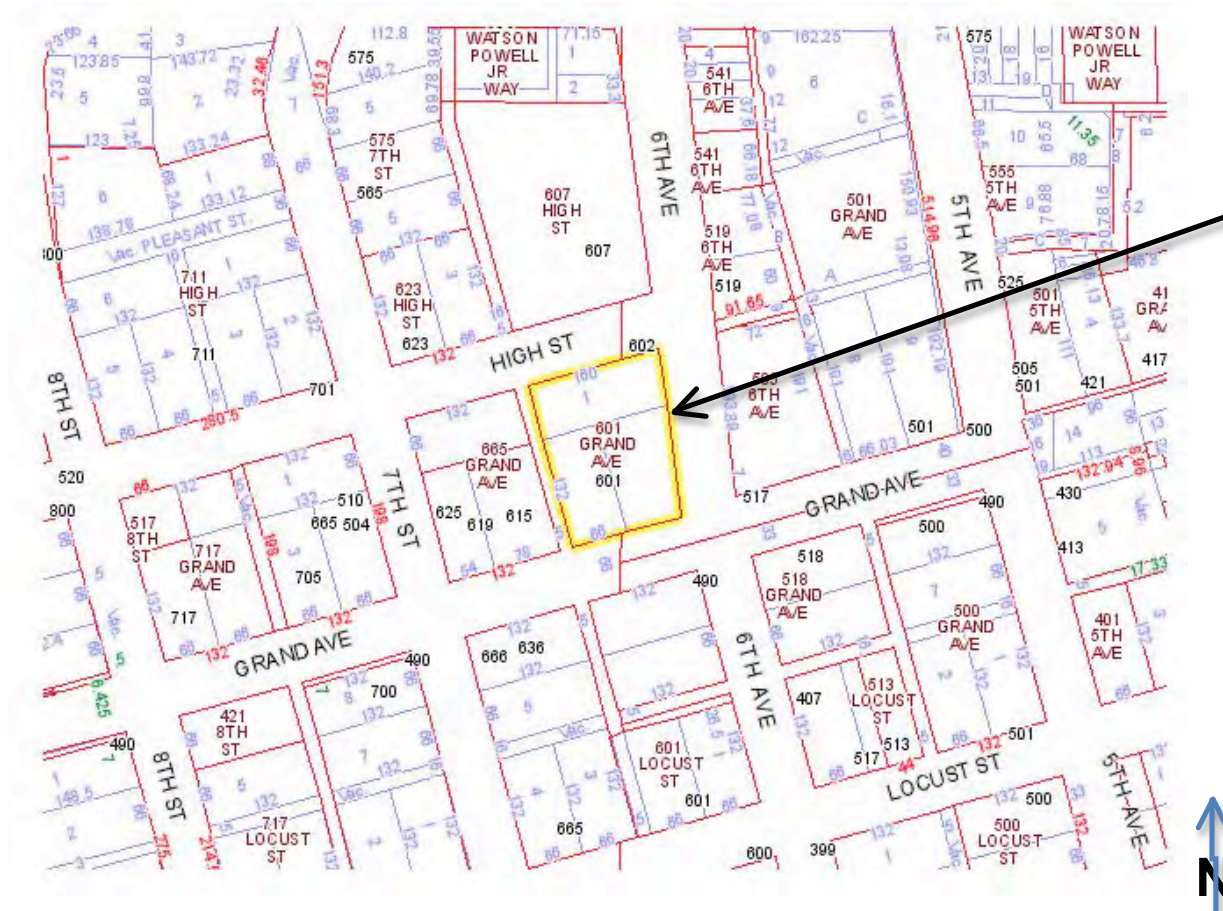


Figure 2: Home Federal Building parcel map showing 601 Grand Avenue (Lots 1, 2, and 3 in Grimmel's Addition). (Polk County Assessor's Office, 2015)

The site contains several features designed by Mies van der Rohe, per the architectural drawings: Square granite pavers cover much of the open areas of the site, referred to as the plaza, and extending to metal

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Section 7 **Page** 5 **Property name** Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building
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curbing at Grand Avenue, Sixth Avenue, and the rear drive-through lane. Within the front plaza are three in-ground square planter areas and along the eastern side of the plaza is one polygonal planter area (its shape mimics the polygonal shape of the building site); these planting areas are voids within the otherwise granite-paved areas and contain soil and in some cases plant material including non-original trees. Also within the front plaza area on the east and west sides are two metal grills; these provide venting to the basement below. The plaza is bounded at the northwest corner by an L-shape low granite retaining wall, edged by granite pavers and three narrow rectangular planting areas (voids within the otherwise granite-paved area). The blacktop-paved drive-through lane abuts the northern boundary of the plaza, and behind the drive-through lane is a low concrete retaining wall with steel curb stands north of the drive-through lane.

Objects are counted by type and total three in number. The Mies van der Rohe site plans show the following object types:

- 1) On the plaza is one flagpole is located near the southwest corner of the site, fronting Grand Avenue (contributing object type 1).
- 2) Also on the plaza are two rectangular granite benches, one facing Grand Avenue, the other fronting Sixth Avenue (contributing object type 2).
- 3) A metal ground sign for the former Home Federal drive-through occupies the northeast corner; inset panel and text sign wording has been changed to reflect the Diocese as the building occupant (contributing object type 3). A small metal "Exit Only" ground sign west end of the drive-through may be original (if original, also would be contributing type 3). (Schultz: Vol. 18: 169)

Two remnant steel posts stand near these signs, one at east end of drive-through lane and one at west end; these are half of pairs of posts used to suspend chains to block-off the drive-through when not in service (the other two posts are non-extant, removed by a prior owner). Due to the removal of the other half of each pair of posts, these are not considered contributing objects. Two non-original metal crosses hang on the façade marble wall; having been installed by the current owner, these are non-contributing.

The building site boundary is also the National Register boundary. Just outside this western boundary line is the paved public alley. And to the west of the public alley is the former site of the former Home Federal parking lot, vacated by at least 1973-1974, and since then owned by the City of Des Moines as site of a city parking ramp that was demolished in 2015; this site is slated for commercial redevelopment. No claims of archaeological significance are made.

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Section 7 Page 6 Property name Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building
County and State Polk, IA

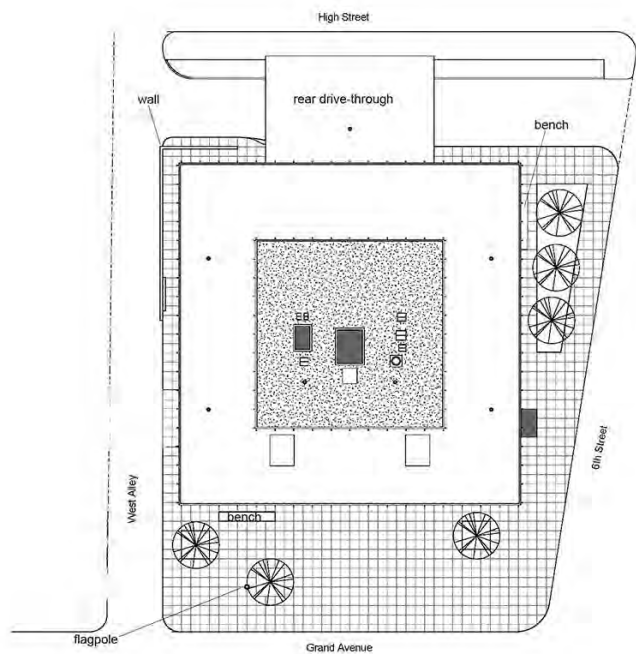


Figure 3: Home Federal Building site plan. (Brooks Borg Skiles AE, 2014, with 2015 revisions by author)

Design

The architect's specifications state that the building is of fire-resistive, noncombustible construction that employs structural steel and architecturally exposed carbon steel.

Note: The exterior and interior descriptions are based on examination of the following: building tours; original architectural plans that remained in place at the building (noted as van der Rohe, followed by plan date and page); extensive observation notes and assessments by project architect Steve Stimmel, AIA, with Des Moines-based Brooks Borg Skiles AE, and preservation architect Gunny Harboe, AIA, with Chicago-based Harboe Architects, PC, an expert on Mies van der Rohe architecture (noted as Stimmel BBS and Harboe, respectively); and a detailed and photo-rich December 1962 special advertising section for the Home Federal grand opening. Labels for elements and areas of the site, objects, building, and interior rooms and spaces are drawn from March 1961 floor plans (with some amendments made in 1962), augmented by labels for rooms as used in the 12-page December 1962 special advertising section announcing Home Federal's month-long grand opening. (Mies van der Rohe: A1-A10 1961; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, December 30, 1962: 1-12) Some details in room labels differ between the 1961 plans and 1962 advertising special section, and are noted as such.

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Exterior:

The main structural and architectural elements of the Home Federal Building flow from exterior to interior. This section will look at these elements and the exterior design. Because structure is such an integral part of the architectural expression for Mies van der Rohe, discussion of the structure is integrated into the architectural description. Overall, the exterior remains as designed by the Mies van der Rohe office, Chicago, with structural engineer B. Ostrom, Nelson, Ostrom, Baskin, Berman and Associates, of Chicago, and built by general contractor Ringland-Johnson, Inc., of Des Moines. The Mies van der Rohe office hired Des Moines-based architect's representative Harry Kavanaugh to monitor construction and contractors on-site and send nearly daily updates, allowing the Mies office architects Gene Summers, AIA, and Arthur G. Salzman, AIA, to remain actively involved with ensuring that the building was constructed as designed—based on a review of extensive extant Home Federal project correspondence files that have been retained in the building. (Associate architect Smith-Voorhees-Jensen, Architects Associated, of Des Moines appears to have played a very minor role in the project; project correspondence files only document architect Dighton Smith's work with relocating utilities.)

The flat-roofed building contains two main and contrasting exterior treatments: upper-level steel-and-gray-glass curtain walls on all four elevations supported by steel columns, with recessed first-story clear glass storefronts framed in steel with projecting travertine marble cladding at the south main entrance and repeated on the rear, where the drive-through canopy attaches and shelters the steel-plate-clad north drive-through teller station. (The rooftop penthouse is not visible from the street.) Steel is painted flat black, specified as Flat Black "Iron Gard"; the paint changed from "Detroit Graphite" (noted on the drawings) during construction, per a 1962 architectural bulletin. (Mies van der Rohe, A9; Bulletin No. 6: 3; Harboe: H-5)

As originally designed, the ground-level storefronts contain oversize sheets of clear polished annealed plate glass arranged in black-painted steel-frame grids with vertical display windows extending from granite pavers to horizontal transoms that extend to the plastered projecting Covered Walk ceiling. (Six transoms and some verticals panes have been replaced over time due to cracking and breakage, with replacement transom glazing in each transom opening consisting of three smaller panels with silicone joints.) The plan projects forward in the center of the south and north elevations; these areas are bracketed by travertine wall cladding. On the south front elevation, the glass storefront corners recede and the marble projects forward (two non-original metal crosses are mounted to the marble); the stone frames centered display windows flanking double leaf glazed doors, all topped with transoms. On the north rear elevation, the storefront corners flank marble that is flush; the bump out here is the centered rectangular steel-paneled drive-through and walk-up teller station with projecting teller window; a larger rectangular flat-roofed drive-through canopy supported by steel columns covers the bump-out and the paved drive-through lane. On the east and west side elevations the wall is flat with seven transoms, each with two display windows beneath; double-leaf glazed entrance doors provide entrance through the east and west sides of the rear drive-through bump-out. On the west elevation, three 2nd-floor windows have been removed and related curtain wall modifications made to accommodate the 1982 skywalk bridge; this area will be repaired to match the original material and design. (Harboe; Stimmel)

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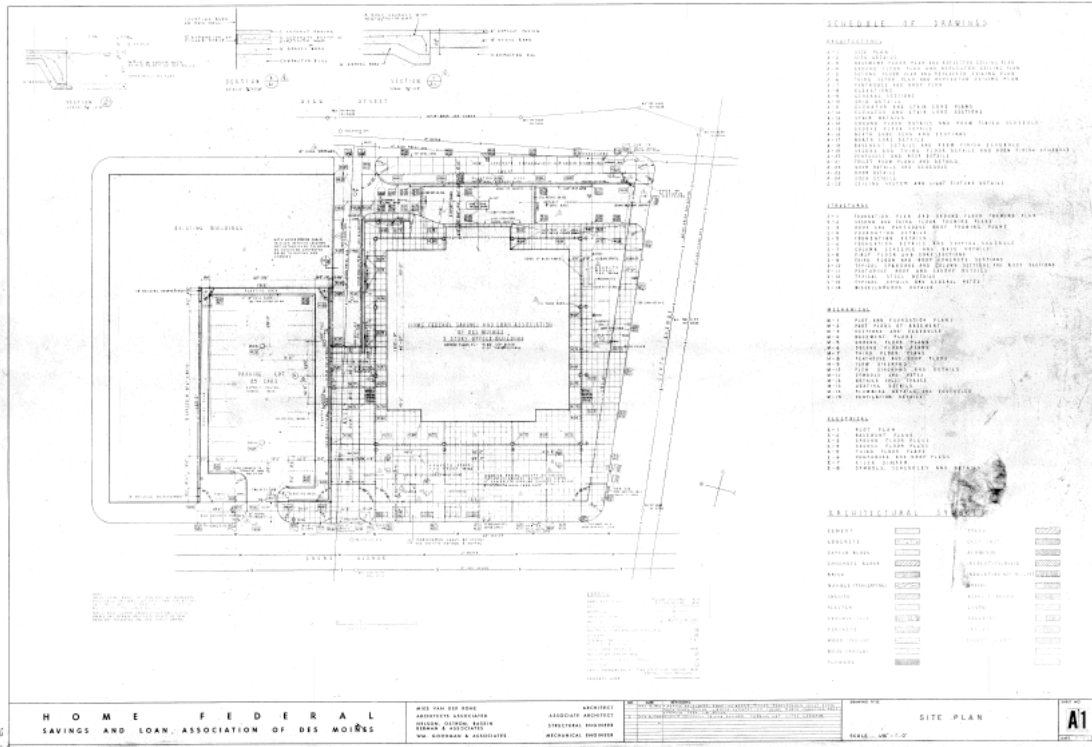


Figure 4: Original Home Federal Building site plan, which included a surface parking lot across the alley to the west; this parking lot was subsumed by a city-owned parking garage, which stood 1973-1974 through 2015. (Mies van der Rohe, A1, March 1, 1961, with May and June 1962 revisions to landscaping, alley and driveway paving, and parking lot lights; from the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building Collection, Diocese of Des Moines)

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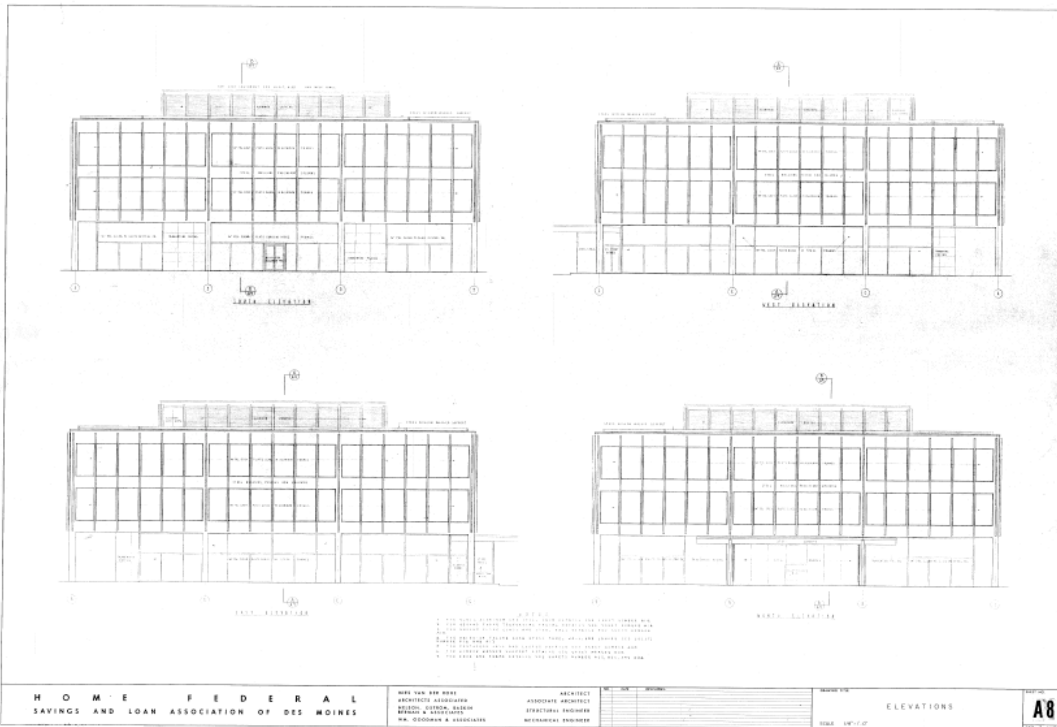


Figure 5: Original Home Federal Building elevations. (Mies van der Rohe, A8, March 1, 1961; from the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association ... Collection, Diocese of Des Moines)

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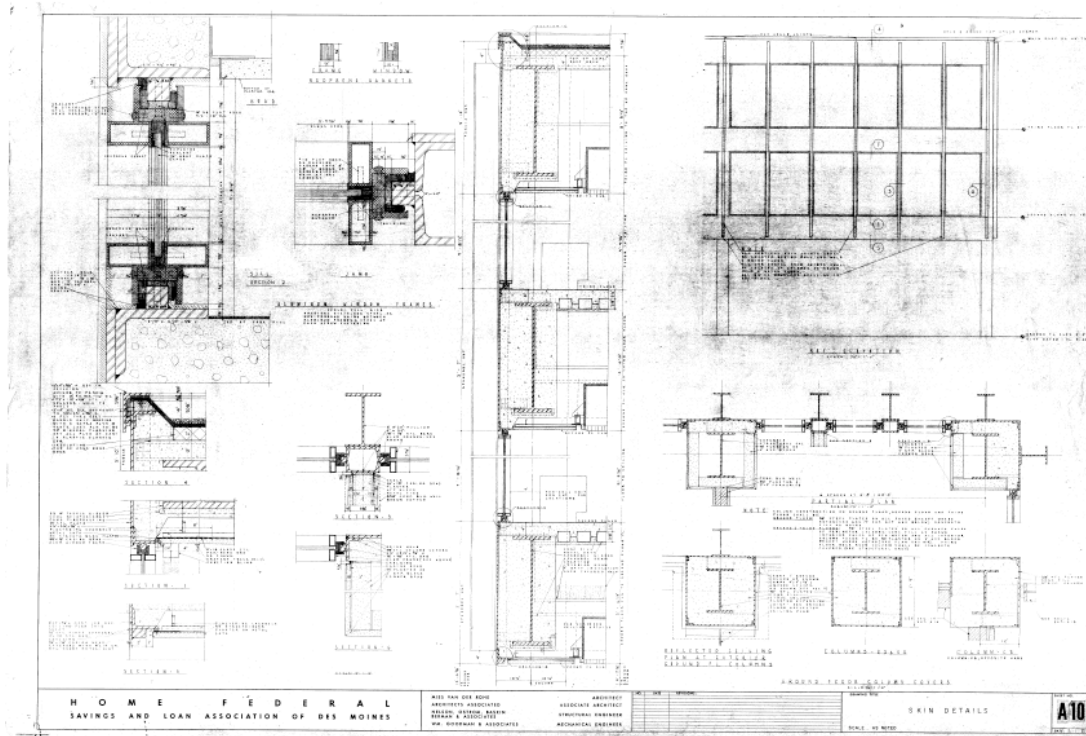


Figure 6: Original Home Federal Building “skin details.” (Mies van der Rohe, A10, March 1, 1961; from the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association ... Collection, Diocese of Des Moines)

The upper-level curtain walls occupy a larger footprint than the first floor, and all four walls repeat the same treatment. Each curtain wall is divided into three sections, separated by steel columns on the first floor with applied “mullions” (so termed on the Mies drawings) in the area above; each section contains six windows divided by additional mullions with steel fascias above and below the two rows of windows. (Mies van der Rohe: A8 1961) Each fixed window rests in an anodized aluminum window frame, separated from adjacent steel via neoprene gaskets and caulking; the glazing is a mix of original gray-tinted polished annealed glass and replacement glass, most with a plastic film applied to it that alters reflectivity. (Harboe: H5-H6, H-15) The underside of the cantilevered second story serves as the first-story exterior ceiling, which is hard-plastered with rectangular lights set on a grid matching the interior ceiling.

The flat roof is covered with Firestone EPDM 60 mil black non-reinforced single ply membrane. Reroofing was completed in 2005. A formed painted aluminum drip edge has been added at the roof edge during the latest re-roofing; it matches the location and exposure of the original steel angle and is not visible from the street. (Harboe) Roof drains and mechanical equipment/vents are located rooftop. In the center of the roof is the penthouse, which is clad in original painted aluminum louvers; two pair of double doors exist rooftop.

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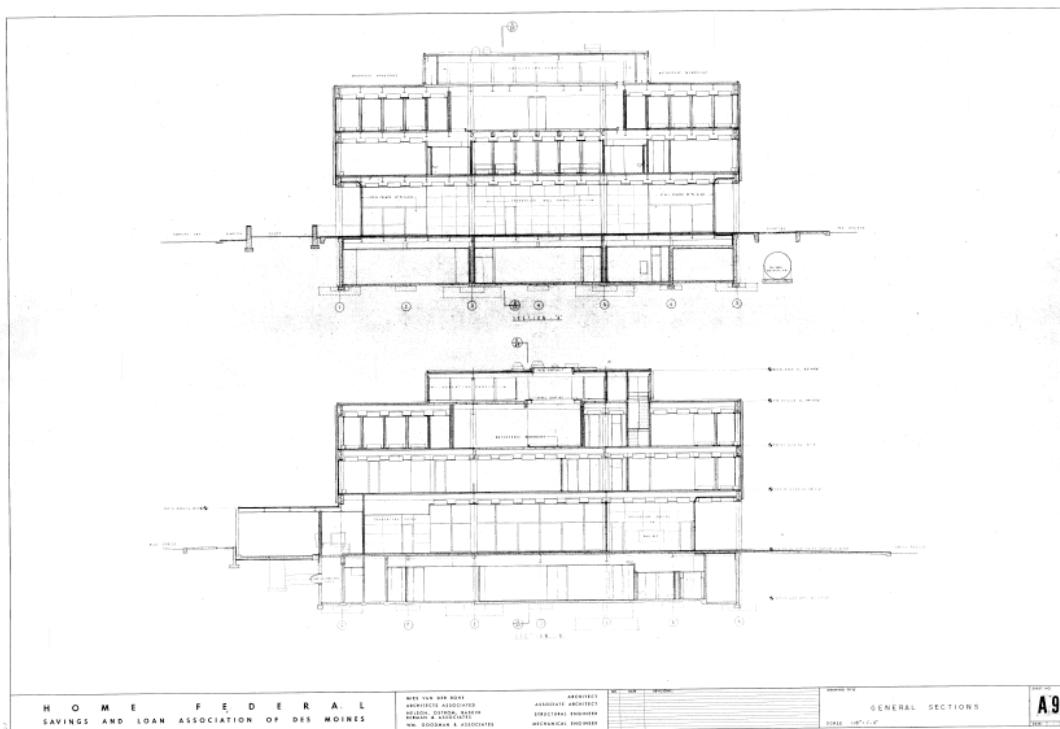


Figure 7: Original Home Federal Building general sections. (Mies van der Rohe, A9, March 1, 1961; from the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association ... Collection, Diocese of Des Moines)

Interior:

Circulation: There are three doorways on the first floor: main south entrance/exit and rear east and west entrances/exits. There are two publically accessible elevators and two exit stairwells, located front of plan; both extend from basement to third floor. One freight elevator extends from rear first floor to the basement, as does the nearby narrow rear service basement stairwell, both located in the 1st-floor "Drive-Up Teller Area". An abandoned dumbwaiter stands in the east side of the first-floor "North Core" and extends from the basement to 2nd floor. (The 3rd-floor plan indicates a removable floor plan located above the dumbwaiter, apparently for future expansion; Mies van der Rohe: A6 1961) The narrower penthouse service stairwell is located on 3rd floor near the west elevator. All stairways are very similar in design and finishes: painted concrete stair treads and landings, metal tread nosings, painted squared steel bar railings, and main-floor landings with resilient floor tiles and black vinyl base. Stairwell walls and ceilings are plaster finished; doors and frames are painted hollow metal, and some have the original painted signage. (Harboe: H-12)

Furnishings: As noted, Mies van der Rohe designed or selected the furnishings and artwork for the Home Federal spaces. However, it appears that all items were liquidated after failure of the Home Federal successor, American Federal. The following exceptions appear to be original: two storage cabinets, three

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integrated clocks with numbers applied directly to the walls (and possibly a fourth clock), and some of the pleated draperies on 1st through 3rd floors, all believed to have been installed in 1962. (Stimmel BBS: A-23; Harboe)

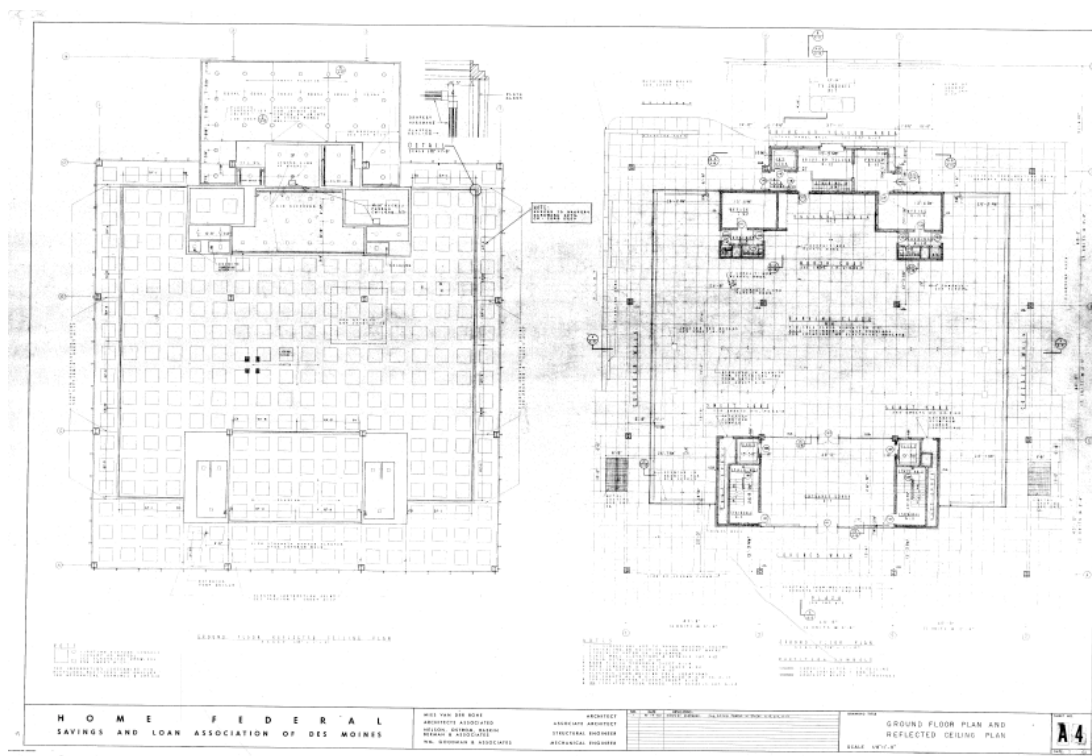


Figure 8: Original Home Federal Building first floor (ground) plan and reflected ceiling plan. (Mies van der Rohe, March 1, 1961 with August 1962 revisions of drapery hardware and ceiling access panels; from the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building Collection, Diocese of Des Moines)

1st Floor:

“Entry Lobby”: Accessed through double-leaf glazed main entrance doors, this enclosed space contains “South (S.) East Core” and “South (S.) West Core,” each with stairwell stainless-steel door and an elevator with stainless-steel door, backed by a “Duct Space.” An original steel-framed wall-mounted directory is mounted to the west wall between the stair and elevator doors. The lobby is defined by exterior materials that continue seamlessly inside: smooth plaster ceiling with square light fixtures, east and west travertine wall facing, honed granite floor, and south and north storefront systems each with double leaf glazed doors (exterior doors are replacement aluminum doors; interior lobby doors are original stainless-steel). The elevators each have stainless-steel doors and push buttons in the lobby; each cab is clad in carpet (floor), textured stainless-steel walls with stainless-steel base, and ceiling light fixture with aluminum grate louver. (Harboe: H-10–H-11)

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“Banking Floor”: This large soaring space was designed as an open-plan office, with four steel-encased columns and the “North Core” being the only intrusions. Opposite the Banking Floor entrance doors stands the North Core’s teller counter area (counter appears nonextant or a remnant exists), designed as a focal point along the north wall. As with the Entrance Lobby, the Banking Floor continues key exterior materials into the interior: Granite pavers (overlaid with some carpeting), the perimeter walls are painted steel and glass storefronts, the interior walls are travertine, and the plaster ceiling has squared recessed light fixtures. The south travertine walls contain two original wall clocks and floor-to-ceiling extruded aluminum louvered return-air grilles. One original Home Federal furnishing remains in the open-office area, a granite and wood storage cabinet, which is not in its original location per historic photographs. Two non-original but imitative wood-framed glass partitions exist in the southeast and southwest corners; the southeast corner is used as a radio studio and has a non-original suspended acoustical ceiling and non-original light fixtures. (Harboe: H-10; Stimmel BBS: A-16)

North Core: This small symmetrical area stands north of the main Banking Floor; it contains two short double-loaded corridors, each with toilet room and private office, plus the central Teller Area. The non-extant teller counter would have served as the southern boundary; stainless-steel doors and frames enclose the short east-west corridors; as mentioned above, the ceiling is lower here with different light fixtures, and stepped travertine-clad walls further draw in the eye to this end of the first-floor plan. In the corridors, small single-occupancy toilet rooms continue the granite floor, with interior walls and ceilings of painted plaster with ceiling-installed round-down light fixtures. Painted hollow metal doors and frames provide access to the toilet rooms and offices; some retain original painted signage. Drinking fountains, abandoned dumbwaiter, and janitorial closet with electrical panel also are located within these corridors. (Harboe: H-10, H-13) The Teller Area includes an original “Day Safe,” with a pair of metal safe doors. A second original Home Federal furnishing remains here, a granite and wood storage cabinet, which may not be in the original location. Non-original fabric-covered removable furniture walls stand in this area, along with a non-original but imitative wood-framed glass partitioned office. (Harboe: H-10).

“Drive-up Teller” bump-out: This small area contains the Drive-up Teller area, walk-in teller foyer, rear freight elevator with freight elevator lobby, and rear basement stairs. The original drive-up and walk-up teller windows remain in place, as do painted plaster walls and ceilings with round-down light fixtures. The teller area has surface-mounted conduit and heating equipment, shelving, laminate countertop, and carpeting. The foyer has a laminate counter and granite pavers. (Harboe: H-14)

2nd and 3rd Floors:

Overall note: As commissioned by Home Federal, the original 1961-1962 Mies van der Rohe design planned for most of the upper stories to be unfinished rentable tenant space. Mies van der Rohe *did* design the north half of the 2nd floor for Home Federal. However, all tenant space was left open and unsubdivided on the 1961-1962 plans, save for the small corner Koss Construction tenant space occupying about one-quarter of the 3rd floor; the plans note that Koss Construction designs, located in the northeast quadrant of the building, were done in April 1962. In summary, the south half of 2nd floor (tenant space) and about three-

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quarters of the 3rd floor tenant space are later infill.

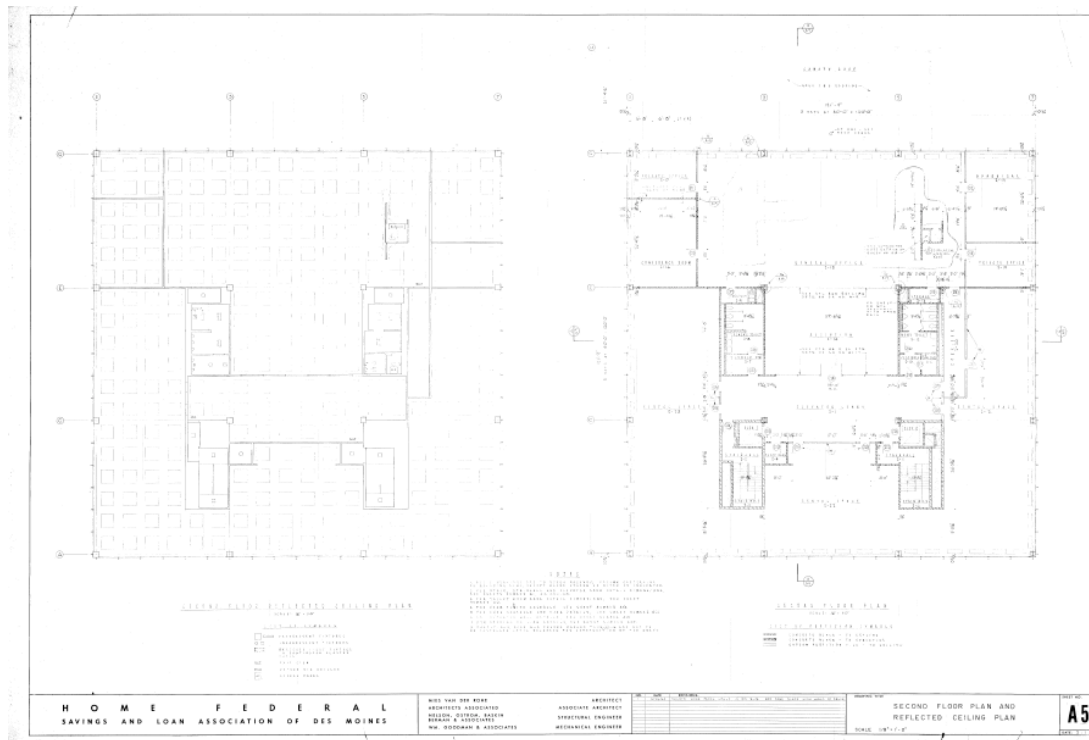


Figure 9: Original Home Federal Building second floor plan and reflected ceiling plan; the southern half of the floor was left open for flexible leasable tenant space. Note: original is very light and did not reproduce well. (original copy is very light and hard to read; Mies van der Rohe, March 1, 1961 with June 1962 revisions of deleting wood panel walls in one room and adding concrete block wing walls; from the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building Collection, Diocese of Des Moines)

2nd floor "Elevator Lobby": This lobby serves currently serves as a reception area and main circulation space on the floor; the two elevators and two stairwells open via doors here, as do men's and women's restrooms. The lobby's western perimeter has been extended to the west perimeter wall in modern times to accommodate the recently removed 1982 skywalk connection and provide ADA-compliant entrance to the 2nd-floor. Original east and south walls within the historic lobby footprint are painted plaster with black vinyl base, with an original reveal at top that create a shadow line that visually separates wall from painted plaster ceiling with integrated square light fixtures; carpeting covers the floor. The north wall is an original wood-framed glass partition; the wood is painted black to blend with the black-painted steel; this wall originally provided a view to the Home Federal Loan Department's open office. (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, December 30, 1962; Harboe: H-11-H-12) No claim for historical significance is made for the toilet rooms, which may contain some replacement materials and do not meet ADA or current code. For these

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multiple-occupancy restrooms, women's have a powder room that opens into the partitioned toilet room with lavatories separated by a partial wall; men's restrooms have a janitorial closet/vestibule in place of the powder room. These restrooms contain ceramic floor and wall tiles and a painted finished ceiling with recessed fixtures plus wall-mounted lighting around the mirrors. The light fixtures consist of the original wall mounted fixtures over the mirror and recessed florescent light fixtures in the ceiling. (Harboe: H-13–H-14)

3rd floor Elevator Lobby: Same finishes and plan to 2nd floor, with exceptions noted. This lobby is smaller than 2nd floor due to the location of the mechanical core's south wall (north wall of elevator lobby); it has a smaller non-original wood-frame glass storefront integrated into the lobby south wall. The connection to the east corridor has double-leaf glazed doors non-original to this location.

2nd floor Home Federal's Mortgage Loan Department "Reception" and "General Office": Within the center of the 2nd floor stands part of the original open-plan Mortgage Loan Department; this area is now used by Catholic Charities. The north perimeter open office area has been infilled with offices post-1962 and the northeast corner two large offices and corridor also have been reconfigured over time (using imitative finished walls, floor-to-ceiling framed wood or hollow metal doors in hollow metal frames, and gridded framed-glass partition walls) — thus these non-original areas are excluded from the historic extant Mies van der Rohe-designed area. Within the extant open Home Federal Mortgage Loan Department area, walls are painted plaster with a tan vinyl base and a reveal at the top, creating a shadow line where the plaster ceiling with integrated square light fixtures meets; floor is carpeted and limited original hollow metal framed painted doors with what looks like original hardware remain. An original wall clock has been moved from the west wall to the east due to the non-original glass partitioning; an abandoned dumbwaiter remains near the northeast corner. (Harboe: H-14–H-15)

2nd and 3rd floor Corridors: Some of the walls and likely all of the plaster ceilings with integrated light fixtures appear to be original. Comparison with the original plans shows some corridors have been widened and some original walls that divided tenant space from Home Federal and Koss Construction spaces have been removed and replacements added in different locations. Some original hollow metal doors and frames appear to exist in these locations, but many have been added later as part of non-original subdivided office and tenant build out. Where original, walls are painted plaster with a vinyl base and a reveal at the top, creating a shadow line. Floors are carpeted.

2nd and 3rd floors non-historic post-1962 subdivided offices: The perimeter walls and plaster ceilings with integrated light fixtures appear to be original. These subdivided areas are largely served by partially original rectangular corridors with offices and conference rooms largely located on the windowed perimeter. As mentioned above, this later infill build-out is largely imitative of the Mies van der Rohe design. Finishes are largely sympathetic: walls may be plastered finish, GWB, or wood-and-glass partitions; vinyl base molding; carpet or vinyl tile. Doors are a mix of flush painted hollow metal or wood doors and frames as well as single full glazed metal- or wood-framed doors; most doors extend from the floor to just below the ceiling. Hardware appears to be a mix of chrome-plated or stainless-steel hardware with a brushed finish to match or imitate the original. (Harboe: H-25–H-26)

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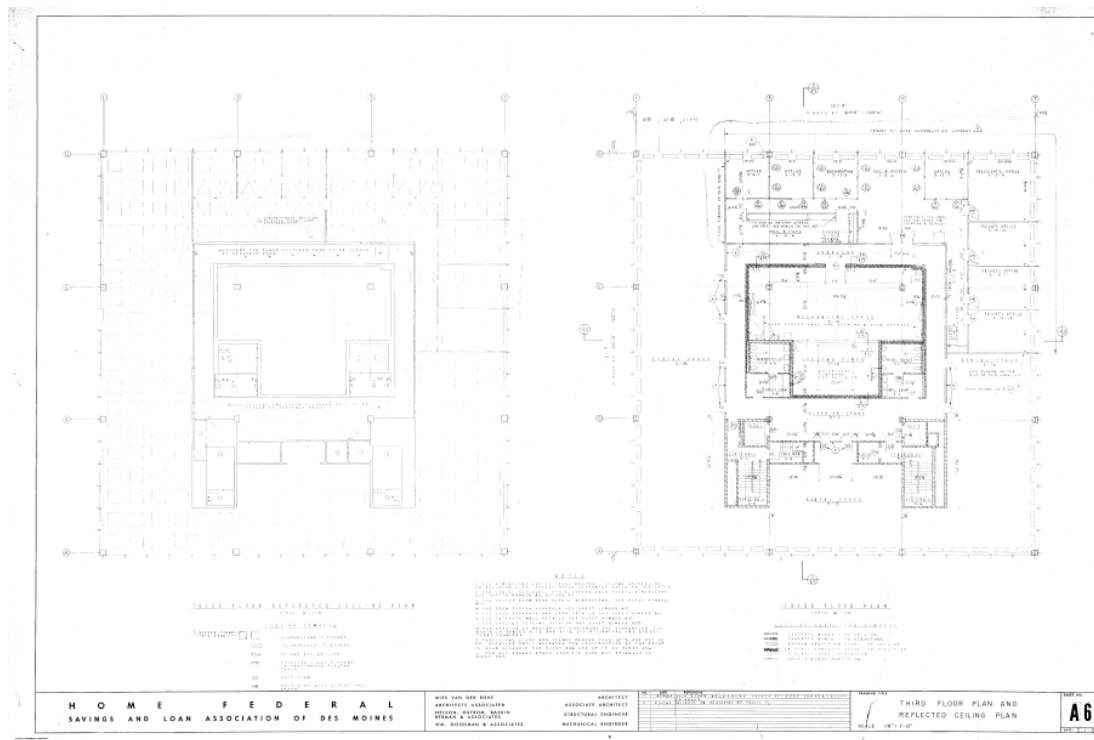


Figure 10: Original Home Federal Building third floor plan and reflected ceiling plan; all was flexible leasable tenant space, with only the northeast tenant space directly designed by Mies van der Rohe. Note: Original drawing is very light and did not reproduce well. (Mies van der Rohe, March 1, 1961 with April 1962 revisions of moving exit signs and adding tenant Koss Construction Co.'s office space; from the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building Collection, Diocese of Des Moines)

3rd floor Mechanical Space: The center of the 3rd floor plan is unfinished mechanical space. It includes a cooling tower that extends into the penthouse. Equipment includes original and some replacement; finishes are exposed concrete walls and floors.

Mechanical Penthouse:

The smaller square footprint of the rooftop penthouse contains the penthouse staircase, equipment for the two lobby elevators, the cooling tower (which begins on third floor), air-handling unit, and other mechanicals. These spaces have unpainted concrete floors, aluminum louvered exterior walls, unpainted CMU partitions, and exposed fireproofing on the roof deck and beams. Pairs of hollow metal doors in east and west exterior walls are contemporary replacements and have a primer-only painted finish.

Basement:

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The partially finished basement footprint matches the footprint of the 2nd and 3rd floors, extending beyond that of the first floor underneath part of the granite-paved plaza. The basement has a partially original rectangular corridor that loops around a centered enclosed space (including a large area that was depicted as the “employee lounge,” but labeled on the plans as open “Circulation Space” and has been enclosed at an unknown date). A small portion of the basement may have been open to the public at selected times: mainly the lounge/Circulation Space and large Home Federal “café for employees” (dining room and small kitchen), which on the Mies plans is labeled “Community Room” and “kitchen outfitted by others.” (A press release about the 1962 opening of the Home Federal building described the basement as containing a “conference room and lounge with movable stage [nonextant], projection booth, and dining facilities is available for the use of tenants.”) (“Home Federal Office Building, Des Moines”) Opposite the café/community room stands the suite of former IBM computer rooms, which includes a partially intact glazed wall. Sets of double doors at the north end appear to secure the sensitive “Vault” and other employee-only spaces including the “Telephone Room,” storage rooms, freight elevator, and rear basement stairs near the vault. On the south stand the unfinished mechanical and electrical support areas as well as restrooms, elevators, and egress stairs.

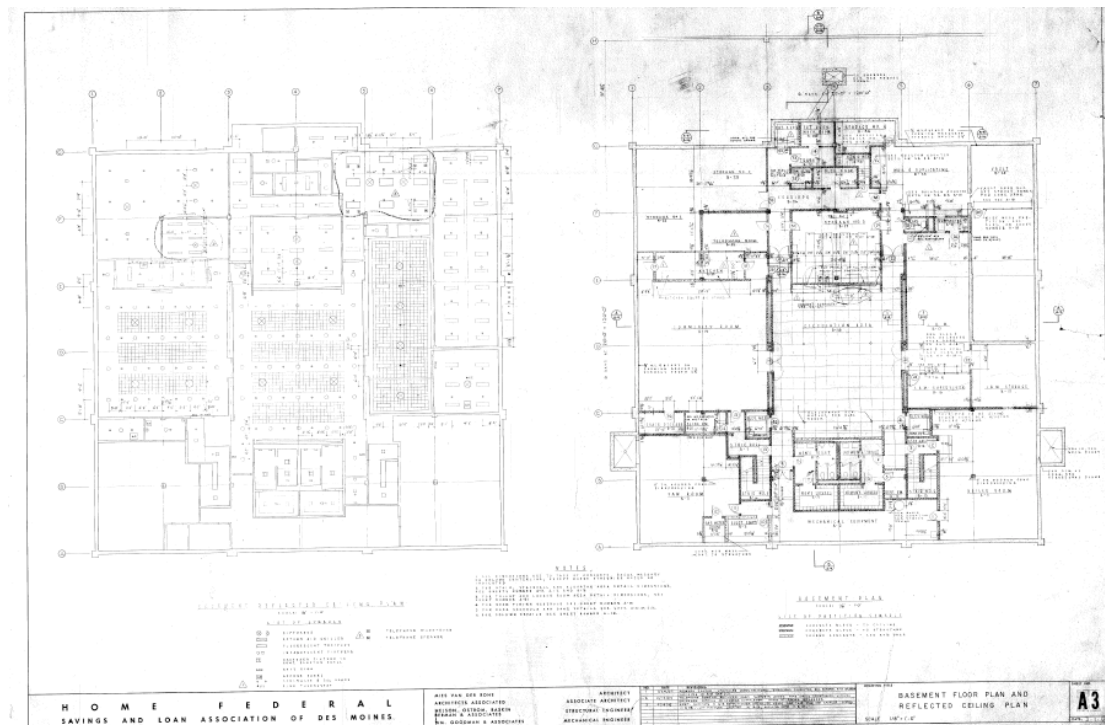


Figure 11: Home Federal basement and ceiling plans. (Mies van der Rohe, A3, March 1, 1961, with 1962 revisions to various rooms; from the Home Federal Collection, Diocese of Des Moines)

The basement corridor has finished plaster walls and ceilings (mostly) with terrazzo floors to the south end

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and vinyl tile in the non-public north end. The dining room has original plaster-finished CMU walls plaster ceiling with sections of applied acoustical tiles, and carpet over vinyl tile, with an original but reconfigured partial-height walnut-clad partition wall. The wood partition hides from dining room view the remodeled non-Mies kitchen. The vault is of cast-in-place concrete with vinyl tile floor. The unfinished rooms mostly have exposed CMU walls and concrete floors, and a mix of acoustical ceilings and open ceilings. Doors and frames are either painted hollow metal or wood; some original painted door signage remains. Other finishes are GWB walls and carpet. (Stimmel; Harboe)

Alterations

Relatively few alterations have occurred, and most alterations were made by the two prior bank owners. As such, dates of alterations are mostly unknown.

- About six travertine exterior stone wall panels appear to have been replaced. (Harboe: H-8)
- The 1982 skywalk connection was removed by the City of Des Moines in 2015.
- The small parking lot across the alley was redeveloped along with adjoining parcels into a larger city-owned 1973-1974 parking ramp, removed in 2015. (Stimmel)
- Some granite paving in the public alley has either been removed or covered over.
- The three sets of exterior entry doors are not original and have been replaced with aluminum doors that are similar to, but do not match, the original stainless-steel Ellison doors. (Harboe: H-10)
- On the rooftop and out of public view, penthouse doors have been replaced as has the window-washing support rail.
- Interior alterations are few on the 1st floor, mainly limited to partitioning off three small areas in the southwest and southeast corners plus north teller area with non-original but replicative wood-framed glass partitions.
- Upper levels contain post-1962 office partitions and finishes, largely in areas that were left open by the Mies van der Rohe floor plans for future tenant build-out. These areas generally employ an imitative approach locating partitions on the planning grid, using mostly full height black painted doors and frames, and retaining the existing ceiling and light fixtures. The open office loan area on second floor remains largely intact, with one added partitioned office area. The third floor Koss Construction Co. area designed by Mies van der Rohe has been altered at date(s) unknown.
- Basement alterations mostly include adding partition walls in various places such as the original Circulation Area and IBM room, plus changes to the kitchen (which had cabinets and equipment provided by others), and adding carpeting in places.

Integrity

The Home Federal Building exhibits a high degree of integrity. Examining the building according to the seven aspects of integrity—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—as defined in the *National Register Bulletin No. 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, requires understanding the property's significance within the continuum of American history, time, and place. This examination, which follows, finds the building retains excellent historic integrity in six aspects and very good historic integrity in one aspect.

Location: The Home Federal Building remains at its original site in downtown Des Moines. With regard to

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location, its integrity is excellent.

Design: As a resource considered eligible under Criterion C, integrity of design and materials are of particular importance. The Mies van der Rohe Modern Movement design continues to reflect the historic function as a prominent financial institution's building—Iowa's largest savings and loan at the time of construction—with building technologies that were cutting edge and at times experimental. The integrated structural system; the use of steel and tinted glass; the careful use of the Miesian grid (explained within the Statement of Significance); the seamlessness of exterior and interior spaces via repeated materials; and overall functionality of the design remain unique expressions of Mies van der Rohe's midcentury design work. In these ways, the Home Federal Building retains its full (excellent) integrity of design.

Setting: Overall the integrity of setting is very good. The original half-block building site east of the alley remains unchanged. Its setting in relationship to the other half of the block changed in 1974 when the 1973- of Des Moines built a parking ramp there. Surrounding the Mies building are several historic buildings that pre-existed as well as later Modern Movement works.

Materials: The integrity of materials is very good to excellent; the exterior remains nearly unchanged from when it was originally constructed and the condition of materials remains high. The original design intent of clear glass on 1st floor and tinted on upper stories remains. The granite-paved plaza and site remain nearly as built. The public areas—the plaza, entrance lobby, banking floor, circulation, 2nd and 3rd-floor elevator lobbies and corridors, and Home Federal Loan Department open office plus basement corridor and employee café dining room retain the majority of their original finishes and interior layouts. The unfinished tenant spaces retain perimeter walls and ceilings as designed by Mies van der Rohe, and have been built-out over time, as intended. In other words, the Home Federal Building retains most of its original historic fabric and design integrity on the exterior and within public spaces. Where alterations have occurred is in upper-level non-public spaces, mostly within areas originally designated for leasable tenant build-out.

Workmanship: The integrity of workmanship is excellent. As will be discussed below, the high quality of finished product demanded by Mies van der Rohe is clearly expressed throughout the exterior and interior in the steel work and stonework—and on the interior, with the plaster work and overall seamless construction that has withstood continual use, although some fixtures, finishes, and systems are nearing the end of their lifespans.

Feeling: The integrity of feeling is excellent. The Home Federal Building stands apart from other Modernist buildings in Des Moines for its pioneering black painted steel and glass design. The exterior and the interior readily convey its historic character as the work of a master who sought to provide customized design solutions for each client.

Association: This unique building retains its association to the highest degree with Home Federal and with the work of Mies van der Rohe. The building has been recognized in various scholarly works about Mies van der Rohe as an expression of the firm's pioneering work in re-imagining business buildings and

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developing new technologies for working with steel and glass.

Character-defining Features

This list draws on the work of Harboe. Areas of primary, secondary, and tertiary importance are identified. The character-defining features include:

Exterior:

- Primary: Primary facades (Grand and Sixth avenues, respectively), including painted steel columns upholding cantilevered Covered Walk area that shelters the recessed 1st floor: the use of clear glass and travertine wall facing, painted steel columns; 2nd and 3rd floors: Steel mullions, fascias, and columns, the use of gray-tinted glass.
- Secondary: Secondary façades (High Street and alley) are significant, but of a lesser degree due to reduced visibility being a side elevation facing an alley and being a rear elevation on a less-traveled street.
- Secondary: Rear steel-clad drive-through teller bump-out and canopy (steel plate wall cladding and canopy underside plastered, with recessed lighting) with steel support columns are also significant, but to a lesser degree due to their rear location. (The teller window and banking equipment such as deposit box are not Mies van der Rohe designs but third-party products.)
- Primary façade building site: Plaza granite pavers, granite benches, granite L-shape wall, steel curbs, flagpole, and designated landscape areas, plus large northeast freestanding signage frame on High Street (excluding current sign faces).
- Secondary façade building site: Rear concrete retaining wall, small northwest freestanding "Exit Only" sign, northwest extant steel post (second post removed) used to chain-off drive when drive-through was closed.

Interior:

Note: Some areas of the building were not designed by Mies van der Rohe, those being rental tenant space on half of the second and most of the third floor. Perimeter office space and some corridor areas on those floors have been altered over time in response to changes in tenant and banking use; only extant Mies van der Rohe-designed areas are listed below:

- Primary: 1st-floor Entrance Lobby: Public area with granite flooring, continuous plaster ceiling with recessed light fixtures, travertine wall facing, steel-framed directory on west wall, S. East and S. West Core stainless-steel elevator doors and stairwell doors.
- Primary: 1st-floor Banking Floor: Public area with granite flooring, continuous plaster ceiling with recessed light fixtures, travertine wall facing, (this excludes non-original wood-framed glazed walls and non-original removable furniture walls), stainless-steel doors into the North Core
- Primary: 2nd and 3rd floors: Only extant Mies van der Rohe-designed areas: continuous plaster ceiling with recessed light fixtures mostly throughout; perimeter finished walls; elevator lobbies with finished walls, elevator doors, most doors; extant 2nd floor open-plan Home Federal Mortgage Loan Office (directly north of elevator lobby) with wood-framed glazed wall, limited finished walls, wall clock (moved from original location); extant corridors; public stairwells (finished walls and ceilings, concrete steps with metal nosing, steel railings)

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- Secondary: 1st floor North Core: This non-public area has granite flooring, finished and travertine walls, finished ceilings with recessed lighting, original doors and trim where they exist (excluding non-original office build-out)
- Secondary: South-central basement corridor terrazzo floors, plaster-finish walls and ceilings with recessed lighting, and full-height original doors and trim where they exist. The Home Federal dining room may have also been used as a community room.
- Secondary: The Home Federal employee dining room (identified on an original basement door as “dining room” and in the December 1962 advertising special section as employee dining room, but indicated on plans as a community room): re-engineered wood divider (divides off kitchen, which has been remodeled and no claims of historic integrity are made), finished walls, plaster with acoustical tile ceilings with recessed light fixtures.
- Tertiary: All other spaces, as described above.

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8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The Home Federal Savings and Loan Association Building in Des Moines, Iowa, is significant locally and statewide under National Register Criterion C—Architecture. Its period of significance, 1962, marks the date of completed construction of the building—with design by the renowned and highly influential architect Mies van der Rohe. The building is significant under the category of Architecture for its association with Modern Movement design and the work of a master architect and his firm, Mies van der Rohe, FAIA. In Des Moines, the Home Federal Building stands as one of (if not the) first steel-and-glass Modern Movement buildings constructed in the city—and is one of only two Mies van der Rohe buildings constructed in the state of Iowa. The architectural community has praised the building as one of Mies van der Rohe’s noted business commissions. Mies van der Rohe has been recognized a founding father of modernism, and thus the building’s association with the architect further elevates its significance. The building’s design features include the masterful application of the Miesian grid to all aspects of the design; the unconventional urban site plan of a freestanding building set back on a generous open plaza; the use of a visible structural steel skeleton (expressed structure) with tinted glass-and-steel curtain wall “skin”; the use of steel columns to support upper stories that appear suspended over a largely clear-glass first story; the seamless flow from exterior to interior spaces via repeated materials; and the open-plan interiors. The building remains a unique expression of Mies van der Rohe’s midcentury design work.

Locally and statewide, residents have recognized the building as a key addition to the architectural heritage of the city and state since its construction, such as through robust press coverage wherein the building was highlighted as one of the two most important additions to downtown Des Moines in the midcentury; via a vigorous and successful international effort to protect the building from potential demolition when the successor savings and loan institution American Federal failed; via inclusion as a local City of Des Moines landmark; and via inclusion in Iowa architectural books such as the American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter’s *A Century of Iowa Architecture, 1900-1999*, where the building is named one of 50 important works in the state. (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, October 31, 1965; American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter: 72-73) The National Park Service has recognized the importance of post-World War II Modern Movement architecture, and specifically the work of Mies van der Rohe as one of the 20th century’s greatest architects, with National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and National Historic Landmark (NHL) listings including the Farnsworth House (1951; Plano, Illinois; NRHP 2004, NHL 2006); S.R. Crown Hall, IIT Campus (1956; Chicago; NRHP and NHL 2001); and Mies van der Rohe Residential District, Lafayette Park (1956-1967; Detroit; NRHP 1996, NHL nominated 2015). With further research, the building may prove to be significant at a national level.

Period of Significance and Significant Date

The period of significance and significant date for the Mies van der Rohe-designed Home Federal Savings and Loan Association Building are, 1962, the year the building was completed.

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Brief History of Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines

Home Federal began in 1936 as Home Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines, founded by insurance and real estate broker Clyde Beals Fletcher and son Jonathan Moss Fletcher, who left the U.S. Department of Agriculture in California for the opportunity—and joined by other local civic and business leaders. (*Des Moines Register*, November 2004) The new institution was made possible in part due to New Deal legislation enacted between 1932 and 1934 that created the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB) and empowered it to regulate savings and loans and administer deposit insurance through the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation (FSLIC), and allowed for federal chartering of savings and loans, also known as thrifts. (Kushmeider) The early Home Savings and Loan board of directors included Clyde Fletcher (secretary-treasurer of the savings and loan); Jonathan Fletcher (assistant secretary-treasurer); insurance and real estate brokers Arthur S. Kirk and Joseph N. Chamberlain (president and vice-president); Meredith Corp. publishing scion and son of the late U.S. Secretary of Agriculture E.T. Meredith, Jr.; Methodist minister and president emeritus of Simpson College Dr. John L. Hillman; dentist Dr. Marvin J. Houghton, DDS; surgeon Dr. Lawrence E. Kelley, MD; architect and son-in-law of a former governor, Leland A. McBroom, AIA; and Iowa Power and Light Co. executive J.T. Schilling. (Iowa Auditor of State: 66) As a savings and loan association, the financial institution was chartered for home mortgage lending and basic savings and investing. In the beginning, the Home Savings located its office downtown at 904 Grand Avenue (nonextant), adjoining the Chamberlain & Kirk Inc. insurance and real estate office. (City directory)

By 1950, the thrift had become Home *Federal* Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines, located at the southeast corner of Sixth and Grand avenues in the heart of the city's financial and insurance district—kitty-corner from its future 1962 Modern Movement building. Four other savings and loan institutions were located within a block or two radius, as well as the city's largest banks. Home Federal owned its older building, listed by the 1950 city directory as "Home Federal Building," 518 Grand Avenue; this building had numerous offices rented to tenants, as well as banking facilities accessed from 421 Sixth Avenue. As of 1954, Clyde Fletcher was president of the board of directors, and Jonathan Fletcher was executive vice-president and secretary; however, the elder Fletcher entered semi-retirement that same year due to injuries sustained in an auto accident, and died in 1956.

By 1959, Jonathan Fletcher was president of Home Federal. He and the board of directors began charting an ambitious plan for growth and expansion in the 1960s—with a bold new Modernistic building playing a strategic role. As will be described in detail below, in 1959 Fletcher and the institution's building committee commissioned Mies van der Rohe to design modernized facilities tailored to attract and better serve customers and employees and to accommodate modern computerized banking. By the time of the opening of the new building in 1962, Fletcher had grown Home Federal into the state's largest savings and loan association. Home Federal and its successor would continue as the largest savings and loan operation in the state during Fletcher's tenure as president and CEO until his retirement in 1979. Beginning in fall 1962, Home Federal occupied the basement, first floor, and part of the second floor; tenants occupied the remainder of the second and all of the third floors. Home Federal remained in the building from 1962 until 1974, when the institution merged with First Federal Savings and Loan of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to form

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Home Federal's successor, American Federal Savings and Loan. (*Ames Daily Tribune*, June 24, 1974)

As part of this encapsulation of Home Federal's history, it must be noted that Jonathan Fletcher (1914-2004) was hailed for his civic and professional leadership. His public service work included Des Moines Planning & Zoning Commission (member 1950-1959 and chair in 1959), Des Moines Chamber of Commerce (1952-1980 and youngest president in history at age 39 in 1954), treasurer of the Republican State Central Committee (1953-1954), recipient of Des Moines Tribune Community Award in 1959, Drake University board of trustees (1959-1987; chairman of the 1959 Drake Des Moines–Polk County \$5 million fund campaign), member of his alma mater's University of Iowa Athletic Board (1960+), member Greater Des Moines Committee (1960-1980 and president 1970), among others. Professionally, he served as an active member of the Iowa Savings and Loan League (1948-1980, president in 1953) and the United States Savings and Loan League (1948-1980, member of the Executive Committee 1956+), as well as director of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (1960s+, vice chairman 1967). (*Des Moines Register*, November 25, 2004; United States Savings and Loan League, 1956: 44; *Ames Daily Tribune*, June 17, 1960; Iowa Secretary of State: 221; United States Home Loan Bank Board: 161) After his retirement, Fletcher served as chairman of the American Federal board until the institution closed in 1990.

It also should also be noted that the second Mies van der Rohe-designed building in Iowa also resides in Des Moines, on the Drake University Campus: Meredith Memorial Hall, commissioned in 1962 and completed in 1965. Fletcher in his capacity as a trustee along with Home Federal former president Arthur Kirk facilitated the architectural commission for the journalism building Meredith Hall, named in honor of the father of one of Home Federal's early board of directors, E.T. Meredith Jr. This classroom building, the first such added to the Drake campus since the late 1940s, was a memorial to the late Edwin Thomas Meredith (1876-1928), secretary of agriculture under President Woodrow Wilson and founder of the Meredith Publishing Co. of Des Moines. Its construction was made possible by gifts from the late Mrs. E.T. Meredith, Mr. and Mrs. E.T. Meredith, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bohlen (son-in-law and daughter of E.T. Meredith), and the Meredith Publishing Co., as reported by the *Des Moines Sunday Register* at the spring 1965 opening of the campus building. The *Register* architecture critic noted similarities between Mies van der Rohe's Home Federal and Meredith Hall: "It is enough like his downtown savings and loan company that one might walk in and ask for a friendly house loan." (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, *Picture* magazine, April 18, 1965: 6)

In 1990, the successor institution American Federal failed and went into receivership—one of the more than 1,000 federally insured thrift institutions that closed between 1986 and 1995 during the savings and loan crisis. (*Cedar Rapids Gazette*, February 10, 1990; Curry and Shibut: 26) American Federal Savings Association of Iowa was created to hold the assets, and only occupied the building for another year. As part of the receivership, the furnishings and the building itself were sold. In 1992, after a vigorous protest by historic preservationists from around the world that included an international letter-writing campaign to the City of Des Moines and Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to prevent demolition, the building was saved—a move heralded by SHPO as the year's lead preservation victory. (State Historic Preservation Office file on 601 Grand Avenue, Des Moines; *Oskaloosa Herald*, February 17, 1993) The City of Des Moines Historic Preservation Commission voted to designate the Home Federal building as a local

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landmark in February 1992, upheld by the City Council. Soon after, “angel” purchasers deeded the building to the Catholic Diocese of Des Moines, which has owned and occupied the building since then. (Bormann)

Letter writers protesting the possible demolition included original Mies van der Rohe project architect Gene Summers, FAIA, and architect Phyllis Lambert, O.C. FRAIC (Order of Canada, Fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada), who spent four years as director of planning for her father’s Mies van der Rohe-designed Seagram Building and later worked on the Home Federal building plans while an IIT School of Architecture graduate student of Mies van der Rohe. Lambert, writing at the time as director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, noted: “One of two Mies buildings in Iowa, this broad low building is unique in Mies’ built work, important to his theory of the applicability of an architectural approach to high rise or low rise buildings. However, because it did not have to resist wind loads, the building has an unusually generous and elegant forty-foot by forty foot bay size. Home Federal is therefore not only of major significance as the work of a master architect in Des Moines, and in Iowa, it is of major significance to architecture nationally and internationally.” (excerpt from Lambert to Ralph Christian, State Historic Preservation Office, February 19, 1992; on file at SHPO)

Summers, writing at the time as dean of the IIT College of Architecture (a post formerly held by Mies van der Rohe) noted:

“We are drawn to great buildings because they represent the dreams of architects like I.M. Pei, Eero Saarinen, or Mies van der Rohe, and also because they are the work of community leaders. They represent the vision these leaders held for the future of their community.

“Jonathan Fletcher and Joseph Chamberlain were two such leaders. Natives of Des Moines, directors and top officers of Home Federal, they specifically set about in the beginning of the sixties to not only provide the required space for their organization but to build a total environment that would lend a new spirit to downtown Des Moines. They were unselfish in their attitude toward the commitment to the community, and the building was their dream and work as much as it was Mies van der Rohe’s.” (excerpt from Summers to Ralph Christian, State Historic Preservation Office, February 21, 1992; on file at SHPO)

Other notable letters received by the City of Des Moines and the State Historical Society of Iowa included those by the Des Moines Architects Council; the American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter; and City of Chicago preservation specialist Peter Samuelson. Samuelson, who had worked on preservation of Mies van der Rohe buildings in Chicago, noted: “It should be stressed that the Home Federal Office Building is not significant solely because it is the work of Mies van der Rohe, but more importantly because it is one of his best. The building constitutes an irreplaceable link in the fragile chronology of Mies’ executed work, and his impact on international architectural thought and practice.” (Samuelson to Ralph Christianson, February 18, 1992, on file with SHPO)

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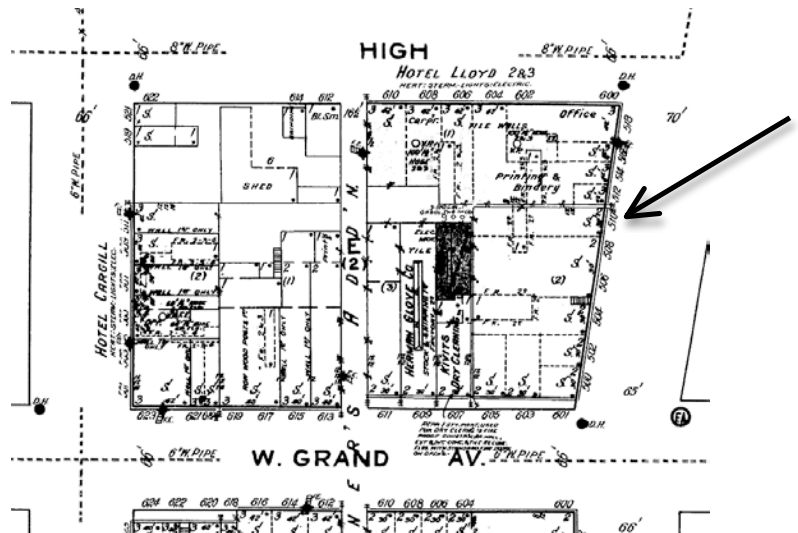
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Design and Construction of the Home Federal Savings and Loan Building

Site and Architect Selection:

The 1962 Home Federal Building reflects its time and place in the post-war remaking of downtown Des Moines, a time when financial institutions in Des Moines and across the country were embracing modern design. This shift away from traditional highly ornamented classical bank architecture toward new materials and technologies employed in streamlined Modernism provided financial institutions such as Home Federal the means of reinforcing a new progressive image while disassociating themselves with traditional banks many blamed for the Great Depression, as detailed by Carol J. Dyson and Anthony Rubano in their paper "Banking on the Future: Modernism and the Local Bank." (Dyson and Rubano: 1-2) At the same time, business leaders in Des Moines were remaking and expanding the northern edge of the downtown central business district by replacing remnant old houses, older hotels, and older small commercial buildings with large Modernist corporate headquarters.

Home Federal leaders elected to remain within the financial district and to make improvements to a prominent street corner occupied by at least three older commercial buildings, the northwest corner of Grand and Sixth avenues, kitty-corner across from their old three-story building. This new half-block site, 601 Grand Avenue—polygonal due to the angle of Sixth Avenue as it intersects Grand Avenue from the north—was first platted in 1857 as part of Dr. F.C. Grimmell's Addition to Fort Des Moines, with residential use predominating until the twentieth century. (Dixon: 253; 1891, 1901 Sanborn maps) By the 1920 Sanborn map, the northwest corner was fully developed with two- and three-story masonry (or veneered) commercial and light industrial buildings, occupied by a hotel, glove company, print shop and bindery, dry cleaners, and stores. (See Fig. 13) The buildings and a similar mix of businesses remained as of the 1957 Sanborn map. Home Federal purchased the new building site in 1955, and a site survey completed in February 1959. (*Des Moines Tribune*, February 1959; Anderson)



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Fig. 12-13. Left: 1950s snapshot shows the three-story brick Hotel Lloyd's High Street elevation looking southeast from the St. Ambrose Rectory, 607 High Street. (Photography courtesy of Norm Bormann) Right: The 1920 Sanborn map shows the future Home Federal Building site as occupied by Hotel Lloyd and two other buildings. Top of the page is north.

Real estate and insurance broker Joseph N. Chamberlain, member of the Home Federal board of directors and chairman of the building committee, played a key role in planning the project and commissioning Mies van der Rohe as the architect, as described in the December 1962 special advertising section Home Federal produced to announce its grand opening. (*Des Moines Register*, December 30, 1962) As reported by the *Des Moines Tribune*, Chamberlain and Home Federal president Jonathan Fletcher spent 2.5 weeks in January 1959 traveling throughout the United States looking at buildings and interviewing architects. They visited Chicago, New York, St. Louis, Miami, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Baltimore, and several West Coast cities. "Said Fletcher: 'After we saw the Seagram building, we wanted van der Rohe.'" (*Des Moines Tribune*, February 1959) The selection of Mies van der Rohe would assure a modern building that would clearly announce the progressive nature of the financial institution, as discussed by Dyson and Rubano. (Dyson and Rubano: 1-2)

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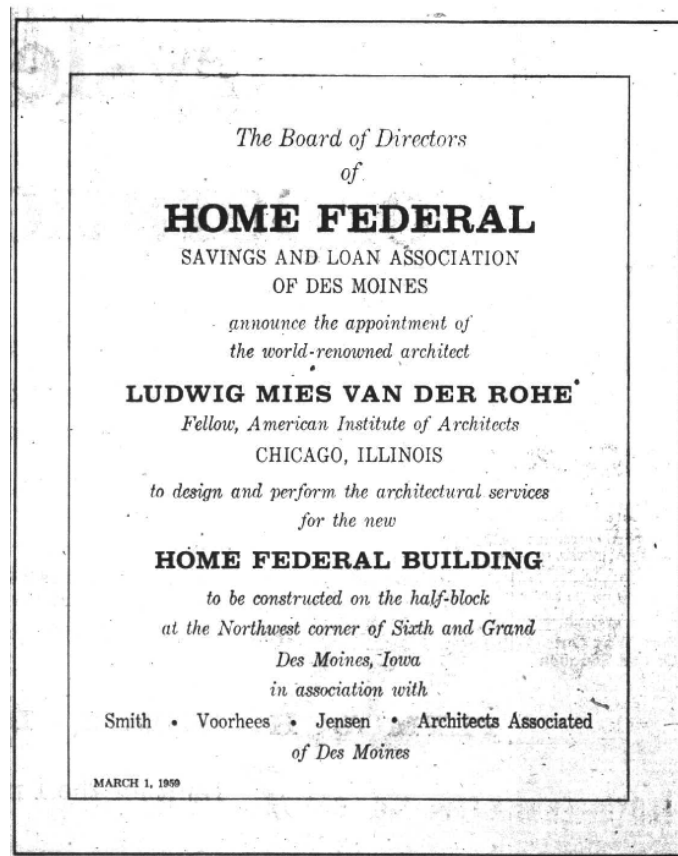


Figure 14: Advertisement announcing Mies van der Rohe's commission for Home Federal. (*Des Moines Register*, March 3, 1959: 7)

In addition, selecting Mies van der Rohe would and did create a public relations boon for Home Federal, in the wake of the highly lauded 1958 completion of Mies's Seagram Building in New York City (to be discussed at further length below). Home Federal took out a large advertisement in a March 1959 *Des Moines Register* to formally announce the selection of Mies van der Rohe as architect for its new Home Federal Building; the ad coincided with the architect's two-day trip to Des Moines to examine the site:

The Board of Directors of Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines announce the appointment of the world-renowned architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Fellow, American Institute of Architects, Chicago, Illinois, to design and perform the architectural services for the new Home Federal Building, to be constructed on the half-block at the Northwest corner of Sixth and Grand, Des Moines, Iowa, in association with Smith • Voorhees • Jensen • Architects Associated of Des Moines. (*Des Moines Register*, March 3, 1959 ad)

The Des Moines Register interviewed Mies van der Rohe during his site visit and noted that the architect

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had recently retired from his role as head of the department of architecture at Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), where he also served as campus architect and designed many of the buildings. The then-72-year-old architect stated: "After 20 years of teaching, I think I've had enough now and am devoting my time to my own work." Thus, the Home Federal project received his full attention at a time when his private practice office grew, both in response to his schedule post-retirement from IIT and his soaring popularity during the height of Modernism and the laudatory publicity and awards for his Seagram Building. (*Des Moines Register*, March 1, 1959)

Additionally, the newspaper referenced Mies van der Rohe's 1954 visit to Des Moines to take the National Council of Architectural Registration examinations in order to facilitate his practice outside of his home state of Illinois — and his visit to the 1948 Des Moines Art Center designed by Eliel Saarinen ("a very nice building"). During his 1959 visit he planned to see Drake University's post-war campus buildings (1949-1957), planned and designed by Eliel Saarinen (until his death in 1950) and son Eero Saarinen. (*Des Moines Register*, March 3, 1959) His visit to Drake University—and his connections to the Home Federal officers who also served as Drake trustees, Jonathan Fletcher and Arthurs S. Kirk—undoubtedly facilitated the university's 1962 commission to design a building for the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, Meredith Memorial Hall (completed 1965), to memorialize the father of Home Federal's early director, the publishing scion Edwin T. Meredith Jr. (*Des Moines Register*, April 18, 1965) It also worth noting that the Saarinen works referenced, for the non-profit Art Center and Drake University, have been attributed as the first Modernistic works by world-renown architects in Des Moines; future research may show that the Home Federal Building may have been Des Moines's first post-war modernist *corporate* work by a world-renown architect, following earlier Modern Movement designs for Des Moines companies that were the work of Iowa architects.

Design of the New Home Federal Savings and Loan Building

Design of the Home Federal building began in early 1959, as indicated by the architecture firm's numbering system and by press accounts. In a newspaper article prior to Mies van der Rohe's site visit, Home Federal president Fletcher stated that the new building would be set back on the half-block site with a plaza, fountains [not built], and benches plus underground parking [not built]. Fletcher explained:

'The new building will be more than just another office building. We'll have something out of the ordinary, something simple, restful and new.

The building will be unique and we hope it will provide a place for a pleasant pause in busy downtown Des Moines.'

The reporter stated that construction of the estimated \$1.5 million building on the half-block site with underground parking was slated to start in March 1961, but that "details of the structure (number of floors, materials and design) are being left to van der Rohe. The German-born architect also will design the furnishings and choose the art work, said Fletcher." (*Des Moines Tribune*, February 1959)

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At the time of his early March site visit, Mies van der Rohe publicly shared an initial concept for the building with the *Des Moines Register* reporter, which called him “one of the world’s foremost architects and designers”:

‘The new building here will be similar to the Seagram Building in the use of glass and bronze, although the building’s design will be quite different.’ The building probably will be three or four stories in height and will have underground parking facilities, he said. The cost probably will be ‘in the vicinity of 1.5 million dollars,’ company officials estimated....

‘I like Des Moines—it is quite flat, and I like that. There aren’t the high towers here and Des Moines has a low-lying character in opposition to the tall buildings of other places. The new building will have a really good site. The situation is good there in relation to traffic.’

Two points are worth highlighting, and will be explored further below: 1) The groundbreaking Seagram Building, planned and constructed 1954-1958, was cited as a model for the initial Home Federal concept. 2) This initial concept favored a multi-story building with underground parking (rather than a parking lot)—and the use of bronze and glass (rather than the welded steel and glass used on the building as constructed).

Mies van der Rohe protégé Gene Summers, FAIA, the project architect for the Seagram Building and Home Federal, among others, also may have visited Des Moines for the Home Federal site visit. The Home Federal December 1962 special advertising section about the grand opening pictured and credited Summers as well as architect Arthur G. Salzman, AIA, as being in charge of the Home Federal project. (*Des Moines Register*, December 30, 1962: 5) Summers, who worked for Mies van der Rohe from 1950 through 1966, explained how his mentor received commissions and the role that Summers played in the office, in a 1987 oral history with Art Institute of Chicago associate architecture curator Pauline Saliga:

Buildings never came to the office fast and steady. Mies never went out and really sought buildings. When he did get a commission it happened that somebody would know of him or be told of him and would come in and talk to us in the office as a group, either Joe Fujikawa [AIA] and Mies, or myself and Mies. We ended up showing them around, and either got the job or not. (Summers: 49)

.... [After the Seagram Building] I ended up getting nearly, well, not nearly, all of the buildings that came into the office that were not apartment buildings.... There were no “project managers,” but that’s what we were. I traveled with Mies to Cuba [for the Bacardi headquarters project, never built due to the Cuban revolution], and after the first few meetings I did all of the contact with the client. That’s the way it was on all the other projects. Mies would get involved in the beginning with the client, just to be there, but hardly ever after that unless the client came to Chicago. He didn’t travel that much, and the client understood it because of his age. (Summers: 51)

In beginning design work, Summers said that Mies generally presented three options to clients:

Mies always had this idea ... —you do three schemes. If you put one scheme before a client, they’ll almost surely not like it. If you put three schemes out there, they’ll surely pick one. It was a good technique and we all used it. (Summers: 71-72)

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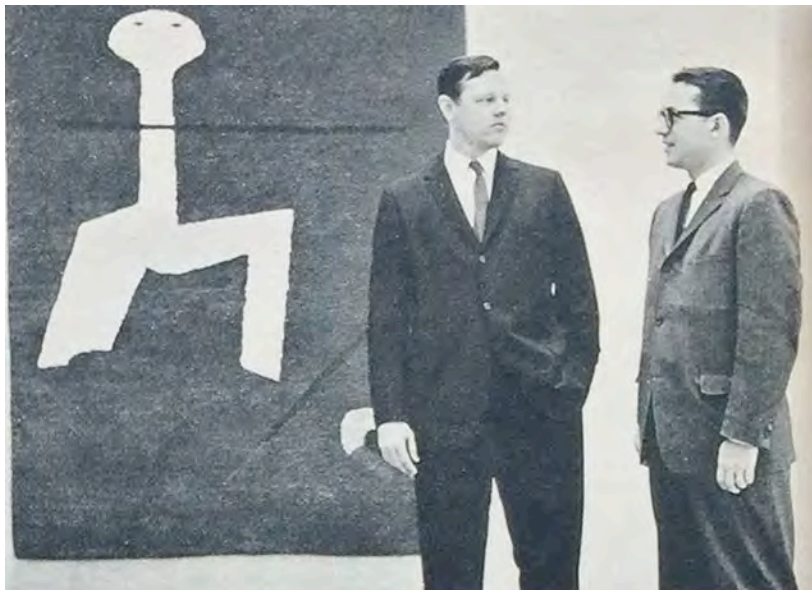


Figure 15: Architects Gene R. Summers (left) and Arthur G. Salzman (right) were pictured in the December 1962 special advertising section about the new building. (Des Moines Sunday Register, Picture magazine, December 30, 1962: 5)

Indeed, at least two design concepts were developed for Home Federal by spring 1959, as shown in photographs of models made by the Office of Mies van der Rohe (shot by the Chicago-based Hedrich-Blessing photography studio) and architectural drawings made by the Office of Mies van der Rohe (recorded in the Franz Schulze-edited volumes of *The Mies van der Rohe Archive: An Illustrated Catalogue of the Mies van der Rohe Drawings in the Museum of Modern Art: Part II: 1938-1967, The American Work*). The first of these designs first being nearly as built with two upper stories suspended over a recessed first story via steel columns and surrounded by plaza; the second, being a trussed two-story design with soaring banking hall and peripheral balcony offices that occupied nearly the full site. Variations on both two concepts continued to be developed in 1959 and 1960, and perhaps even until 1961. In this way, progression of the Home Federal design evolution can be viewed by looking at photographs of these models, as photographed by the noted commercial photography studio Hedrich-Blessing whose clients included Mies van der Rohe and other Modernist architects. The Hedrich-Blessing Archive at the Chicago History Museum has identified a number of photographs of models as possibly being the Des Moines Home Federal Building; evaluation by this author of these photographs showing the models with full sites including backdrops of surrounding buildings appears to show that all but one of these models identified as possible Home Federal models appear to be so. (Hedrich-Blessing)

The first known photograph of a Home Federal model in the Hedrich-Blessing Archive is dated late April 1959: a three-story building that appears very similar to the as-built Home Federal Building, but without a

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transparent first story. Key design elements that appear on the existing Home Federal Building are visible in the model, including the siting of the building in the northwest corner to allow for a generous L-shape plaza, the square shape of the upper stories suspended on columns over a recessed first story, and the ribbons of windows on the upper stories. (Hedrich-Blessing: Models for a small building, April 22, 1959) (See Fig. 16)

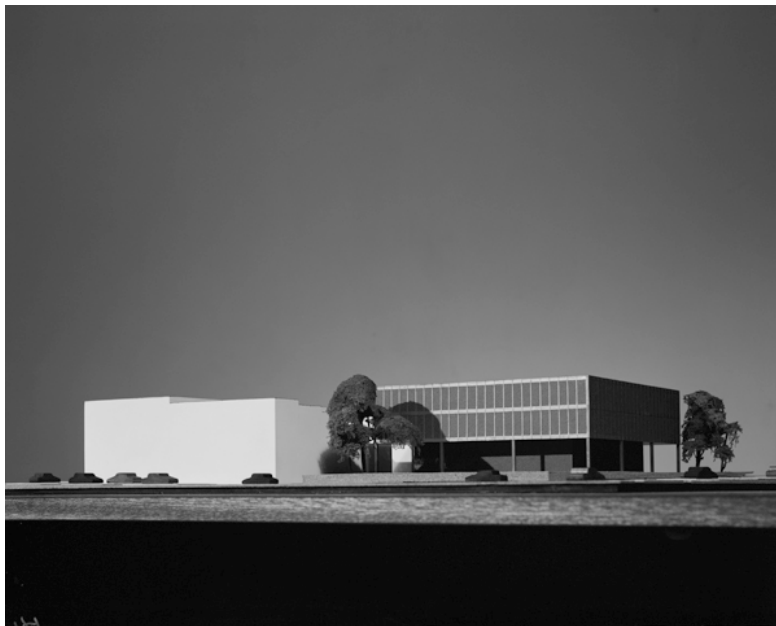


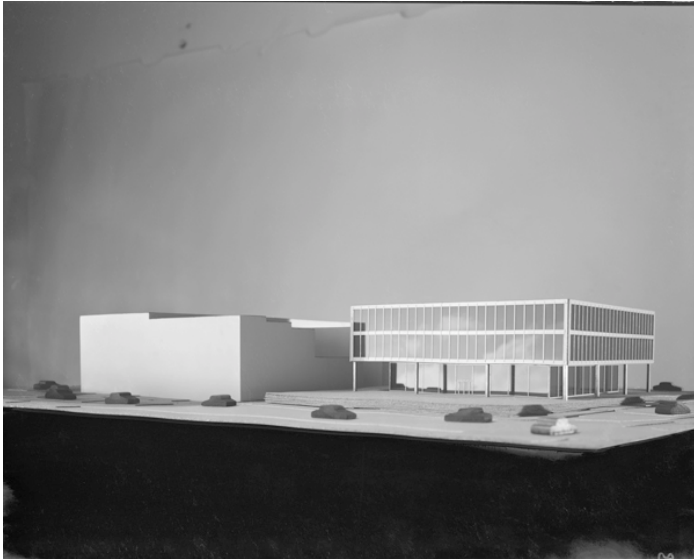
Fig. 16: Early or perhaps even first Mies van der Rohe model for Home Federal Building concept, April 1959, as photographed by Hedrich-Blessing studio for the architect. (Hedrich-Blessing: Models for a small building, April 22, 1959, from Chicago History Museum)

By late June 1959, Mies van der Rohe's office had prepared another two models for Home Federal, as photographed by Hedrich-Blessing: The first appears to show the three-story Home Federal building similar as built except in what may have been white-painted steel and transparent first story without the travertine marble cladding and on what appears to be a slightly raised plaza; the second appears to show an early version of what has become a lauded but not built alternative design with two large trusses suspending a mezzanine and here with what appears to be veined stone cladding at the first story. (Hedrich-Blessing: Models of building designed by Mies van der Rohe, June 29, 1959) (See Figures 17-18) This second unbuilt design will be discussed further, below.

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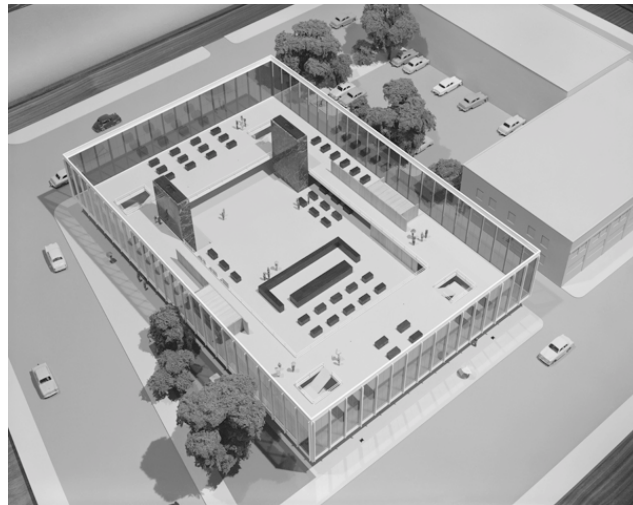
Figures 17-18: Early Mies van der Rohe models for Home Federal Building concept, June 1959, as photographed by Hedrich-Blessing studio for the architect. (Hedrich-Blessing: Models of building designed by Mies van der Rohe, June 29, 1959, Chicago History Museum)

By late August 1959, another model of the trussed unbuilt version was photographed, this time with transparent first-story glass walls. (Figure 19) This concept placed a small number of offices at the perimeter of the suspended mezzanine that ringed the two-story volume banking floor; the building occupied nearly the full site without a plaza and without a drive-through banking window. This “trussed” model appears to have been under serious consideration, as further models of this design were photographed in February 1960, this time with a parking lot across the alley shown. (Figure 20) This may indicate the time period when the design concept shifted from underground parking to surface parking lot. At the time, land was relatively inexpensive in downtown Des Moines, particularly in comparison to land prices in Chicago, where the Mies van der Rohe office and many clients were based.

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Figures 19-20: Early Mies van der Rohe model for unbuilt trussed Home Federal Building concept, left, August 1959, and right, February 1960, as photographed by Hedrich-Blessing studio for the architect. (Hedrich-Blessing: Architectural model for low-rise building, August 27, 1959 and Architectural model with visible interior, February 14, 1960, Chicago History Museum HB-23125 PPL)

Summers said that under Mies's direction, designs evolved from sketching repeatedly and making models, which became increasingly important to the elder architect's decision-making:

[H]e was able to clearly make the decisions by either drawings or by models. In the early years there was a distinct difference between the way we worked..... He insisted that we just sketch a lot, make three-dimensional sketches of details of parts of the building. Later it developed, and it was somewhat of a crutch, I feel, on his part, that he would want a model of the thing. It was always easier instead of looking at a drawing and saying "That's okay," to make a model of it. He had no interest in or even the slightest remotest thought of efficiency of an office as far as getting a job done. That just didn't enter his mind. He was only interested in getting his thing done in the right manner, not any kind of speed.... (Summers: 24)

....To have it designed properly was what he was interested in.... I have wondered how some of the clients stuck with us because it took forever to do some of these things. Sometimes it was the client's fault, but sometimes it took us a long time in the office. (Summers: 25)

....Models were always a part of the office and even in Europe he did models. When we were doing the early IIT buildings, the first years that I was in the office, just know that we did many, many more sketches.... (Summers: 25)

....Every time we did a model or every time we had a building done we'd end up, at least here in Chicago, using Hedrich-Blessing. We always used the same photographer, not only because we knew him and they were good, but because it kept the negatives all in one place. (Summers: 28-29)

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The Home Federal design process continued through 1961, when the existing design was approved and construction preparations began. However, design detailing continued throughout the construction process. This appears to be an example of “fast tracking,” a technique Mies van der Rohe and Gene Summers pioneered on the Seagram Building. As explained by Summers:

... [I]n later years, the way we built the Seagram Building developed into quite a business, which was called “fast-tracking,” where you are actually designing at the same time they’re building. We didn’t realize that that was going to develop into something, but we actually built [the Seagram Building] that way. We started with incomplete drawings, but we finished the foundations and the structural drawings. The building got done faster, and that was because the contractor was established before ... the project design was finished. (Summers: 48)



Figure 21: Final model of the Home Federal Savings and Loan Building and parking lot, with board of directors surrounding the model, as depicted in the December 1962 special advertising section for the bank’s opening. (Des Moines Sunday Register, Picture magazine, December 30, 1962: 11)

Construction:

The Office of Mies van der Rohe was involved with day-to-day construction of the project, 1961 through 1962, managed via a Des Moines-based project inspector. This arrangement allowed the Chicago office to keep a tight rein on contractors who had not worked with Mies van der Rohe previously and were unfamiliar with some of his pioneering methods of working with materials such as steel, glass, and even cement

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plaster used on both exterior and interior ceilings. The project inspector was Des Moines resident and engineer Harry A. Kavanaugh, who kept a daily project log and provided what was likely daily communication to the Chicago office via Mies van der Rohe associate Arthur G. Salzman, AIA, who then coordinated with project architect Gene Summers, FAIA. Many letters written by Kavanaugh, Salzman, and contractors remain in a Home Federal Building construction archives collection retained by the Diocese of Des Moines. Through review of these communications and a partial architectural drawing set, a more nuanced overview of the construction process is provided. (The logbook that Kavanaugh kept is not in this collection, and neither is correspondence from the client, Home Federal.) Above all, this collection provides an excellent overview into the level of detail and involvement the Office of Mies van der Rohe had in designing and executing the design for Home Federal. Part of the involvement required holding contractors to the plans as designed—which included experimental methods of construction and uses of materials with which some of the Des Moines-based contractors and suppliers were unfamiliar.

Kavanaugh's role is clear, but for whom he directly worked remains unknown. The specifications portion of the architectural contract required a fully outfitted architect's office building constructed on the work site with telephones, tables, desks, chairs, plan racks, filing cabinets, and all utilities—and all paid by the contractor except for long-distance phone calls. (Specifications: SC-12) This is presumably the location from where Kavanaugh worked. It is possible Kavanaugh was directly hired by the Office of Mies van der Rohe, which provided him with official stationery to use in his frequent correspondence with contractors and suppliers. Or he may have been hired through the Des Moines-based associate architectural firm, Smith-Voorhees-Jensen, Architects Associated. In the 1958 city directory Kavanaugh is listed as an engineer at the Des Moines architectural firm Wetherell & Harrison. He later worked as an architect's representative at Tinsley, Higgins, Lighter and Lyon, per his 1983 obituary. (*Des Moines Register*, August 10, 1983)

The following narrative timeline is provided based on the construction correspondence:

The pre-construction process had begun by winter 1961, when Dighton W. Smith, AIA, Smith-Voorhees-Jensen, Architects Associated, was coordinating with Iowa Power & Light Company on moving and updating utilities for the project. No other mention is found of Smith-Vorhees-Jensen within the construction archives, so the full scope of this firm's contributions to the project remains unknown—but may have included working with city officials on the permitting and code review process.

By June 1961, site work had begun. (Salzman letter to Kavanaugh, June 19, 1961) In early July, an approved schedule for general construction was forwarded to the client. (Salzman letter, July 3, 1961) Shop work on the building was proceeding; and the Office of Mies van der Rohe pressed the client to make final decisions on bank equipment manufacturer(s) so that requirements for drive-up window, alarm system, night depository, vault, walk-up teller window could be incorporated into the drawings. (Salzman letter, July 19, 1961) Meanwhile the office worked on custom furnishing designs. By late July 1961, footing excavation and piling work was underway. (Kavanaugh, July 31, 1961)

In July and August 1961, tensions became evident between the Des Moines-based general contractor,

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Ringland-Johnson, and the Office of Mies van der Rohe. Delays in getting Ringland's shop drawings approved by the Chicago office led general contractor John Ringland to requests one-week turnarounds instead of three weeks to avoid delays. (Ringland letter to Office of Mies van der Rohe, September 18, 1961) Steel fabrication and install began in August. Des Moines Steel provided carbon steel, which Salzman coached Kavanaugh on how to inspect:

“[L]ook over what has been done. It is not necessary to measure anything – that's up to them. On the structural steel the only things you should be concerned about are reasonable straightness, if they are getting the camber where required, soundness of welds and nelson studs, and workmanship around holes in webs for pipes and ducts. We are much more concerned about the exposed steel. There you should look for lack of straightness, nicked edges or corners, blemished or unplane surfaces, ragged, unsound or un-uniform exposed welds or anything else that might be unsightly in the finished building. (Salzman letter to Kavanaugh, August 16, 1961) (Also Kavanaugh letter, August 28, 1961; Salzman letter to Kavanaugh, August 16, 1961; Ringland letter to Salzman, August 30, 1961)

In early October 1961, structural engineer Belton C. Ostrom, of Chicago-based Nelson, Ostrom, Baskin, Berman and Associates engineering and architecture firm, visited the site and reported excellent concrete foundation work with no shrinking or cracking and structural steel erection virtually complete. (Ostrom letter to Salzman, October 9, 1961, “Ringland-Johnson Letters”) Another Chicago engineer, consulting mechanical engineer William Goodman, designed the multi-zone climate control system, which included individual control of heating and cooling via radiant baseboard heat units (a boiler system exists in the basement) as well as an original air conditioning and ventilation system integrated within the recessed ceiling light fixtures. (Home Federal “Welcome”) Meanwhile, the general contractor instituted monthly meetings with mechanical contractors and architects to discuss problems and schedules, a move that Salzman readily agreed to. (Kavanaugh letter, October 9, 1961; Ringland letter to Salzman, September 21, 1961)

Tensions again flared in December 1961, with Gene Summers sending a letter rebuking Ringland-Johnson for sloppy job drawings; he required that general contractor would certify that all required corrections have been made. (Summers letter to Ringland-Johnson, December 4, 1961) And Salzman sent a letter rebuking the work of subcontractor Architectural Iron for consistently poor performance, including substituting cast-aluminum stair nosings from another company instead of the one specified by the Office of Mies van der Rohe; he advised that the office would invoke the contractual right to remove the subcontractor from the job if performance did not improve. (Salzman letter to R.G. King, Ringland-Johnson, December 14, 1961)

In winter 1962, the aluminum-framed windows were caulked, but water was leaking in by spring, requiring the subcontractor to return to the job. (Ringland letter to Cupples Products Corp., May 22, 1962) In February 1962, the general contractor reported that schedule was delayed but the labor situation was improving; he asked for permission to move up the date of demolition of the building to the west of the alley (parking lot site), which per the contract was to remain until construction commenced in July 1, 1962. (Ringland letter, February 19, 1962) Further delays occurred with sheet metal installation as well as the

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custom-designed light fixtures—which incorporated fluorescent fixtures, heating and cooling, and acoustical sound dampening material. Chicago-based Garcy Lighting fabricated and Underwriters Laboratory-tested the custom innershell fixtures but took more than a year to complete them, which caused delays in ceiling plaster work among other aspects. (Ringland letter to Office of Mies van der Rohe, February 23, 1962; Ringland letter to Iowa Sheet Metal, February 26, 1962; Home Federal “Welcome,” Ringland letter to Garcy, March 7, 1962)



Figure 22: The Des Moines Tribune captured workers lunching atop the Home Federal steel structure in April 1962. (Des Moines Tribune, April 26, 1962: 1)

Of particular interest are letters demonstrating contractors and subcontractors questioning the Office of Mies van der Rohe as far as design and application of materials, demonstrating the experimental nature of the modernist master’s work that appears to have been unfamiliar to some within the Des Moines building community. For example, in April 1962 Allied Construction Services questioned whether plaster could be used on the first-floor soffits (also referred to as first-floor exterior ceilings); Mies architect Salzman verified with the U.S. Gypsum Co.’s Chicago office that plaster with a finish coat consisting of one part Structo-Gauge, two parts ivory lime, and 25 pounds white silica sand per 100 pounds of Structo-Gauge troweled on (not floated) would “keep the appearance the same on both sides of the glass walls.” (Salzman letter to

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R.G. King, Ringland-Johnson, April 19, 1962) Ringland-Johnson also questioned whether smaller panes of glass (and more mullions) could be used on the nearly transparent first story due to difficulty in securing the oversize sheets of glass—a request that was met with a sharp no from Salzman. (Salzman letter to Ringland-Johnson). The aluminum-framed windows of polished clear and gray-tinted glare-resistant annealed Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co. glass were contained within neoprene glazing channels, which were resealed and re-glazed in October 1962 after the initial caulking failed. (Ringland letter to Allied Construction Services, September 27, 1962; Home Federal “Welcome”)

In spring, grading occurred for the building site’s south and east sides to prepare for rough slab installed under the granite-paved plaza. (Ringland letter to Allied Construction, April 4, 1962) Minnesota-based Cold Springs Granite Co. furnished the Rockville granite pavers and retaining wall – and exterior benches. The exterior walking surface pavers were finished with a fine texture; the interior walking surface pavers are honed. The company also supplied granite furniture bases and granite counter tops for removable furniture pieces. This company appears to have worked with the Office of Mies van der Rohe previously, based on wording in a letter. (Cold Springs Granite Co., Cold Spring, Minnesota)

In May 1962, the general contractor provided a new schedule for first-floor work to meet the November 1, 1962, completion date. (Ringland letter) Among other delays that occurred: Roman Travertine marble installation on the exterior and interior core south and north cores lagged due to limited manpower supplied by Minneapolis-based Twin City Tile & Marble Co. (Ringland letter to Twin City Tile & Marble Co., July 24, 1962). In July, Salzman requested permission from Home Federal to build out what would be the minimal tenant space walls and flooring on the second and third floors to avoid construction dust later and improve the appearance of unleased space to prospective tenants; documentation exists for only one small tenant space designed by the Office of Mies van der Rohe (and largely remodeled since)—most tenant space was developed purposefully after the construction was completed and tailored and retailored over time to meet changing tenant needs. (Salzman letter, July 26, 1962)

In August 1962, the Office of Mies van der Rohe completed drawings and specifications for the plantings and draperies; several Des Moines firms were contacted in regard to bids and ultimately the Office of Mies van der Rohe selected landscape contractor William Reinhold of Flat Rock, Michigan, and a Des Moines firm for the draperies. (“Planting” and “Draperies” folders) And Ringland-Johnson provided another revised schedule for completion, targeted for October 31, 1962; work yet to be completed included marble installation, granite floor, plasterwork, ceiling light installation, millwork installation, painting, and asphalt tile floor installation. As a side note, Des Moines-based Iowa Paint Manufacturing Co., Inc. manufactured the exterior and interior paint; original paint chips remain in the folder. (Salzman letter to R.G. King, Ringland-Johnson, February 5, 1962, “Painting” folder; Ringland letter to all contractors and architect, August 28, 1962) In October, the small (nonextant since 1974) parking lot attendant building was revised to less-costly materials — perhaps indicating that cost overruns were occurring. (“Parking Lot Building” folder)

In the end, Home Federal began moving into the building on schedule, taking over utilities from the general contractor November 1, 1962, as owners’ miscellaneous equipment, carpet, furniture, counters, drapes, and

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final punch list items were underway. The savings and loan began preparations for its late November 1962 formal opening (Ringland letter to Home Federal Savings, November 1, 1962)

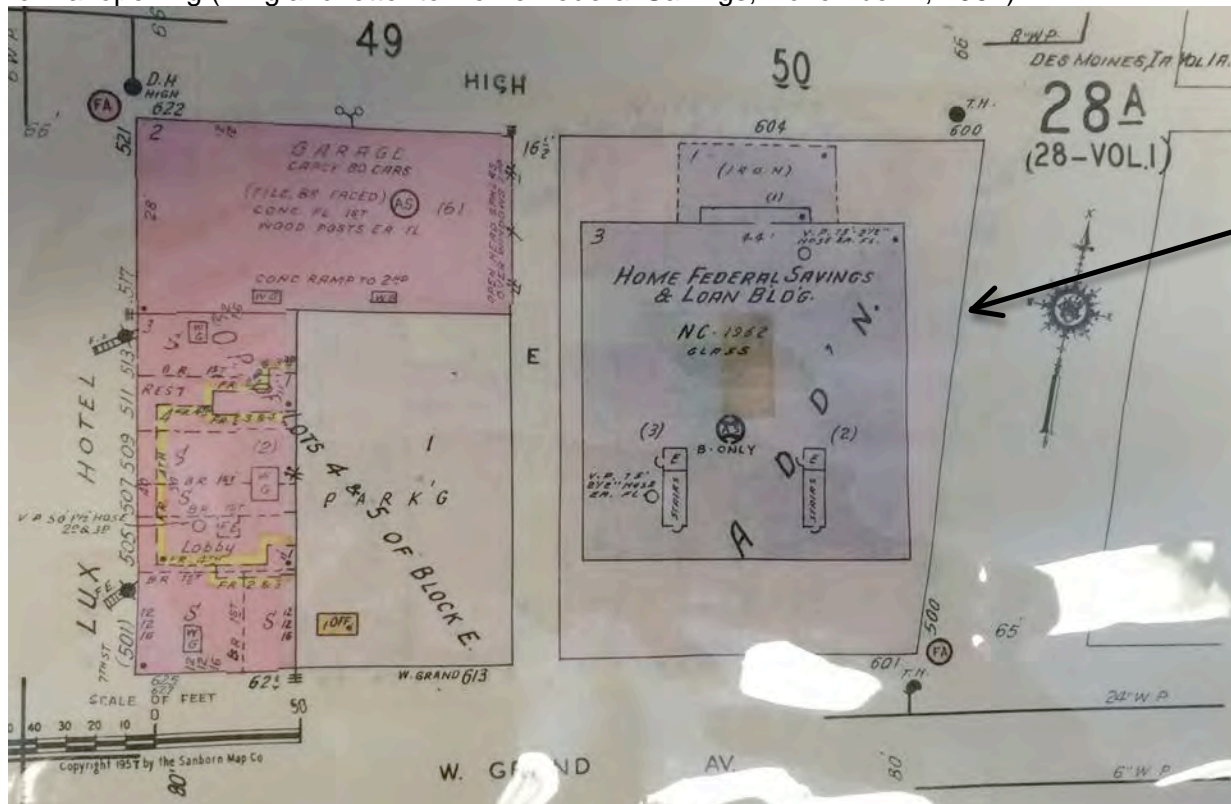


Figure 23: The revised 1965 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the completed Home Federal Building, indicated as non-combustible (“NC”). This pasted-in revision is on transparent paper that allows a “ghost” image of the former Hotel Lloyd to show through. North arrow is depicted on the map. (City of Des Moines)

Home Federal As Built: A Modern Landmark

In celebrating its completed new building, Home Federal developed a 12-page special section inserted into the Des Moines Sunday Register, which then had an all-time high circulation statewide of some half-million subscribers. This special section sought to educate readers about the architect, the architecture, and the ways in which this building would deliver improved services to customers—and invited all to visit. Evidence suggests that the building became something of a tourist spot, with postcards produced (now available for sale such as through eBay). A December 1962 special advertising section invited the public to visit the “Modern, Convenient New Home of Home Federal Savings and Loan Association” during a month-long grand opening celebration. The 12-page photo-rich publication promised: “Inside: In Picture and Words, the Exciting Story of a New Landmark for Thrifty Iowans.” (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, Picture, (Advertising) Section 2: December 30, 1962)

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A New Architectural Masterpiece in Downtown Des Moines

World-Famous Architect's Philosophy: 'Express Structure of Building'

LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE of Chicago, who designed the new Home Federal Building, is regarded by many as the world's foremost architect. He has been listed with Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier as "the great triumvirate" of modern architecture.

Mies' work is based on the conviction that architecture should be in harmony with structure; that beauty of form will result if structure is logical, direct, functional. One architectural writer has explained: "By knowing what to leave out, Mies adds a great deal to what he leaves in."

Born in Germany in 1886, Mies van der Rohe became an architect at 21 and in a dozen years attained a place of leadership among European designers. In 1937, rankling under Nazi restraints, he brought his talents to America. Among his best-known American creations are the new 18-story Seagram Building in New York City and the two skyscraper apartments at 860 Lake Shore Drive in Chicago.

In the new Home Federal Building, Mies' philosophy is expressed in the architectural use of steel, the same kind of steel usually hidden by "architects." It may be seen in the building's simple lines, the suggestive harmony of steel, glass and stone; the generous use of open space. In this building, he has demonstrated again the great beauty attainable in masterful simplicity.

STRIKING CONTRAST BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW in architecture is seen in this view. The South Avenue side of the Home Federal Building, with St. Andrew Cathedral in the background, Home Federal chose this downtown site for its new home, not only as a convenience to customers, but also with the definite aim of helping to revitalize the city's central business section.

PART OF SPACIOUS CUSTOMER PARKING AREA is seen in foreground of this view from southeast. In addition, Home Federal will continue to provide free parking for commuters on all other downtown public lots. Set back from the street and free-standing, the building admits light and air to view from all four sides, provides for a broad garage plaza extending to the city's main thoroughfare to a downtown site.

DRIVE-IN AND WALK-UP TELLER WINDOWS on north side of building are a new convenience, open extra hours: from 8:30 to 5:30 Monday through Thursday and 8:30 to 6:00 on Friday. Also under the canopy is an after-hours depository. Drive-in entrance is on South Avenue; exit on High Street. Provision is made also for a future "island" drive-in, with closed-circuit television and pneumatic tube system for communication between customer and teller.

CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE . . . MODERN SERVICE TO SAVERS AND HOME BUYERS

HOME FEDERAL'S beautiful new building is the achievement of everyone who has had confidence in the future of Home Federal. This includes those who have saved at Home Federal and those who have financed homes with us, as well as the men and women who have guided and operated Home Federal through over 26 years of steady growth.

The new building also is a symbol of Home Federal's confidence in the future—in the future of Des Moines and of the downtown area as its vital heart; in the future of Iowa; in the future of the American system.

Further, the new building is essential to Home Federal's future growth and achievement. It provides the facilities and space for Home Federal to serve its present customers even better, to serve more and more new customers, and to help Iowans achieve their goals of thrift and home ownership.

We are especially proud that the new building not only will meet Home Federal's needs, but also that it is an architectural masterpiece.

We invite you to enjoy the new convenience Home Federal offers, and to join us, this coming month, in celebrating the greatest milestone in the 26-year history of our organization.

JONATHAN M. FLETCHER
President
Home Federal Savings
and Loan Association

Figures 24-25: Home Federal executives sought to educate the public about the "World Famous Architect's Philosophy: Express Structure of Building" while marketing the savings and loan's services in 12-page December 1962 newspaper special section. (Des Moines Sunday Register, Picture, (Advertising) Section 2: December 30, 1962: 2-3)

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Born in Germany in 1886, Mies van der Rohe became an architect at 21 and in a dozen years attained a place of leadership among European designers. In 1937, rankling under Nazi restraints, he brought his talents to America. Among his best-known American creations are the new

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38-story Seagram Building in New York City and the twin skyscraper apartments at 860 [and 880] Lake Shore Drive in Chicago.

In the new Home Federal Building, Mies' philosophy is expressed in the architectural use of steel, the same kind of steel usually hidden by "architecture." It may be seen in the building's simple lines; the magnificent harmony of steel, glass, and stone; the generous use of open space. In the building, he has demonstrated again the great beauty attainable in masterful simplicity.

[Captions] Striking contrast between the old and the new architecture is seen in this view: The Sixth Avenue side of the Home Federal Building, with St. Ambrose Cathedral in the background. Home Federal chose this downtown site for its new home, not only as a convenience to customers but also with the definite aim of helping to revitalize the city's central business section....

Set back from the street and free-standing, the building admits light and affords views from all four sides; provides for a broad granite plaza extending to the curb; brings trees to downtown.

Main entrance at 601 Grand Avenue: Main floor, set back from upper floors, has exterior facing of Roman Travertine marble imported from Italy. On upper floors, steel panels painted black express the metal structure of the building. First-floor glass is clear for maximum visibility. Second and third floor windows are gray-tinted glass, reducing sky glare...." (Des Moines Sunday Register, December 30, 1962: 2)

The special section details the interior design, the mechanical systems, and the furnishings, all designed or selected by Mies.

Inside: Beauty and Function, as Modern as Tomorrow

To achieve total success in architecture, every detail of a building must be related in a harmonious whole.

In the new Home Federal Building, a single theme is carried out in furnishings and décor. Electrical fixtures are the same throughout, providing maximum flexibility of partitioning and uniformity of lighting. Inside the great glass windows, fireproof beige curtains permit sunlight control and privacy.

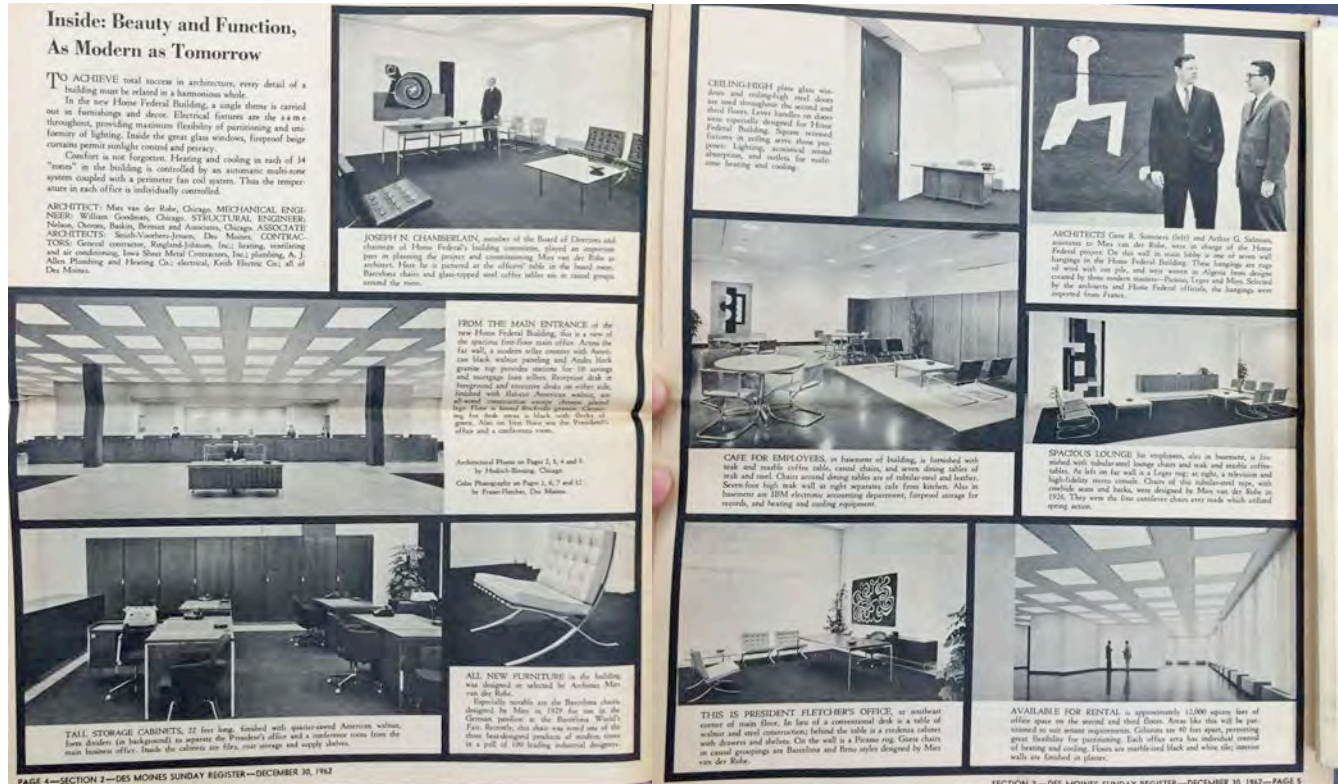
Heating and cooling in each of 34 "zones" in the building is controlled by an automatic multi-zone system coupled with a perimeter fan coil system. Thus, the temperature in each office is individually controlled.

One futuristic feature appears not to have been built: the drive-up teller window was built to accommodate a future island drive-in with pneumatic tube systems; this appears not to have been built. (Des Moines Sunday Register, December 30, 1962: 3; Stimmel)

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Figures 26-27: The special section featured the photography of Chicago commercial studio Hedrich-Blessing, which often photographed Mies van der Rohe's work. (Des Moines Sunday Register, Picture, (Advertising) Section 2: December 30, 1962: 4-5)

Even as Home Federal was inducing potential customers from afar to visit, president Jonathan M. Fletcher, a past-president of the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce, was touting the importance of the downtown commercial district in a letter in the special section:

....The new building is also a symbol of Home Federal's confidence in the future—in the future of Des Moines and the downtown area as its vital heart; in the future of Iowa; in the future of the American system. Further, the new building is essential to Home Federal's future growth and achievement. We are especially proud that the new building not only will meet Home Federal's needs, but also that it is an architectural masterpiece." (Des Moines Sunday Register, December 30, 1962: 3)

Fletcher's own open office was depicted, and located in the prominent southeast corner of the first story—providing customers with easy access to the man in charge.

Here it is important to provide further information about the Miesian grid, which the Home Federal Building

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readily applies. Historic preservation architecture specialist Gunny Harboe, AIA, of Chicago-based Harboe Architects (whose award-winning preservation work has included several Mies buildings including IIT's S.R. Crown Hall) encapsulates Home Federal's place within the Mies van der Rohe portfolio and use of this grid:

Like many Mies building designs, the Home Federal Savings and Loan building emphasizes function over ornament. This functionalist aspect is most obvious in Mies's decision to allow the structural grid to set the design motif for the entire building, both on the exterior and interior. On the exterior, the grid is expressed by applied vertical I-beams while on the interior, the column and mullion grid determine the layout for partitions and ceiling light fixtures.... Another typical Miesian feature is the recessed first floor entry lobby, clad mostly with glass. The glass allows Mies to continue exterior materials and architectural elements into the interior thereby creating a visual transition from exterior to interior. ... The end result is a building that expertly displays Mies's characteristic "less is more" design principals in which clean and crisp details and careful proportions take precedence over architectural elaboration. (Harboe: H-2-H-3)

To expand further on the use the Miesian structural grid: As is typical for his work, the Home Federal design employs a structural column and mullion grid that modulates nearly all aspects of site, exterior, and interior layouts. For example, the plaza granite paver joint lines are centered on either a column or mullion, as are interior partition walls. The grid module also carries over into exterior/interior ceiling light layout and interior perimeter fan coil unit placement. (Harboe: H-26)

Visiting both the Seagram Building and Home Federal, the use of the grid as well as key elements from the monumental New York City skyscraper are readily apparent in the Des Moines building: the granite-paved plaza, the curtain wall of the upper stories ends before the ground floor, a colonnade for the recessed transparent first story; the use of travertine marble, and steel-framed clear glass at the first story; and the upper steel-and-gray-tinted-glass curtain wall. (author visit 2014; Blaser: 80) So, too, are the continuation of materials from outdoors flowing seamlessly indoors: cement plastered ceiling on the canopy with integrated grid of lights continues indoors; granite pavers with different polish levels lead from outdoors to indoors; travertine marble clads exterior and interior; black steel outlines fenestrations outside and in. This continuity illustrates the Miesian principal of "space as an architectural problem.... Inside is outside is inside," as noted by Werner Blaser in his biography *Mies van der Rohe: Less Is More*. (Blaser: 86)

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Figure 28: Seagram Building façade as seen from the top of the plaza. Recessed first floor shows travertine walls inside; the upper curtain wall suspends above the colonnade. (Jennifer James)

In his oral history interview, Summers also addressed his work on the Seagram Building: He moved to New York City to join Mies van der Rohe and oversee the office and project, which had been conceived of but not fully detailed or designed. At Mies van der Rohe's request, Summers detailed key aspects of the building. Summers summarized key aspects of the Seagram Building:

The one that to me clearly is the most important thing is that it is the most highly refined of Mies's idea of a high-rise building, using the very best materials and the best detailing. From that point of view, it couldn't be done better, that idea that he always had about structure or expression of structure. The other aspect that is important is one that has more to do with the environment, and that's the plaza. You can see the building, unlike so many. It wasn't the first time that somebody left space on a building, but it was among the first. Lever House, across the street, which was a pretty well-known building at that time [1952, award-winning design by Gordon Bunshaft, FAIA, of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill/SOM], had space, but it created it with a low element. It still pretty much covered the whole site. (Summers: 45)

.... I was there when he decided instead of having clear glass he wanted to have [rose] colored glass. That was an interesting process to get that, because none of the big companies wanted to go in and do it. Finally he actually went to Phyllis [Lambert, daughter of Seagram's owner Samuel Bronfman, who oversaw the architectural process for the Seagram Building] and said "Phyllis, who makes your whiskey bottles?" She found out.... They made up samples and ended up making it. The major companies now make it.... He also had a lot of experience in Europe with colored glass. The Silk Exhibition had it. The Barcelona Pavilion had colored glass in it. He had had some background on

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that. At that time, the Lever House was the first important building using a green glass, but obviously you don't want to use a green tint with a bronze color. (Summers: 47-48)

These pioneering aspects of the Seagram Building also proved to be pioneering the Des Moines. Home Federal Building was one of the first commercial buildings—and future research may show it to have been the first—to introduce a plaza in the downtown commercial business district, and to use tinted glass.

Making the Case for Modernism in Des Moines's CBD

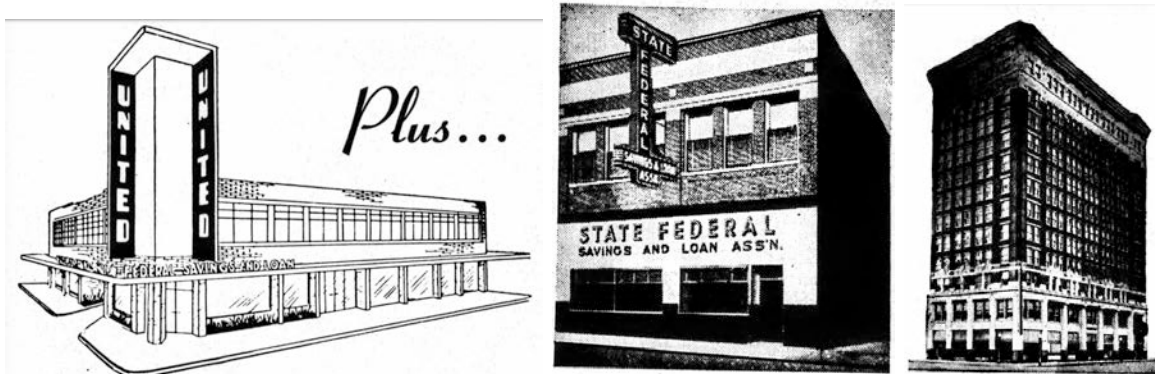
In 1955, the year that Home Federal purchased its new site, it was one of nine financial institutions within a two-block radius, including three large main-line banks and six savings and loan associations. These other institutions were as follows, with notes on known architecture and/or Modern Movement adaptations (see Figures 29-36 below):

- 1) Des Moines Savings & Loan Association, "Savings & Loan Building" (1913 low-rise skyscraper built as the Hippee-Polk Building; multiple tenants), 210 Sixth Avenue — advertised as "the oldest in Des Moines." Added a modern rear addition drive-through teller station in the early 1960s; expanded to include space in adjoining 1973 Financial Center skyscraper.
- 2) Polk County Federal Savings & Loan Association, 623 High Street (High and 7th streets, nearly kitty-corner from the northwest corner of the new Home Federal site; non-extant) — advertised as of 1954 with a photograph of its modern façade (or perhaps wholly new building)
- 3) State Federal Savings and Loan Association, 519 Sixth Avenue (6th and High Street, kitty-corner from the northeast corner of corner of the new Home Federal site; nonextant) — advertised as "30th Year of Service," with a streamlined façade treatment.
- 4) United Federal Savings & Loan Association, 4th and Locust streets (nonextant) —advertised with a line drawing of its standalone modern building.
- 5) Insurance Plan Savings and Loan Association, 827 Grand Avenue (nonextant), had a modern façade or modern building pictured in 1956 advertising.
- 6) Bankers Trust, Sixth and Locust streets (nonextant) — in 1958 proposed building a new drive-in bank and parking ramp (unbuilt); in 1974 moved into a Cor-Ten steel-clad modernist skyscraper with tenant space also provided. (Stimmel)
- 7) Iowa-Des Moines National Bank, Sixth and Walnut streets (NRHP 1979) — in 1959 added a Motor Bank Addition (nonextant) designed by Brooks Borg architectural firm. (Stimmel)
- 8) Central National Bank and Trust Company, 317 Sixth Avenue — in 1965 work began on a Mies-influenced 14-story skyscraper designed by Epstein and Sons Engineers of Chicago; the bank occupied the first three stories and other tenants populated the remainder. (Epstein)

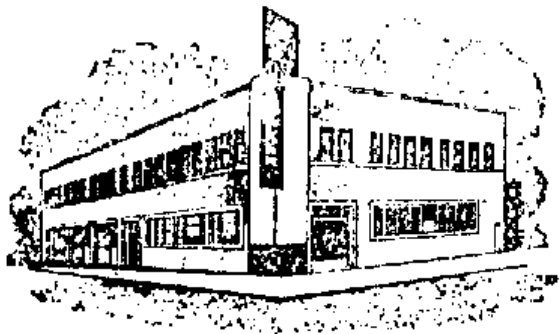
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Figs. 29-31: Buildings established identity in midcentury advertisements: From left, United Federal, State Federal, and Des Moines Savings and Loan Building (an early low-rise skyscraper). (1955 city directory buyer's guide insert)



Figs. 32-33: Left, Polk County Federal Savings and Loan in a 1954 ad. (*The Jefferson Herald*, November 11, 1954:13) Right, by 1966 it had been remodeled. (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, February 13, 1966).



Figures 34: Insurance Plan Savings & Loan depicted its modern-looking building in a 1956 advertisement. (*Catholic Messenger*, December 7, 1956, Section 3: 11)

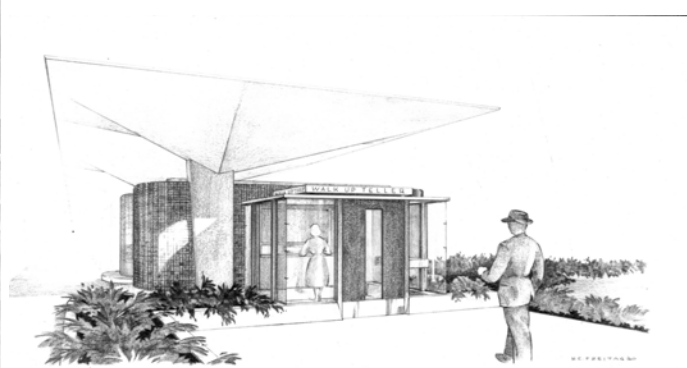
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MOTOR BANK
IOWA DES MOINES NATIONAL BANK



IOWA DES MOINES NATIONAL BANK
BROOKS BORG ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS
DES MOINES, IOWA

Figures 35-36: Traditional downtown banks also adopted modernistic architecture, as evidenced by the Iowa Des Moines National Bank Motor Bank (nonextant), left, and Walk-up Teller, right, both 1959, design by Brooks Borg Architects Engineers. (Images courtesy of Brooks Borg Skiles AE, Stephen Stimmel, AIA)



HOME FEDERAL
SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION
SIXTH AND GRAND • DES MOINES 7
New Landmark for Thrifty Iowans

Figure 37: Home Federal used the design of its new building as part of its branding and marketing, here with the catch phrase: “New Landmark for Thrifty Iowans.” (Des Moines Register, various ads)

These Des Moines institutions undoubtedly were influenced by national financial industry publications, which regularly extolled the virtues of modern design. According to Dyson and Rubano:

At the end of the war, the expected fiscal and housing boom resulted in unprecedented growth in the banking industry. The new and fast-moving credit economy fueled by mortgages and automobile and personal loans vastly increased banking profits. To capture the explosive growth, a bank had to be as appealing as possible to the largest number of people. Banks simply could not risk being perceived as stuffy and outdated. The most reliable way to attract people to your bank was to sell friendly convenience. (Dyson and Rubano: 2-45)

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Banks adopted modern retail architecture, including floor-to-ceiling storefront windows and open floor plans. Modern architecture in banks also dovetailed with the fascination with efficiency and technology, including computers—modern architecture projected the modernity of the institution. Dyson and Rubano also find data that backed up claims of the benefits of modernization:

Supporting the claim that switching to Modernism was economically prudent, a 1950 survey of modernized banks revealed that their deposits increased more than 33 percent above those of commercial banks as a whole. Ninety-six percent of bankers reported improved customer-banker relations. Modernization also decreased personnel turnover, and 68 percent of the bankers reported, 'It was now possible to acquire a higher caliber of personnel.' ("Does Modernization Pay?":18 as quoted in Dyson and Rubano: 2-45)

At the same time, in the 1950s Des Moines leaders saw the downtown falling behind suburban development, as told in *Standing on the Shoulders of Giants*, a history of the Greater Des Moines Partnership (successor of the Chamber of Commerce) written by retired *Des Moines Register* business editor Dave Elbert. In 1959 the Chamber of Commerce, of which Jonathan Fletcher was past-president, hired St. Louis-based city planning firm Harlan Bartholomew and Associates and the Real Estate Research Corp. to work with the city, local architects, and the state highway commission to produce a comprehensive plan for the central business district. Completed in 1960, the 85-page report laid out an ambitious 20-year \$300-million plan for remaking downtown: clearing undesirable buildings, bringing in highways, and constructing new modernist skyscrapers and low-rise buildings to provide government services, commerce, and housing. The report included analysis of the 766 central business district buildings, and found only 98 of " 'architectural or aesthetic value.'" Further, only 5 percent of all floor space was Class 1 (new and modern), and only 17 percent was Class 2 (good, well-maintained structures). (Elbert: 57-58) The Chamber of Commerce strongly promoted new construction, especially in the downtown, as represented by a September 1962 Chamber special section that ran in the *Des Moines Sunday Register*; Home Federal was one of fourteen new construction projects featured: "Modern new offices for Home Federal Savings and Loan are nearing completion in Downtown Des Moines." (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, September 16, 1962) In this way, construction of the new Home Federal Building represented a fulfillment of a portion of the Bartholomew blueprint for progress.

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Figure 38: Home Federal was one of 14 businesses highlighted in a September 1962 special section produced by the Chamber of Commerce. (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, September 16, 1962)

Press Coverage During Construction and Shortly After

Repeatedly the Des Moines press celebrated the Home Federal Building as part of the new face of modern downtown Des Moines. During construction, photographs and updates appeared in the *Des Moines Register* and *Des Moines Tribune*, such as the April 1962 front-page photograph of construction workers eating on the rooftop as viewed from the sidewalk. (*Des Moines Tribune*: April 26, 1962) The opening ceremonies were promoted in the *Des Moines Sunday Register* (November 25, 1962) and drew large crowds, dignitaries, and more front-page coverage that took readers on a tour from basement employee dining room to the president's open office in a corner of the large banking hall. (*Des Moines Tribune*: November 26, 1962)

The building continued to garner press coverage in the years following. In June 1965, architects Mies van der Rohe and Gene Summers' visit to Des Moines to inspect their two works, Home Federal and Drake University's recently completed Meredith Hall, led to a striking photo portrait of Mies van der Rohe running in the *Des Moines Tribune*. The photograph ran with the headline "Famed Architect Visits Here," and a caption describing the Home Federal Building as "one of Des Moines' most beautiful buildings." (*Des Moines Tribune*, June 3, 1965: 19.) In September 1965, a visiting architectural historian hailed Home Federal and the new Skidmore, Owing & Merrill (SOM)/Gordon Bunshaft, FAIA, American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building (601 Sixth Avenue, NRHP nominated and approved by SNRC 2015), located one block north of Home Federal along Sixth Avenue as important new architectural works

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for the city. (*Des Moines Register*, September 24, 1965)

An in-depth story on the impact of modern architecture in Des Moines, *The Des Moines Register* art and architecture critic declared Home Federal and American Republic to be the new downtown Des Moines "Axis of Beauty," with the Miesian "black temple" and SOM "white temple" showcasing the best in Modern Movement architecture. (*Des Moines Register*, October 31, 1965) Interestingly, this relationship of SOM/Gordon Bunshaft and Mies van der Rohe corporate "temples" mirrors the Bunshaft-designed Lever House and Mies van der Rohe with Gene Summers-designed Seagram Building, which sit kitty-corner across the street in New York City—with these two groundbreaking skyscrapers each inspiring the leaders of the two Des Moines institutions to commission the very same architects to design for their companies in Des Moines.



FAMED ARCHITECT VISITS HERE

Figures 39-40: Left: Mies van der Rohe photographed in the Home Federal building. (*Des Moines Tribune*, June 3, 1965: 19) Right: Home Federal Building as one of two points in the downtown "axis of beauty." (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, Picture magazine, October 1, 1965)

1965 CLIPPING FILE 12 Des Moines Architecture

AN INNER SANCTUARY of beauty is the courtyard of Drake's Meredith Hall, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. An ever-changing pattern of sunlight gives radiance to the glass walls and black panels of this imposing addition to the campus.

DOWNTOWN "Axis of Beauty" has the Home Federal Savings & Loan building (left) at Sixth and Grand Avenues, and American Republic Insurance Co. two blocks north.

Splendor in Steel
Art and Beauty Go Hand-in-Hand With Utility
In City's New Business and Cultural Mansions

By George Shane

EVEN though he may have been away from Des Moines only a few years, the returning native now almost invariably says something like this: "How much the old town has changed! You probably don't notice it, living here, but I do—and I like most of the things which are going on . . . the new buildings . . . many of them are great!"

A few decades ago the full-time local inhabitants didn't see so much change but today he may readily agree with the returned native and say he is not only aware of all this new civic blossoming but is almost overwhelmed by it. Architects of international reputation have been designing their share of Des Moines' newer important buildings. New architectural landmarks encourage others. This spirit is infectious and builders who think only of utility and not of beauty are falling into the minority.

A few years after World War II the renowned Finnish-American architect Eelot Saarinen stood on a knoll in Greenwood park and with sketchbook in hand, made a quick drawing which was to become the basic plan of the Des Moines Art Center. The Art Center there opened in June of 1948. And here may well have been the force behind regeneration of the architectural interest which has brought to Des Moines in subsequent years the work of Eero Saarinen, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Richard Neutra, Baranick and Come, and Harry Weese & Associates.

From the time Des Moines was established as a fort at the confluence of the Des Moines and Racoon Rivers, the city sprawled out like any midwest community. The town, its valleys and hills, covered about the same amount of space as San Francisco, and one architectural critic called Des Moines "a congregation of highted areas."

But the elms grew fast and here and there graceful mansions and quaint cottages were built. Terrace Hill engaged in the city's crowning Victorian glory and the arcade of elms on Grand Avenue charmed the citizenry and visitors alike.

Among those enthralled by Grand Avenue's beauty was Philip C. Johnson, head of the archite-

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Office of Mies van der Rohe and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, FAIA, and Gene Summers, FAIA: Impact on Modernist Architecture

German-born architect, furniture designer, and educator Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) is credited as being part of the architectural triumvirate—with Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright—that reshaped architecture in the twentieth century. (Huxtable: 166) “With Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier, he was a leading figure in the development of modern architecture. His reputation rests not only on his buildings and projects but also on his rationally based method of architectural education.” (Carver) The son and grandson of stonemasons, he grew up in the building trade and began working with architects in his hometown in the early 1900s. He then moved to Berlin to work with established design professionals before establishing his own practice in 1912 or 1913. He designed the pioneering German Barcelona Pavilion for the Barcelona International Exposition of 1929. He was appointed director of the Bauhaus in 1930; the Nazi regime closed the school in 1933 — eventually prompting Mies van der Rohe’s emigration. In 1938, the architect moved to Chicago to head the school of architecture at Armour Institute of Technology, which in 1940 merged to become the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). There he also served as campus architect and designed more than twenty of the institute’s buildings, bringing natural light and open plans to the fore. As an instructor and practicing architect, Mies van der Rohe emphasized the following: “1) structure as an architectural factor: its possibilities and limitations, 2) space as an architectural problem, 3) proportion as a means of architectural expression, 4) the expression value of materials, and 5) painting and sculpture in their relationship to architecture....” (Blaser: 63)

At the midcentury, Mies’s multistory urban skyscrapers “by virtue of their precise, almost Platonic images, found worldwide emulation and placed him in the forefront of 20th-century urban design.” (Carter) The same could be said of smaller-scale works. Highlights among his hundreds of commissions include the iconic glass-and-white-painted-steel Farnsworth House (Plano, Illinois; 1946-1951; now a National Trust for Historic Preservation site); 860-880 Lake Shore Apartments (Chicago, 1948-1951, collaboration; NRHP), which employ visible structure with steel I-beams straight from the mill welded to mullions and columns; his 39-story Seagram Building (New York City, 1954-1958; NRHP), his largest work with an elevated plaza; Ron Bacardi y Compañía, S.A., Administration Building (Mexico City, 1958) with its interior/exterior relationship, and the New National Gallery (Berlin, Germany, 1962-1968), a steel-and-glass “temple to art” with an elevated platform and generous plaza. (Spaeth: 175-177) With the success of the Seagram Building, Mies received a number of new commissions—including the Home Federal project (1959-1963), the Krupp Building (Germany, 1960-1963), and the New National Gallery. (Spaeth: 168) Mies van der Rohe retired from IIT in 1958 and continued his private architectural practice until his death in 1969. (Cohen: 131; Blaser: 14-31)

Mies van der Rohe was admitted to the American Institute of Architects in 1941, and elected to the College of Fellows of the AIA in 1954. In 1959, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) awarded Mies its Gold Medal, highest honor; in 1960 the American Institute of Architects (AIA) awarded Mies the AIA Gold Medal for distinguished service; and in 1963 President John F. Kennedy honored Mies with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. (Spaeth: 173, 179) In 1984 the AIA awarded the Seagram Building the 25-Year Award in recognition of its enduring vitality; it stands on the National Register of Historic Places, one of a number of

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his works listed as previously mentioned.

In his two decades at IIT, Mies trained many architects but only hired a few of them to work in his private practice office, including Gene Summers, FAIA. Texas-born Summers (1928-2011) received his undergraduate degree in architecture from Texas A&M and came to Chicago to pursue his master's degree in architecture at IIT under direction of Mies van der Rohe. Summers was admitted to the American Institute of Architects, Chicago Chapter, in 1961 and elected to the College of Fellows of the AIA in 1972.

In 1950, while still working on his master's degree, Mies van der Rohe hired Summers, whose first task was making landscape elements for models. His tenure was interrupted by two years of military service as a U.S. Corps of Engineers as first lieutenant during the Korean War. Upon returning, Mies van der Rohe invited Summers to oversee the New York office that operated during design and construction of the iconic tinted glass-and-steel skyscraper, the Seagram Building. Summers quickly became the office's main non-residential designer and project manager until his departure from the firm in 1966. (Summers) During this time he was the supervising architect for some of Mies van der Rohe's most celebrated projects, including the Seagram Building (Summers moved to New York to oversee the office), Bacardi Building (Mexico City), and the New National Gallery (Berlin). Mies had discussed partnership with Summers and two other designers, a prospect that Summers rejected due to the long-range implications of an unbalanced partnership of designers and no business-focused partners. Summers left Mies' office in 1966, after Mies van der Rohe, his health declining, had turned down competing for the New York World Trade Center—leaving the firm no new large projects.

Summers started his own firm, but soon joined the large and influential architecture firm C.F. Murphy to oversee the critically acclaimed McCormick Place lakefront convention center (1970) and became a partner in charge of design until he left in 1973. Summers then pursued real estate development including the award-winning historic rehabilitation of the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles with business partner Canadian architect and IIT graduate Phyllis (Bronfman) Lambert, the Seagram's heiress with whom he worked on the Seagram Building. In 1984 he moved to France to pursue bronze sculpting, returning to Chicago to follow Mies van der Rohe's footsteps as dean of IIT's school of architecture, 1989 until 1993. In his retirement he continued to pursue metalwork. (Summers; New York Times)

The Home Federal Building is included in a number of biographies and critiques of Mies van der Rohe's work. It is worth noting that of the numerous projects completed by Mies van der Rohe, most of them are much larger buildings than the Home Federal project and in larger cities, which renders the Home Federal Building's inclusion as one based on merit of design rather than size and prestige of place or owner. David Spaeth's biography *Mies van der Rohe* draws direct connections between the Seagram Building, the Friedrich Krupp Administration Building (Essen, Germany, 1959-1963), and Home Federal. He posits that the Krupp Building and, by extension, Home Federal translate the corporate repose and spaciousness of the Seagram Building from high-rise to low-rise structures, describing the Krupp as "understated monumentality." Spaeth continues: "The final solution to Home Federal owes much to Mies's concurrent work for Krupp. Both have square structural bays. Both have two floors of offices elevated above an

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entrance space, which in the Home Federal Building is also the main banking hall. [At Krupp the offices are elevated above a paved platform containing parking, mechanicals, and dining facilities.] And both have skin details similar to those Mies used in the 860 and 880 Lake Shore Drive Apartments (1945-1951), where the size and expression of the columns interrupted the rhythm of the windows but not the regularity of the window mullions themselves. To Mies's way of thinking, when there was reason for change, he changed. When he could refine an earlier solution, he did so." (Spaeth: 180-182)

Peter Carter in his 1974 book *Mies van der Rohe at Work* praises the smaller Home Federal building as an example of a successful work on a tight site, with the plaza being of importance: "The opening up of a limited area under and around the building as an extension of the pavement (on Grand Avenue the building is set back 45 ft. from the property line) has demonstrated that even a small concession to the pedestrian may contribute to the city environment to a degree out of all proportion to its actual physical size." (Carter: 131)

Other authors have focused on the unbuilt Home Federal truss concept, with the notion that this design came first and was rejected, leading to the creation of a more conservative second design that was built. It is important to revisit these criticisms within the context of evidence to the contrary: period newspaper reporting on the early 1959 original concept to be based on the Seagram Building, the 1959 Hedrich-Blessing photography of the Seagram-derived design similar to as built and the 1959-1960 photography of the two concurrent "Seagram" and "truss models, as well as Summers's insights into the Office of Mies van der Rohe's design and construction processes. For example, in their book *Mies van der Rohe, a Critical Biography, New and Revised Edition* by Franz Schulze (editor of the MOMA Mies van der Rohe Archive volumes) and Edward Windhorst provide a narrative that runs counter to the evidence, that the truss design was reduced in scale to the squared building that was constructed, and that Mies had little involvement with the project:

The Home Federal building that was built is less interesting than a dramatic preliminary scheme partly modeled on the Cantor Drive-In Restaurant.... A subsequently much-published presentation model shows the steel exterior and the huge trusses in white a first for Mies in a commercial building.

By the 1960s, the "Cantor scheme" had been "pulled out of the drawer" many times.... But in this case, the Cantor solution was too much building for the Des Moines bankers. The spacious banking hall was rejected in favor of adding tenant space, and the plan was made square.... The building was built with three stories above grade, a standard first-floor colonnade, and an exterior wall similar to that used at 860-880 [Lakeshore Drive, Chicago, apartment buildings].

Even after the scheme was reduced, bank executives were still wary of costs. This is reflected even in small matters. A waiting-room kiosk for the parking lot attendant—in plan twelve by sixteen feet—was designed and detailed in steel and bearing-wall brick, a lovely example of how Mies's vocabulary succeeds at the smallest scale. But the scheme was rejected, and the kiosk was constructed of wood.

Mies's office produced superb details even for second-tier buildings, as the Des Moines project demonstrates. His staff designed not just the typical bank interiors like teller stations and

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transaction desks, but millwork cabinets, freestanding partitions, custom paneling, granite benches, custom signage for inside and out, and even the main floor wall clock [sic – there are two main floor clocks]. Mies had little involvement in the Home Federal project, which is credited chiefly to Gene Summers. (Schulze and Windhorst: 367)

Interestingly, the difference in usable square footage between the two buildings was not very great, and the authors do not note the change from underground parking to surface parking, which brought about the parking lot attendant building. Schulze, as editor of the MOMA Mies van der Rohe Archive volumes of drawings, also in that publication attributes the truss design, derived from the unbuilt drive-in restaurant (1945-1950), as a preliminary that was *redesigned* to more closely cleave to the Seagram Building due to the Home Federal association's desire for leasable space. (Schulze: Vol. 18: 100-172 (Home Federal); Vol. 13: 184-278 (Cantor))

However, evidence as presented above finds that Mies van der Rohe's initial late winter 1959 Home Federal concept was based on the Seagram Building and that the truss design was one of at least two concurrent concepts formally presented in spring 1959, as it was customary for the architect and his office to present more than one design. Rather than the architect redesigning based on the client, the client was offered a choice and chose the more fiscally conservative option: one that included leasable tenant space to provide an income stream to offset some of the costs of the building and replicate the same structure of financial institution within a larger building with leasable tenant space as Home Federal had at its old 518 Grand Avenue location, in a time of financial uncertainty in the savings and loan industry.

Schulze and Windhorst find in Mies van der Rohe's later work a completion of exterior methodology which he successfully married with his earlier interior methodology honed in Europe: Working in steel (which came to be substituted for wood), glass, concrete, brick, and aluminum, he transformed elementary materials through design and handwork (such as welding steel) into "great architecture." "Every American building, no matter how humble, partook of the master's vocabulary, in things large and small. Each is an amalgam of beautiful, hard-won solutions to the "problems" of detail." (Schulze and Windhorst: 381)

Cohen, in looking at Mies van der Rohe's full body of work, finds cohesion among the designs particularly in the master architect's last two decades, during which time he designed the Home Federal Building:

...[T]he mature work of Mies van der Rohe is based on a rejection of invention as such and this relies on a limited vocabulary of types and themes, some of which overlap. Thus the open floor of the skyscraper, with its vertical core, is akin to the design of certain horizontal buildings, with their opaque central service area. Moreover, the visible structure of the skyscraper designs was transposed on to low-rise buildings, which borrowed their vertical elements....

Using steel and glass, the materials of heavy industry, in configurations shaped by the aesthetic strategies of the avant-garde but nevertheless marked with the stamp of classicism, Mies produced categories of buildings as revealing of the world of capitalist productions as the Florentine palaces were of the feudalism of the Quattrocento." (Cohen: 128, 129-130)

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Upon Mies van der Rohe's death in 1969, *New York Times* architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable opined: The glassy skyscrapers and sleek-walled buildings that are the pride of modern cities and the symbol of modern life owe more to Mies van der Rohe than to any other architect of our time. In an age of complexity and confusion, Mies knew exactly what he was doing, what he did, essentially, was to give that age its characteristic look and style. Almost every important street of every major city today is lined with the offspring of the spare, elegant structures that were his personal contribution to the art of architecture.

Mies made the glittering, soaring, straight-lined tower of today's urban world peculiarly his own. Even more than Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright—with whom he completed the architectural triumvirate of form givers for the twentieth century—he left the stamp of his art and philosophy on much of the world's contemporary construction.

The art and philosophy were based exclusively on contemporary technology: the supporting metal skeleton frame, the non-load-bearing wall hung lightly from it, and the modern materials that made the traditional heavy masonry building obsolete. He used those materials—glass, steel, and aluminum, as well as timeless marble and bronze—with an exquisite, demanding, and even rigid sense of order, appropriateness and beauty. There is not a cheap, vulgar, or fussy passage in anything he designed or built....

....Mies remained an artist committed to the design of the individual building. His lifelong interest was the creation of the most perfect product that an infallibly refined taste and progressive technology could produce. His singular aim was the beautiful and efficient framing of large, all-purpose spaces; some worked superbly, some did not. But the strong, richly austere aesthetic that he established was an unparalleled expression of new materials and engineering techniques.

....Mies was large—in history, as an innovator and talent of Michelangelesque stature; and personally, as a calm, massive, craggy man with the tacit monumentality of his work. His buildings are large—soaring symbols for an age.... (Huxtable: 166-167)

Significance of the Home Federal Building as a Mies van der Rohe Design

The Home Federal Building is significant locally as an important local architectural benchmark for bringing modernism to the downtown commercial district. The building also is significant statewide as the first and only one of two Mies van der Rohe-designed buildings in Iowa. Mies van der Rohe's award-winning work, including the Seagram Building for which the Home Federal Building derives in part from, brought to Des Moines (and Iowa) world-class architecture during a time when city and corporate leaders were looking for new approaches to urban design. The building received laudatory local press coverage that held up the Home Federal Building as a new model for a new modern downtown. In this way, the building gained tremendous local significance as a symbol of investment in remaking the central business district.

And perhaps even more importantly, the business that occupied the building accomplished what it set out to do: build a new banking facility to increase its customer base and grow its business. Home Federal used the modern architectural design in its marketing and branding, from affixing an architectural rendering of the building on its advertisements and other such materials to inviting the public to tour the building via open invitations offered over several months to the public to see the space. Home Federal rose quickly to

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become the largest savings and loan in Iowa even before the building was completed. In this way, the building succeeded perhaps even beyond what the savings and loan association board of directors may have imagined.

Even two and three years after the building was completed, the Home Federal Building was celebrated as a major benefit for downtown: In September 1965, architectural historian and University of California at Berkeley professor Allan Temko, surveyed the city from the air and ground. Among other findings, he praised two new downtown buildings: SOM's American Republic headquarters and van der Rohe's Home Federal Savings & Loan Association. "These two building are great assets to downtown Des Moines," he said. "The American Republic Building is a prodigious civic contribution, and **in the Home Federal building you have the dignity of Mies which is magnificent.**" (emphasis added; *Des Moines Register*, September 24, 1965)

In an October 1965 *Des Moines Sunday Register Picture* magazine cover story about the importance of modernistic architecture in Des Moines, art and architecture critic George Shane retraced the steps of modernism in Des Moines and singled out American Republic—calling it "a work of art containing works of art"—as one of two key new buildings downtown:

In a time when seemingly, no street or city can be saved for the joy of the past, the inventory of Des Moines' mid-twentieth-century growth seems well on the credit side. What had begun at the Des Moines Art Center [Eliel Saarinen design, 1948] continued at Drake University. The Eero Saarinen building brought new beauty to the school's postwar growth.... Harry Weese & Associates continue with a pleasing variation of the Saarinen concept.

There is also at Drake, Meredith Hall, a new [Ludwig Mies] van der Rohe school of journalism, and then **downtown van der Rohe's Home Federal Savings and Loan Association building.** Up Sixth Avenue from the van der Rohe building is the American Republic Insurance Co. building, a Skidmore, Owings & Merrill creation.

An astute architectural observer said these two buildings give Des Moines "a new axis of beauty—the van der Rohe Black Temple on the lower downtown level and the White Temple of Skidmore up the street—and in a way, not unlike the building pattern of the Acropolis." (emphasis added; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, October 31, 1965)

At the time of Home Federal's construction (1961-1962), downtown was entering one of the largest construction surges on record in a concerted effort to remake the downtown. The coming of the Interstate 235 freeway system north of downtown and the availability of urban renewal funding resulted in local government and business leaders literally scraping away acres of the central core of Des Moines, particularly the northern edge of downtown near the freeway, north of Home Federal. A consistent theme with newspaper reporting and downtown Des Moines booster advertising on these construction projects is the repeated inclusion of Home Federal as an outstanding example of what was then-called "contemporary architecture."

In a variety of other local records and lists, Home Federal has been noted as an architecturally important building. The local significance also has been demonstrated by the Home Federal Building being named a City of Des Moines Landmark, one of only twenty-some buildings with this honorary designation. The

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American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter, selected the building as one of 50 most important projects of the twentieth century built in Iowa, in its book *A Century of Iowa Architecture, 1900-1999*: "The finer of the two Mies van der Rohe buildings in Des Moines, the former bank uses sumptuous materials and exquisite detailing to distinguish itself. The siting both recedes from the street to create a forecourt and ... to reveal a church tower behind." (Alread and Campbell, Iowa Chapter: 72-73) And the 1993 Society of Architectural Historians book *Buildings of Iowa* includes the building in its survey of important architecture in the state, stating "This is a post-World War II exercise in a steel-frame, glass-infill building, carried out by Mies van der Rohe, one of the pioneer modernists.... The detailing is meticulous, as is always the case in Mies's best work, and the materials are "posh": granite, and travertine marble...." (Gebhard and Mansheim: 200-201)

In summary, the Des Moines community has celebrated the Mies van der Rohe Building as an important addition to the downtown streetscape since its announced construction through the present.

In addition, the building is a less-typical building type, being a financial institution, designed by the Mies van der Rohe office. The building's rarity as a building type designed by the architect coupled with the fine detailing of the work may with future research provide a case for potential national significance.

Future Plans

The City of Des Moines removed the skywalk connection on the west elevation of the Home Federal Building in late 2015. Coinciding with this process, the Diocese of Des Moines has committed to rehabilitating the building according to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and plans to apply for state historic tax credits.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building is located at 601 Grand Avenue, constructed on Lots 1, 2, and 3 in Block E of Grimmel's Addition to Fort Des Moines.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the building on its original parcel historically associated with the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building.

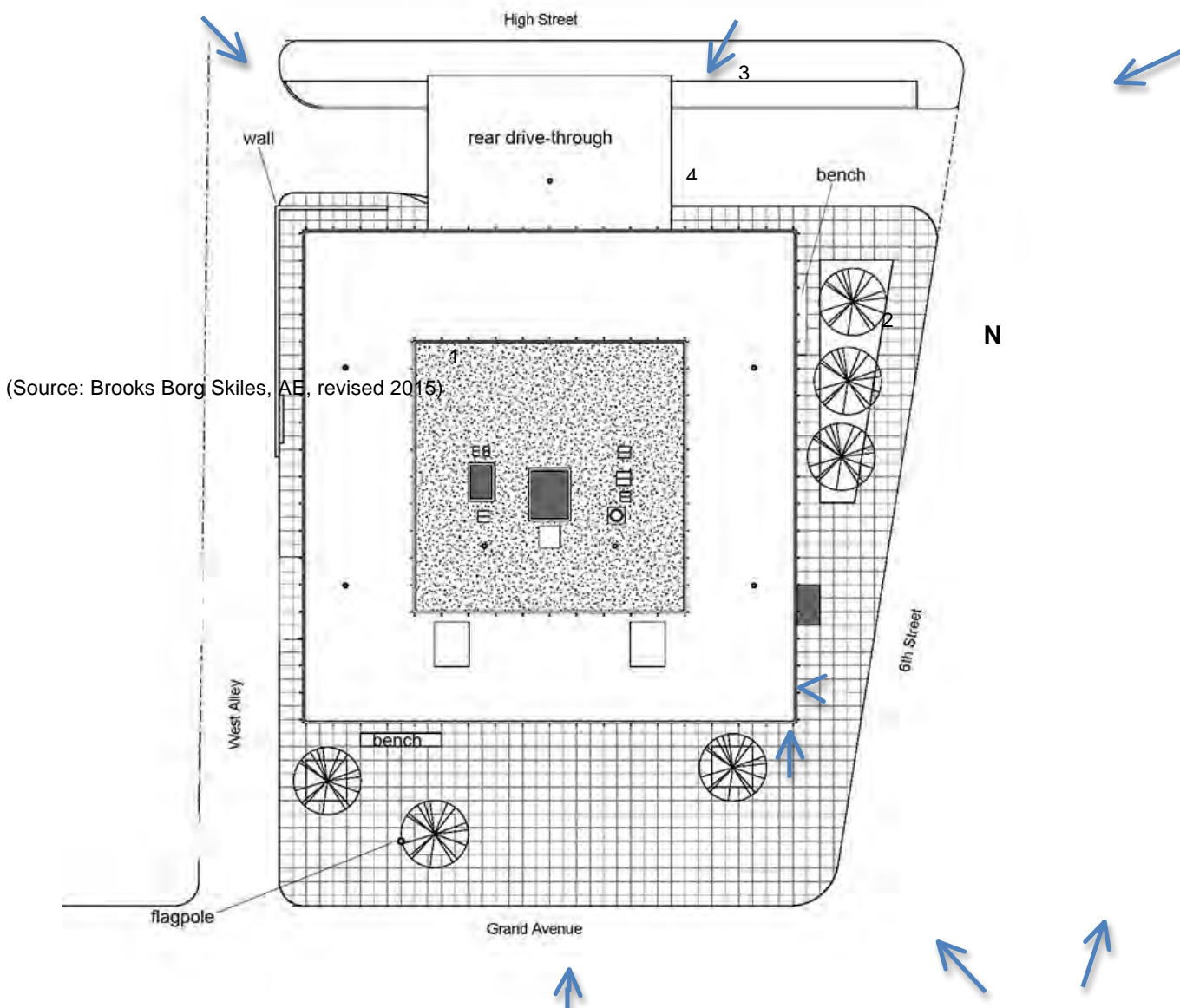
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Sketch map and photo key, 2015

Site plan



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Sketch map – 1st floor



(Source: Brooks Borg Skiles, AE, revised 2015)



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Sketch map – 2nd floor

11

12

(Source: Brooks Borg Skiles, A/E, revised, 2015)



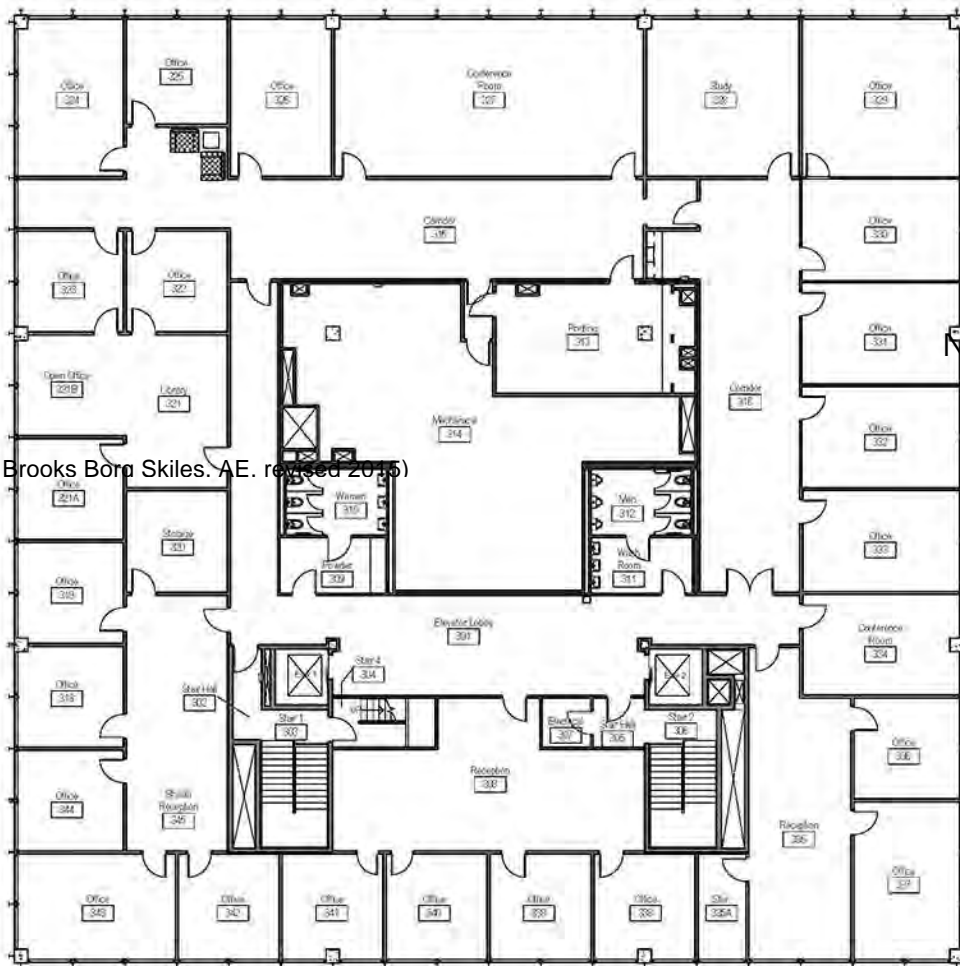
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Sketch map – 3rd floor

(Source: Brooks Borg Skiles, A.E. revised 2016)



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Photographs

Photo Log

Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building, Polk County, Iowa.
All photographs taken 2015, by Jennifer James, Jennifer James Communications, LC, Des Moines, Iowa.
A CD-ROM of all images will be on file with the property owner and the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office.

1. View of south elevation and front main entrance looking north across Grand Avenue.
2. View of east elevation looking northwest across Sixth Avenue.
3. View of date stone on southeast corner looking west.
4. View of southeast corner recessed first story looking north.
5. View of east side and north rear elevations looking southwest from Sixth Avenue.
6. View of rear north elevation looking south from across High Street.
7. View of rear north and west alley side elevations looking southeast from the alley.
8. View of first-floor front lobby and south cores from the banking hall, looking south.
9. View of the first-floor banking hall and lobby beyond, looking southwest.
10. View of the first-floor banking hall and north core looking north.
11. View of the second-floor elevator lobby looking west.
12. View of the second-floor glazed office entrance looking northwest from elevator lobby.
13. View of the second-floor north corridor and open office area looking east.



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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 12/9/2016 Date of Pending List: 1/11/2017 Date of 16th Day: 1/26/2017 Date of 45th Day: 1/24/2017 Date of Weekly List: 2/1/2017

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 1/24/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Edson Beall Discipline Historian

Telephone _____ Date _____

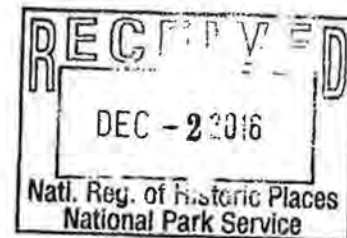
DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
CULTURAL AFFAIRS

MARY COWNIE, DIRECTOR
CHRIS KRAMER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TERRY F. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR



November 30, 2016

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmarks
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The following National Register nomination(s) from Iowa are enclosed for your review and listing if acceptable.

- Bricker-Price Block, 105-115 S. Chestnut Avenue, Earlham, Madison County
- The Priester Building, 601 Brady Street, Davenport, Scott County
- Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Des Moines Building, 601 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Polk County
- Mack-International Motor Truck Corporation Building, 121 12th Street, Des Moines, Polk County
- Washington and Elizabeth Miller Tract-Center-Soll Community Historic District, roughly 35th St. west to 38th St. between 3500-3607 Grand Ave. north to Center St., Des Moines, Polk County
- Walnut Tire & Battery Co. – Globe Publishing Company Building, 1417-1425 Walnut Street, Des Moines, Polk County
- Storm Lake High School, 310 Cayuga Street, Storm Lake, Buena Vista County
- Hotel President, 500 Sycamore Street, Waterloo, Black Hawk County
- Park Hotel, 115 NW State Street, Sac City, Sac County
- Hamburg Historic District (amendment, increase, decrease), hill to northwest of downtown: roughly W. 5th St from Western to Brown, W. 6th St from Harrison to Warren, W. 7th St, W. 8th St and W. 9th St from Ripley to Vine, Davenport, Scott County
- Iowa Highway Commission, District 6 Building, 430 16th Avenue SW, Cedar Rapids, Linn County

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Foster
National Register Coordinator
State Historical Society of Iowa

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