

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1107

National Register of Historic Places
Registration 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 an 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 First Security Bank Building

other name/site number First Security Building

2. Location

street & town 405 South Main Street not for publication

city or town Salt Lake City vicinity

state Utah code UT county Salt Lake code 035 zip code 84111

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
[Signature] Date 8/16/2005
Signature of certifying official/Title
Utah Division of State History, Office of Historic Preservation
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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Edson H. Beall 9-28-05

First Security Bank Building
Name of Property

Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah
City, County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE:financial institution

COMMERCE/TRADE:business

Current Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE:financial institution

VACANT/NOT IN USE

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls GLASS

PORCELAIN ENAMEL ON STEEL

roof BUILT-UP

other METAL: ALUMINUM

Narrative Description

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

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

First Security Bank Building
Name of Property

Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah
City, County and State

8. Description

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 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.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

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 _____
- COMMERCE _____
- COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT _____
- ECONOMICS _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1954-1955

Significant Dates

1954, 1955

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architects: W. A. Sarmiento, W. G. Knoebel, Slack W. Winburn
Builders: Utah Construction Company

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository:
Utah Heritage Foundation

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

First Security Bank Building
Name of Property

Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah
City, County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.89 acres

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/2 4/2/4/9/0/0 4/5/1/2/2/8/0
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Beginning at the Northwest corner of Lot 5, Block 39, Plat "A" Salt Lake City Survey, and running thence South 249.5 feet along the West line of said Block 39; thence East 165 feet; thence North 2 feet; thence East 165 feet to the East line of Lot 4, Block 39, Plat "A" Salt Lake City Survey; thence North 247.5 feet along the East line of Lots 4 and 5 of said Block 39, to the Northeast corner of said Lot 5, thence West 330 feet along the north line of said Lot 5 to the point of beginning.

Property Tax No. 16-06-306-001

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries are those historically and currently associated with the property.

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Korral Broschinsky
organization Preservation Documentation Resource date May 19, 2005
street & number P.O. Box 58766 telephone (801) 913-5645
city or town Salt Lake City state UT zip code 84158

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) 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

name/title Paul Willie, Wasatch Plaza Holdings II, LLC
street & number 399 North Main #200 telephone 435-755-2035
city or town Logan state UT zip code 84321

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7 Page 1

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Narrative Description

The First Security Bank Building, constructed between 1954 and 1955, is a twelve-story steel and glass bank and office tower located at 405 South Main Street in downtown Salt Lake City. The commercial building is Utah's finest example of the modernist movement's International Style. The building has four main volumes expressed distinctly on the exterior: the main and second floor banking spaces, the office tower, an elevator-service shaft, and a three-story annex to the south. The building is constructed of a steel frame on a concrete foundation, and has a flat built-up roof. The curtain wall skin consists of a combination of glass, steel, aluminum, and porcelain enameled steel panels. The First Security Bank building's lot is 1.89 acres in size and is part of Block 39 of the original plat of Salt Lake City. The building sits at the northwest corner of the lot, with primary elevations at the property lines along Fourth South (400 South) to the north and Main Street to the west. A non-contributing concrete-frame parking garage, built in 1972, is located to the southeast of the bank building. The parking structure is totally separate from the bank building and is not included in the nomination. The exterior and most of the interior was rehabilitated in 2004 as a federal historic preservation tax credit project.¹

The bank building consists of several interconnected cubic volumes on a rectangular footprint. The annex portion, built at the same time as the main building, has a square footprint. The main floor banking space and lobby measure approximately 110 feet x 50 feet. The second floor was originally smaller and featured a balcony wrapping around the north, west and east elevations. The balcony was enclosed, probably sometime in the early 1970s. This has been the only major modification to the exterior. The materials used in the balcony enclosure are similar to and indistinguishable from the original materials, and therefore the modification does not adversely affect the integrity of the building. The tower block consists of the identical third through twelfth floors. Behind the tower, the elevator-service core rises to 36 feet above the roofline of the tower. A secondary mechanical penthouse and cooling tower to the east rises 24 feet above the roofline. South of the elevator tower is the three-story annex. The annex has a roughly square footprint, approximately 70 feet x 84 feet. The annex was designed to abut an existing circa 1911 commercial building at the south end of the property, providing a visual link between the bank tower and the older building as well as a continuous streetscape.

The four volumes of the building are supported on a steel frame with some concrete in the floor slabs. The exterior walls are curtain walls covered with a variety of materials. The main floor features floor-to-ceiling glass set in aluminum sash dividing the openings with a transom above each large glass plate. There is a double-door full-glass entrance at the east end of the north elevation. Modifications to the storefront include the subdivision of the glass with newer aluminum mullions and the addition of a recessed entrance in the center of the north elevation (both probably in the 1970s). The glass street front wraps along the west elevation to connect with the main floor of the elevator block where a lobby and access to the three public elevators is located. There is another double glass door entering this lobby from the west elevation. The doors are original.

¹ The main spaces and several of the tower floors have been finished and are occupied. Other floors will be finished to future tenant specifications.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7 Page 2

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

The storefront glass is accented by burnished stainless steel panels, which appear as bulkheads. The stainless steel panels also cover the structural columns where visible. The east elevation of the main floor is sheathed with porcelain enamel over steel. The square porcelain enamel panels are corrugated and terra cotta colored. The elevation was originally blank, but a teller window and canopy (for the drive-through banking) was added to the east in 1974. The south elevation is mostly obscured by the annex, although there is a service entrance at the southeast corner.

The second floor originally featured an unsheltered balcony with a quarry tile floor, but it has been enclosed, probably in the early 1970s. Today the floor appears as a ribbon of windows between two bands of fluted porcelain enamel panels.² The panels are cream or buff-colored. The windows of the second floor are similar to those in the tower; appearing as a vertical tripartite window with a large, square center light with smaller rectangular lights above and below. The lights are set in an aluminum sash and many of the lights are hinged and operable. The aluminum mullions separate each window and stainless steel panels break the ribbon after every sixth window. During the recent rehabilitation, all of the exterior surfaces were cleaned and/or repainted as necessary to achieve the original colors. The enlarged second floor is located on the north and east elevations. The roof above the second floor is built-up.

Above the second floor is the tower block, whose main visual emphasis is horizontal, especially on the north elevation. Alternating between the blue tinted ribbon windows are bands of dark gray spandrel panels. The steel panels are embossed with simple squares. At the southeast and southwest corners of the tower block is a vertical line of the light-colored enamel panels. These panels are juxtaposed to the elevator shaft, which is sheathed in terra cotta-colored panels. To the south of the elevator shaft are two additional vertical lines of the light colored enamel, giving a strong vertical emphasis to the rear portions of the east and west elevations. The rear (south) elevation of the building, which rises above the annex, is probably the most dynamic. Projecting from the elevator shaft is the west stairwell, which is lit by windows on the north and south sides. There are also windows on the north and south elevations of the elevator penthouse. The elevator block (to the west) is sheathed in light-colored panels on the south elevation, broken only occasionally by small vertical windows. The office space (to the east) is framed by rust-colored panels, and a *brise-soleil* partially shelters the bands of window and spandrel.

The annex appears essentially as a three-story glass box on the west elevation, which features horizontal bands similar to those on the tower block. The east elevation is covered with stucco while the north elevation connects to the main bank building and the south elevation abuts the existing building to the south. A small portion of the west end of the south elevation is covered in light-colored enamel panels. Directly east of the annex is the 7½ level concrete-frame parking structure for approximately 570 automobiles built in 1972. The structure is non-contributing, but is not attached to the bank building and only minimally impacts the view of the bank building's secondary elevations.

² Because the bands appear identical to those in historic photographs, it is possible the top band was simply moved outward (from the bottom of the tower) at the time of the balcony enclosure. Similar panels were used on two drive-through teller shelters located to the east of the bank building until 1974 when they were replaced by the teller window and canopy.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7 Page 3

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

On the interior, the First Security Bank Building has 127,708 square feet of space divided between twelve floors, a basement, and the annex. Over the years, the main floor has been modified slightly. Currently the Wells Fargo Bank uses only the northeast corner of the banking floor for its lobby and teller spaces. The other main floor spaces are used for conference and meeting rooms by the building's most prominent tenant, the Eagle Gate College. All the old carpeting and partitions (circa 1970s to 1980s) in these rooms were removed during the rehabilitation, and new finishes applied. All the historic finishes in the lobby and hall spaces were retained and cleaned as needed. The elevator block for the bank elevator, which serves the main and second floors, retains its marble panels. The panels are dark brown and are accented by bands of cast aluminum with diamond-shaped ornaments at the intersections. The terrazzo flooring (squares with white metal dividing strips and decorative circular insets) is preserved through portions of the bank space, especially in the hallway between the bank and the office elevator lobby. A polished pipe handrail preserved on the rear staircase is an indication of the details of the original interior. An intercom system originally serviced the banking floors but is no longer in service.

The public elevator lobby at the southwest corner of the bank building is the most pristinely preserved of the interior spaces. The original terrazzo flooring is intact and was repaired and cleaned. The elevator banks are paneled with marble and aluminum accents. The original mailbox, directory box, and elevator control panel are extant. Above the elevators is a large clock fashioned from aluminum spheres to represent the hours and aluminum hands. The doors of the three elevators are original. Restrooms and mechanical rooms are located south of the passenger elevator banks.

Another well-preserved space is the basement where a large safety deposit vault is located. The vault was built with 1'6" concrete walls and a steel vault door. There is also a safety deposit lobby, guard desk, a supply room and telephone equipment room. The configuration of the basement has not changed, however the space has new finishes. Originally there was a tunnel from the basement to the demolished exterior teller shelter. However the tunnel has not been accessible since the shelter was removed in 1974. The basement area is slightly larger than the footprint of the main building. The boiler and other mechanical systems are located in the basement. The entire building is air-conditioned, including half of the basement space.

The second floor was originally open with a ring of individual offices built around the balcony enclosure. At the center of the floor was the bank elevator core, which included the elevator, a supply room, and a book vault. At the rear of the second floor was a small cafeteria. However, the second floor did not retain its original finishes and these spaces have been gutted and are awaiting a new tenant. The second through twelfth floors are similar. All are accessed by the three public elevators as well as staircases at the east and west ends of the building. The elevator lobby space of each floor is slightly larger than a hall, but features marble panels and terrazzo flooring, as well as the mail drop. Restrooms are located on each floor behind the elevators. Various tenants had modified the office spaces of the tower over the years. Because of numerous changes to carpet, paint and partitions, none of the floors had retained its original finishes. All non-historic finishes were removed.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7 Page 4

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

The interior spaces of the annex are similar to the office tower and had been modified by numerous tenants through the years. Today, the annex and several of the tower floors currently house the Eagle Gate College. A description of the finished seventh floor provides a good example of the décor for the former bank building. The elevators open onto a circular reception area with a desk to the east and a glass-enclosed conference room to the west. Office partitions are found along the north wall and behind the reception desk to the east. The reception floor is black marble with carpet by the elevators and in a circle below a circle of indirect lighting in the ceiling. The colors are black, grey, light green and cream. There is new carpet and new paint in all of the office spaces.

Unlike many office complexes of the period, the top floor (12th) of the bank building was not designed for office or social space, but is similar to the lower floors. Mechanical systems, fire suppression water tank, and the elevator workings are found in the two penthouses, and are entirely separate from the office space. Oversized lettering reading "First Security" was originally attached at the top of the building on the north and south elevations of the elevator penthouse until removed in June 2005. The word "First" projected above the roofline, and "Security" was attached to the penthouse. Each letter was an open metal box with exposed neon tube lighting inside. The rooftop signage was originally lit at night. Similar (smaller) lettering was removed from above the storefront when the Wells Fargo Bank took over the building (circa 2000). The rooftop signage has recently been replaced with a somewhat similar style of neon lettering for a new tenant (Ken Garff). Because of current sign ordinances for Salt Lake City, the new lettering does not project as high over the penthouse roof as the original lettering.

On its corner lot, the First Security Bank Building displays no distinct landscaping except that provided by the recently built courthouse to the east. A mid-block street, Church Street, dividing the two properties was removed by the construction of the courthouse and landscaping. First Security's concrete parking structure covers most of the remaining lot space and measures 209 feet x 130 feet. A small asphalt driveway off Fourth South (400 South) allows bank patrons to access the drive-through pneumatic tubes and the ATM machine just east of the bank building.

The First Security Bank Building is located at the southern end of Salt Lake Main Street commercial business district within an eclectic collection of commercial architecture. The twelve-story bank building is about as tall as the twin Boston and Newhouse Buildings (built in 1911) to the north. The First Security Bank Building is surrounded by the nouveau Beaux Arts Matheson Courthouse (built 2000-2001) to the east, the 1910 brick masonry New Grand Hotel to the north, a parking lot to the west (former location of the eleven-story Hotel Newhouse, built in the 1910s and demolished in the 1970s), and the annex and assorted one-story commercial buildings to the south. Northwest of the bank building is a Neoclassical style building, the former Salt Lake City Federal Building and Post Office (1902-1905), currently used as the Frank E. Moss Federal Courthouse. Within this eclectic group, the color and massing of the First Security Bank Building is a conspicuous standout. As the only International style commercial building in the downtown area, the First Security Bank Building is a distinctive part Salt Lake City's commercial district skyline and is a contributing historic resource of Salt Lake City.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 1

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Narrative Statement of Significance

The First Security Bank Building, built in 1954-1955, is a twelve-story commercial building constructed of glass and steel in the International Style. The building is significant under Criterion A for its contribution to the history of Salt Lake City's downtown commercial district and the history of banking in Utah. Completed in 1955, the combination bank and office tower was the first major addition to the city's skyline since the 1924 and a sign of growing economic prosperity. The First Security Corporation anticipated the building would become "the prestige address" for office space and an anchor for the southern end of Salt Lake's commercial business district. The First Security Bank Building is also significant under Criterion C for architecture and engineering, including a number of "firsts" in the city and state. It was Utah's first major commercial building built in International Style and the first modern high-rise. It was also the first building in downtown Salt Lake to eschew traditional masonry in favor of curtain wall construction. The exterior was sheathed with a skin of glass and porcelain enameled steel panels. The building was a collaboration of architects W. A. Sarmiento and W. G. Knoebel, of the Bank Building and Equipment Company of St. Louis, one of the premiere bank design firms in the nation at the time, and prominent Salt Lake architect, Slack W. Winburn. The building was constructed by the Utah Construction Company, a subsidiary of the First Security Corporation. To this day, the First Security Bank Building remains Utah's best example of the tenets of the International Style in commercial architecture. The building's diverse materials and interplay of volumes has been compared to the nation's premier example of the International Style, the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society (PSFS) building. The First Security Bank Building has had only minor modifications and contributes to the historic resources of Salt Lake City.

History Of The First Security Bank Building

The history of the First Security Bank Building begins with the Eccles family. David Eccles (1849-1912) came to Utah in 1863 an impoverished Scottish convert to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon Church). At the time of his death at age sixty-two he was Utah's first multimillionaire and had amassed a fortune in lumber, railroads, construction companies, beet sugar factories, canneries, condensed milk plants, flour mills, coal mining, electric plants, insurance companies and banks. Marriner S. Eccles (1890-1977) was the oldest son of David and Ellen Stoddard Eccles. After his father's death, he took over leadership of most of his father's businesses. In 1924 Marriner Eccles and his brother George Eccles (1900-1982), a graduate of Columbia University School of Business, formed the Eccles-Browning Affiliated Banks, and within three years had acquired control of banks at seventeen locations in Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming. On June 15, 1928 Marriner and George Eccles with others organized the First Security Corporation as a holding company, believed to be the first multibank holding company in the United States, to manage the system of the seventeen banks. As officers in the First Security Corporation, the Eccles brothers became the leading bankers in the Intermountain West.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 2

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

After surviving runs on two of its largest banks in Ogden and Boise at the onset of the Great Depression, the First Security Corporation arranged a merger in 1932 to save Deseret National Bank, the oldest national bank in Utah. At the same time, First Security acquired the Deseret Building at 79 South Main Street in Salt Lake City. The Deseret Building was built by the Deseret National Bank in 1919. The name was changed and the early masonry skyscraper became the first First Security Bank building in Salt Lake City, and is still in use as an office complex. The First Security Corporation continued to grow through the 1930s and 1940s, and its founder Marriner S. Eccles became a national advisor on the nation's compensatory fiscal and monetary policies.

By 1950, the First Security Corporation had moved many of its corporate offices from Ogden to Salt Lake. Most were housed in the former Deseret Building at 79 South Main Street with George S. Eccles as president of the corporation. Plans to build another office complex had been in the works for several years. On April 22, 1949, the First Security Bank of Utah purchased a parcel of land at the northwest corner of Plat A's Block 39 at the southernmost end of the city's commercial business district. Since the 1860s, the Main Street corridor had been a bustling commercial district. The early Main Street business district consisted of mainly of non-LDS merchants who congregated in a linear fashion along Main Street rather than within the central core of LDS-owned businesses near the Salt Lake Temple. As the city grew, the business district moved steadily southward and by the first quarter of the twentieth century a few early skyscrapers (Boston and Newhouse Buildings [1911], Hotel Newhouse [1910s], etc.) were located at the south end of Salt Lake's downtown.

However, despite the presence of a handful of tall buildings, the area near Fourth South and Main Street was not as commercialized as the north end of Main Street. The northwest corner of Block 39 was the site of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, a traditional stone meetinghouse with a tower and a frame rectory in the rear. When the church was first built in 1880, Block 39 was primarily residential. By the turn of the twentieth century, several one and two-story brick commercial buildings had replaced some, but not all of the dwellings. In 1926, the Episcopal Church sold the property and moved to a new building at 300 South and 900 East. The church was demolished within a few years. By the 1940s, after five changes in ownership, the property was home to a service station, an automobile lot, a tavern and a store. In 1949, after acquiring the corner lot and two adjacent parcels, the First Security Bank built a small oval-shaped, aluminum drive-through bank shelter.

On January 7, 1954, the *Salt Lake Tribune* announced plans by the First Security Bank to construct a "modern bank building" at the corner of Fourth South and Main. At the same time, the corporation would also modernize its building at 79 S. Main. The lead paragraph stated it would be the "largest building program in downtown Salt Lake City in approximately three decades" at a cost of several million dollars. The article gave a fairly accurate assessment. During the depression years and through World War II, first a stagnating economy and later a scarcity of materials and labor had virtually halted the construction of large office structures in the downtown area. The last two multi-story office buildings to be constructed in the commercial district were the Tribune Building at 143 South Main and the Continental Bank Building at 208 South Main, both completed in 1924.³

³ The only business to expand its facilities between 1924 and 1954 was the Mountain State Telephone & Telegraph Company, which added two stories to its building at First South and State Street in 1939. Four more stories were added in 1947.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 3

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

The *Tribune* article noted that Gerald T. Hart of Denver, a “valuation consultant” had predicted the “section around 4th South and Main would be the center of an expanded downtown area in Salt Lake City.” The article also states that Peruvian architect, W. Sarmiento, of the Bank Building Corporation, would design the new building. The Bank Building and Equipment Corporation based in St. Louis was the nation’s most prestigious and prolific bank design firm at the time. Slack W. Winburn, a Salt Lake architect, would also be associated with the project. The bank building would be constructed by the Utah Construction Company, a large-project construction firm started by David Eccles and owned by the First Security Corporation. A groundbreaking ceremony took place on March 9, 1954. At the time, Salt Lake’s Mayor Earl J. Glade made the following pronouncement:

This important financial gesture very properly anticipates the central role that Salt Lake City will play in the new business and industrial developments in this area, which we are now beginning. In the erection of their magnificent new banking house and office structure, I look upon the vision, enterprise, and courage of George S. Eccles, president, and his associate directors of the First Security Bank, as beginning a new business epoch in metropolitan Salt Lake City.⁴

In response to the mayor’s statement, George S. Eccles observed the “new bank building should provide the needed additional office space for the fast growing business and industrial life of the area, and make it possible for Salt Lake to attract division offices for major industries of intermountain and national scope. We have great confidence in the economic future of Salt Lake City and its entire area, and are happy to be of assistance in this program.”⁵

The residents of Salt Lake City must have watched the construction of the edifice with growing interest. The local newspaper had updates on the construction every two months. The first step was the demolition of two older buildings near Church Street. The drive-through was then moved to the east end of the construction site and the auto-related businesses demolished. A 100 foot-deep hole was dug and the concrete foundation poured. By the end of 1954, the skeletal frame had risen 191 feet in the air and by February 1955, workers were beginning to apply the “porcelain-coated steel panels” that would constitute the majority of the building’s skin. A photograph taken on June 1, 1955, shows the nearly complete building with the caption: “Standing impressively with its modern, sleek lines, the new building provides a new prestige business address.” The phrase, “a prestige address,” was also used on the building’s promotional packet. The cost of the building had risen from an estimated \$2.5 million to more than \$3 million by the conclusion of construction. As the building dedication drew near, the building was featured in a two-page photo spread in the *Salt Lake Tribune*’s supplement section. Along with a detailed description of the building came this profound statement: “Every Utahn can look with pride to the completed First Security Building, a structure of beauty and the latest in banking service and business convenience.”⁶

⁴ Hyman, 275.

⁵ *Ibid*, 275-276.

⁶ *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 16, 1955.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 4

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

The First Security Bank Building was dedicated on August 22, 1955. George and Marriner Eccles were both on hand as well as a number of local dignitaries. A podium was erected outside the north elevation where a large crowd gathered to witness the festivities. The public was invited to tour the building. The bank was functioning and a number of other tenants had moved in to occupy the tower floors. The building was considered both an artistic and economic success, the synthesis of all that a modern bank should be in the mid-1950s. The post-war banking industry flourished in the new credit-based economy. As a result, banks turned to marketing "friendly convenience" and began to shake off the stuffy service traditions and pretentious aesthetic the public associated with pre-depression banking. Modern architecture and modern technology helped make the modern bank as "welcoming as a shop" with a floor-to-ceiling plate glass storefront and a minimum of architectural and financial barriers between the bank patrons and the bank representatives.⁷

In practice, the First Security Bank Building was not a complete triumph. The anticipated expansion of downtown never materialized. The area immediately south of the bank building became a thriving motel-hotel district after the Interstate 15 on-and-off ramps were constructed at 500 and 600 South around 1957. However, the area immediately surrounding the bank saw little construction activity and all subsequent office towers were constructed at the north and east portions of the business district. First Security did not move its corporate offices to the new building, but kept them primarily in the former Deseret Building at the north end of the commercial district. For approximately three decades, the First Security building was near full occupancy with a variety of tenants, mostly businesses and government agencies. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, despite numerous remodeling of the rental floors, the building was perceived by the public as dingy and dated. There was some talk of demolishing the structure or at the very least giving it a new skin, especially after the completion of the Matheson Courthouse when Salt Lake County showed interest in acquiring the property for a new district attorney's office and criminal justice building. The county lost a bid to buy the property to the Wasatch Property Management group, who purchased the building in June 2002. The Wells Fargo Bank, which had taken over the First Security holdings in 2000, moved most of the old First Security offices out in 2002, leaving only a small branch in the northeast corner of the building. Wells Fargo Bank continues to have a branch in the building after the 2004 rehabilitation. The building is gradually acquiring new tenants. The largest tenant is the Eagle Gate College, an associate's degree college, which uses numerous spaces in the building for its downtown Salt Lake campus.

Architecture

The architecture of the First Security Bank Building, built in 1954-1955, is Utah's first and finest example of the International Style and the only example of the style in a high-rise commercial building. The term International Style was first used in 1932 by Henry Russell Hitchcock and Phillip Johnson, in an essay titled *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922*, which served as a catalog for an exhibition on architecture at the Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition showcased an architectural style that started in Europe in the 1920s with the work of Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier and spread to the United States within a decade. The

⁷ *Banking on the Future: Modernism and the Local Bank*, 2.45.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 5

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

International Style developed in response to three phenomena confronting architects at the end of the 19th century. The first was a general dissatisfaction (at least on the part of architects) with the practice of decorating buildings with a mix of stylistic elements from different architectural periods that bore little relationship to the building's function. The second was an economic need to create large numbers of new structures to serve a rapidly industrializing society. The third was the development of new structural technologies based on the use of steel, reinforced concrete and glass.

The architectural products of the International Style design philosophy followed two main tenets: 1) form should be determined by function, and 2) form should express the modern construction technology. The most common characteristics of International Style buildings are rectangular forms; light-colored taut planar surfaces completely devoid of applied ornamentation, ribbon windows, open interior spaces, and a visual weightless quality made possible by the use of structural framing, the curtain wall and cantilevers. By the 1950s and 1960s, the International Style provided an architectural vocabulary and an aesthetic rationale for clean, efficient, geometric buildings, though many of the later examples were more formalistic than form-derived. The International Style skyscraper became the status symbols of corporate power and progressiveness in the United States.

During construction of the First Security Bank Building, newspaper articles compared the building to the United Nations building in New York (built in 1952), mostly because the novelty of the "skin-type" architecture. The design of the First Security building gave a nod to the 21-story Lever House skyscraper (also built in New York in 1952) in the way the tower block hovered above the two-story base, an effect unfortunately lost to the First Security Building when the second floor was extended and the balcony enclosed. However, the greatest similarities in design can be made between the First Security Bank Building and the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society (PSFS) in Philadelphia, the nation's first and best example of an International Style high-rise, and reportedly the world's first modernist skyscraper. The PSFS Building, designed by architects George Howe and William Lescaze, was constructed between 1929 and 1932 as the corporate headquarters of the PSFS at the then staggering cost of \$8 million. The building was constructed on a steel frame and sheathed in granite, limestone, brick and glass. It was the first building to be constructed with central air-conditioning and many of the interior spaces were elaborately decorated with marble and exotic hardwoods. The building also had the PSFS sign integrated into the design. The PSFS building was designated as the Building of the Century by the American Institute of Architects in 1968, and listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1976. However, it is to the form of the PSFS that the First Security Bank Building bears more than a passing resemblance. The PSFS incorporates a street level façade as the base of the building with the 30-story tower set back. Above the base the tower plan is T-shaped with the elevator and service areas incorporated into one smooth block and the glazed office block given the maximum amount of natural light. The signage (recently replaced) for the First Security Bank was part of the original design. The First Security Bank Building, though not as elegant in proportion or materials as PSFS, is similarly "form driven by function" while completely embracing the new technology in both structural and sheathing materials.

The First Security Bank Building was designed by the Bank Building and Equipment Corporation of St. Louis, the premier bank design firm in the country in the mid-twentieth century. By one estimate, the Bank Building

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 6

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Corporation designed over 4,000 projects, both large corporate centers and mid-size institutions, in the United States.⁸ The firm's director of design in the 1950s was Wenceslaus Alfonso Sarmiento (1923-). W. A. Sarmiento was raised in Lima, Peru and graduated from the Escuela de Ingenieros in 1946. He emigrated to America in the late 1940s, located in New York, and after a traffic accident with the president of the Bank Building company, moved to St. Louis to work as an architect. Sarmiento worked with the Bank Building Corporation until 1965 and during that time produced numerous bank buildings inspired by the International Style and the South American modernism of influences such as Oscar Niemeyer. Sarmiento worked as a draftsman in Niemeyer's architecture office at a time before he was appointed national architect of Brasilia. Recently preservation groups, primarily the Los Angeles Conservancy, have been working to save Sarmiento's bank buildings in southern California. One of the best examples is the Glendale Federal Savings and Loan Building, which was listed on the California Register of Historic Places in 2001. The Glendale bank was built in 1959, a few years later than the First Security Building, but uses the same rust color (also called terracotta or brick red) on the fire tower. It also features an office block dramatically set at a 45° from the streets which may show an evolution of Sarmiento's design during the few years between First Security and Glendale Savings' design.

While Sarmiento may have been responsible for the basic design of the First Security building, the detailed design work and supervision was left to others at the design firm. W. G. Knoebel (probably Walter Knoebel [1894-1984]), based in St. Louis, was listed as supervising architect on the construction drawings and the First Security Corporation's promotional packet. Knoebel had been with the Bank Building Corporation since the 1920s. He was responsible for an eclectic variety of designs, including the State Saving Bank in Council Bluffs, Iowa, an Art Deco building from 1925 listed on the National Register in 1984. Architects at the design firm's branch office in San Francisco also played a role in the design. However, the First Security building was the first curtain wall building designed and constructed by the Bank Building Corporation and represented a definitive leap forward in innovation and technology for the company and America. As the largest bank building company in America at the time, the Bank Building Corp. had the opportunity to use these new materials more often than other architects. Gordon Bunshaft's design for Lever House in New York City is widely regarded as the first curtain wall building in America. According to Sarmiento, the First Security Bank Building was the second. It was second by virtue that it used no masonry or wood behind the curtain as many other early glass and steel buildings continued to do.

Collaborating with the Bank Building and Equipment Corporation was Salt Lake architect Slack W. Winburn (1895-1964). Slack Winburn was born in Missouri, but moved to Idaho Falls where he attended high school and started his architectural career. He came to Salt Lake City in 1920 where he started a firm with James Chesbro. He started a partnership with his son David Winburn in 1952. Between these dates, Winburn created an architectural legacy of eclectic designs from a New England-style Unitarian church, a classically influence World War I memorial, a shopping center, a university dormitory, and several apartment buildings. After his work on the First Security Bank Building, he continued to use a modernist vocabulary, most notably in the

⁸ *Glendale Savings and Loan Building*, Building, Structure and Object Record, California Dept. of Parks and Recreation, 2000.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 7

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Pacific Northwest Pipeline Building built in 1957 at 315 E. 200 South in Salt Lake City. The Pipeline building, though more boxy than the First Security building, uses many of the same elements: curtain wall construction, ribbon windows, porcelain steel panels, and a separate stair tower. While not quite the media "event" of its predecessor, the construction of the Pipeline building was part of the inevitable expansion of modernism and Salt Lake's commercial expansion outside the downtown commercial district.

The general contractor for the project was the First Security Corporation's own Utah Construction Company. Subcontractors included the American Bridge Division of the United States Steel Corporation who provided the structural steel. R. L. Eason and Associates provided the structural engineering, while Ferris and Hamig were consulting engineers on the electrical and mechanical systems. Both firms were based in St. Louis. The porcelain-coated steel panels were manufactured by the Cupples Company of St. Louis. First Security Bank was the first building by Cupples to use curtain wall construction and porcelain enamel steel panels. Because the companies were both located in St. Louis, Sarmiento was able to work the Cupples' engineers, overseeing the development and production of panels in the factory and insuring they would be produced to specifications. By the mid-1980s, Cupples had produced the curtain walls for five of the six tallest buildings in the world such as the World Trade Center, and other modern city monuments such as the LDS Church Headquarters Building in Salt Lake City.

As Utah's premier example of the International Style, the First Security Bank Building is both historically and architecturally significant. In addition to being a symbol of the reinvigoration of Salt Lake's commercial district at the mid-point of the twentieth century, the building expresses the tenets of International Style modernism (with its juxtaposition of form, mass, color and texture) better than any other building in the state. In good condition and only slightly modified, the First Security Bank Building makes a significant contribution to the historic resources of Salt Lake City and the state of Utah.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 9 Page 1

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Bibliography

[Ancestral File]. Available online at the Family Search website (www.familysearch.com).

Bank Building and Equipment Corporation. [Architectural construction drawings for the First Security Bank Building, dated May 24, 1954. Copy in possession of building owner.

Carter, Thomas and Peter Goss. *Utah's Historic Architecture, 1847-1940, A Guide*. Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1988.

Deseret News. Various issues. On microfilm available at the University of Utah Marriott Library.

Dyson, Carol J. and Anthony Rubano. "Banking on the Future: Modernism and the Local Bank." In *Preserving the Recent Past 2*. Conference Paper?

First Security Corporation. "A Prestige Address . . . The First Security Building." Promotional folder.

Hyman, Sidney. *Challenge and Response: The First Security Corporation First Fifty Years, 1928-1978*. Salt Lake City: Utah, Graduate School of Business, University of Utah, 1978.

Giraud, Elizabeth Egleston. "Post War Landmarks," *Utah Preservation: Building on the Past*, Volume 7 [2003].

Glendale Savings and Loan Building, Building, Structure and Object Record, California Dept. of Parks and Recreation, 2000.

Miller, William C., FAIA. "I'm Not Ugly . . . I Have International Flair." Reprinted in *Heritage: Newsletter of the Utah Heritage Foundation*, Winter 2001. Published originally in the *Forum Journal: The Journal of the National Trust for Historic Preservation*, Fall 2000.

Salt Lake Tribune. Various issues. On microfilm available at the University of Utah Marriott Library.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Salt Lake City, Utah, 1894 to 1986. Available at the Utah State Historical Society and the University of Utah Marriott Library.

[Salt Lake County Tax Cards]. Available at the Salt Lake County Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

[Salt Lake County Title Abstracts and Plat Maps]. Available at the Salt Lake County Recorder's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 9 Page 1

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Utah Heritage Foundation. *Historic Downtown Salt Lake City Walking Tour, Guide* [1999].

[Utah State Historical Society Burials Database]. Available online at Historical Society's website
(ntapps.dced.state.ut.us).

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. PHOTOS Page 1

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Common Label Information:

1. First Security Bank Building
2. Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah
3. Photographer: Korral Broschinsky
4. Date: February 2005
5. Negative on file at Utah SHPO.

Archival Photos

Photo No. 1:

6. South & west elevations of building. Camera facing northeast.

Photo No. 2:

6. North & west elevations of building. Camera facing southeast.

Supplemental Photos

Photo No. 3:

6. West elevation of tower. Camera facing east.

Photo No. 4:

6. West elevation of building. Camera facing east.

Photo No. 5:

6. North & east elevations of building. Camera facing southwest.

Photo No. 6:

6. North & west elevations of building. Camera facing southeast.

Photo No. 7:

6. North & west elevation of building: sign detail. Camera facing southeast.

Photo No. 8:

6. Interior lobby of building. Camera facing southwest.

Photo No. 9:

6. Interior lobby of building. Camera facing south.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. PHOTOS Page 2

First Security Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Photo No. 10:

6. Interior of building: 7th floor elevator area (typical). Camera facing south.

Photo No. 11:

6. North & west elevations of building. Camera facing southeast.
(Photocopy of tax assessment photo, c. late-1950s)

S.C. County Archives - Scan on Server

6-26-03



(11)

First Security Bank
c. late 1950's