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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

DIVISION OF
NATIONAL REGISTER PROGRAMS
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Saline County Bank
other names/site number Western Post Office; NEHS # SA08-69

2. Location

street & number na n/a not for publication
city, town Western n/a vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Saline code 151 zip code 68464

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> objects
			<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: na
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
James A. Hansen 02/20/90
Signature of certifying official Date
Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:) _____
for Signature of the Keeper 4/5/90 Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Financial Institution

Commerce/Specialty Store

Commerce/Professional

Government/Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/Post Office

Commerce/Specialty Store

Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

roof unknown

other pressed metal

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Saline County Bank Building, located in Western, Nebraska, is a late nineteenth-century commercial building, employing mixed-use commercial and office space. Designed in the commercial Italianate style of architecture, the two-story brick building was erected by William Bench in 1887 as the Saline County Bank, with George F. Sawyer serving as its president. The original cast iron storefront at the southeast corner was remodeled around 1910. Occupying a prominent corner lot in town, the building stands as a key structure in the downtown business environs due to its size and architectural design. The bank now houses the Western post office. The interior banking space was remodeled in recent years to accommodate the post office facility.

The Saline County Bank is located at the main business intersection in Western (1988 population: 336), a small community in the Central Plains region of southeast Nebraska. Constructed in 1887 on a lot owned by William Bench, the building was leased to George F. Sawyer, owner and president of the Saline County Bank. Sawyer purchased the bank property in 1889 and sold it to the Saline County Bank in 1896. Sawyer served as president of the Saline County Bank until his death in 1933.

Designed in the commercial Italianate style of architecture, the two-story building, measuring approximately 25 feet by 62 feet, is rectangular and has a flat roof with parapet walls. The structure exhibits two primary facades (south and west) with the main entry located at the southwest corner. The prominent entry displays concrete pilasters and oversized pressed metal brackets, flanking the round-arched door opening, and supporting a pressed metal wall cornice. The frame building is faced with red brick. Additional entries are found on the west (front) and south (side) facades. Fenestration in the building consists of tall, narrow double-hung windows with one-over-one pane arrangement, and pressed metal window hoods, consisting of segmentally arched hoods on the first level and pedimented hoods on second. The structure features

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a pressed metal bracketed cornice with a corner pedimented crown which, in relief, states: "1887." The structure has four internal chimneys. The building originally displayed a cast iron store front at the southeast corner. It was later filled in (ca. 1910), but done sympathetically, because the window and door openings and hood detail are identical to the design of the original building.

Bank buildings of this type are multi-story buildings of mixed-use commercial and office space. They are typically located on prominent corner lots in the central business district of urban areas (towns and cities), and are key components in the architectural environs of the "main street" area. Buildings employ masonry construction and display formalistic design. The banking space, usually located on the first level, included a banking room of monumental size and/or significant detailing. Bank buildings of this type are found in numerous Nebraska communities, but are commonly adapted to retail or office uses after the defunct bank's operation (Puschendorf, 1989, p. 5).

The Saline County Bank originally housed the banking facility in the front portion, with a retail business located in the rear space. In a 1909 view (see photo #3) a millinery shop is housed here. In a later view (see photo #4), after the storefront is filled in, the post office occupies the space. The second level housed office space, originally utilized by the telephone company. The original banking space is no longer intact. Many of the original bank fixtures were removed when the post office remodeled the first level in recent years. Only the bank vault survives. The rear commercial space, which retains its original tin ceiling, has also been remodeled. The second floor consists of a main hall leading into separate offices, each with its own entry. Access to the second level is provided via stairs through the west (front) entry. The integrity of the second level has been preserved.

The Saline County Bank has been an important visual and architectural landmark in Western since its opening in 1887. The building currently houses the post office in the front portion on the first floor, with a beauty salon in the rear space. The second level is vacant.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1887-c.1910

Significant Dates

1887
c.1910

Cultural Affiliation

na

Significant Person

na

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Saline County Bank is architecturally significant (Criterion C), on a local level, as a well-preserved example of a late nineteenth-century commercial building, employing mixed-use-commercial and office space. Stylistically, the bank represents an excellent example of this type as designed in the commercial Italianate style of architecture. In many towns, these banks occupied prominent corners and served as symbols of progress and solidarity in a growing community. Their building design, scale and material needed to reflect these qualities, and thus, these buildings were many times a key component in the architectural environs of central business districts. The period of significance is derived from the original construction date (1887) of the building, and significant later remodelings (ca. 1910).

Bank buildings of this type are located on prominent corner lots in the central business district of urban areas (towns and cities). They are found as multi-story buildings of mixed-use-commercial and office space. The banking space, usually located on the first level with a raised corner entry, often included a banking room of monumental size and/or significant detailing (Puschendorf, 1989, p. 5). Other commercial businesses typically occupied the remaining space on the first level (with separate entrances), with office space found on the upper floor. This type of bank building is important for its association with the context; The Age of Main Street Banking: The Dual System in Nebraska (1889-1920).

The Saline County Bank, one of only three multi-story commercial buildings in the downtown business district, has been an important landmark in the community of Western since its opening in 1887. The bank building is the only representative structure of its type in the town.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Gillespie, Laurene; Saline County Bank, Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey Form, July, 1988 on File Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE

Puschendorf, Robert, "The Age of Main Street Banking: The Dual System in Nebraska (1889-1920)" Historic Context Report 15.05.03, on File, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE

"Western Centennial Picture Gallery", Fairbury Journal News, April 14, 1972, Fairbury, NE

Western Wave, weekly newspaper, June, 1887 through January 1888, Western, NE

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	4
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6	5	3	0	0	0
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4	4	7	2	8	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is described as Lot 13, Block 6, Original Town of Western, Saline County, Nebraska.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes that parcel of land that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joni Gilkerson, Architectural Historian
organization Nebraska State Historical Society date November, 1989
street & number 1500 "R" Street telephone (402) 471-4767
city or town Lincoln state Nebraska zip code 68501

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Within the Central Plains region, the Saline County Bank is similar in plan and massing to two other known examples of this type recorded thus far in the on-going Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey. They include: the People's State Bank in Diller (NEHBS #JF02-3), listed NRHP, and the bank building in Tobias (NEHBS #SA07-38). Two other similar examples, identified outside the Central Plains region, are noteworthy. The State Bank Block in Red Cloud (NEHBS #WT07-30), listed NRHP, and the bank building in Blue Springs (NEHBS #GA04-3), are located in adjacent regions, the Republican Valley and the Southeast, respectively. These regions, for the most part, comprise the southeast portion of the state.

The bank buildings listed above are characterized by brick construction, rectangular massing, two-stories, flat roofs with parapet walls, corner entries, and prominent cornices. They display two major street facades showing high quality materials and formal design characteristics, exhibit mixed-use, and were constructed in the 1880's-1890's.

Due to the pristine condition of the exterior, the Saline County Bank is significant as an excellent example of the commercial building type, and for its notable interpretation of the type in the commercial Italianate style of architecture. The Italianate style gained popularity in Nebraska from the 1860's through the 1880's. Characteristic features of the style as employed in commercial architecture include: rectangular massing, multiple stories, tall narrow windows, and pressed metal decorative features including crowning cornices with overscaled brackets and decorative window hoods. All of these features were employed in the design of the Saline County Bank.

Remarkably intact, the only alteration to the building's exterior is the remodeling of the original open storefront at the rear of the building's south facade. This early remodeling, itself over 50 years old, reflects the changing uses of the structure and as such, is significant to the building's architectural history.

Due to its high level of exterior integrity, the bank building becomes important as a visual record for future reference and comparison of this type as it relates to the banking contexts in Nebraska. Further developments of the property type will occur as the NESHPO continues its historic context research and historic buildings survey.