

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC People's Federal Savings & Loan Association

AND/OR COMMON People's Savings and Loan Association Bank

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Public Square, 101 East Court Street at Ohio Avenue

CITY, TOWN Sidney VICINITY OF Fourth

STATE Ohio 45365 CODE 039 COUNTY Shelby CODE 149

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. George Hoelbrich, Secretary, People's Federal Savings and Loan Association

STREET & NUMBER 101 East Court Street (Box 26)

CITY, TOWN Sidney VICINITY OF STATE Ohio 45365

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Shelby County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER Public Square

CITY, TOWN Sidney STATE Ohio 45365

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Ohio Historic Survey, Phase I: "Ohio Historic Landmarks"

DATE February 1967 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS The Ohio Historical Society, 1982 Velma Avenue

CITY, TOWN Columbus STATE Ohio

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

One of Sullivan's last commissions, the Sidney, Ohio bank, was described in detail in The American Architect, October 1918 (Thomas E. Tallmadge, AIA):

"I remember that when draftsmen in a large office, in designing a bank building, we usually took figures on stone, terra cotta and granite, the design remaining constant for all three. In the Sidney bank the materials were selected before the exterior was designed, and thereby became unalterable features in the program. Terra cotta was chosen for belt courses, cornice and window trim, because the plastic clay of which it is made lends itself to delicate modeling and pressing into molds; besides, in terra cotta a great range of color and surface texture is attainable. For the general exterior wall surface, Indiana shale wire-cut brick was chosen. This brick comes from the kiln in many shades, and is so laid up in the building with horizontal joints well raked. Two other materials, the latter of them most unusual in Mr. Sullivan's work, were selected glass mosaic and verde antique marble; with this palette Mr. Sullivan designed his exterior. The dispositions of the mass--the fenestration, expressing the functions of the building, and the location of its internal units; the materials treated with enthusiastic and sympathetic understanding; the range and harmony of the color--give the little building a gemlike quality that glows afterward on the "inward eye" like a pigeon-blood ruby.

It is not necessary to analyze the exterior at great length; the photographs explain it very well. Certain obvious beauties and peculiarities, which would appear to some as solecisms, are evident.

The first to claim attention and admiration is the cornice; nothing lovelier in terra cotta, it seems to me, has been done. The continuity and the separate-ness of the hexagonal units, and the feeling of the mold, are a triumph for the fabricator, Mr. Gates of the American Terra Cotta Co., as well as for the designer. The lack of drip in the cornice, as the water flows back on the roof (why shouldn't it?), and the recessed brick pattern below, are fascinating details.

Next I like best the entrance door. The architrave and doorjambs are worthy of the closest study. This ornament is living ornament; it is as much a part of the substance as the shell of a tortoise or the hide of an alligator. Above is a magnificent tympanum in glass mosaic, the work of Louis J. Millet; it has the single word "THRIFT" inlaid in its surface. It is held in place by a beautiful arch in terra cotta, which has a considerable projection and an enriched soffit.

The third outstanding feature of the exterior is the extraordinary range of windows that give onto the banking room, remarkable and unprecedented, full of vigorous modeling, and rich in color, with the great panel of glass mosaic over. It is undoubtedly the most brilliant feature in the facade. Original

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8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1917-1918

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Louis Sullivan (1856-1924)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sidney bank is one in the series of commissions that came late in Louis Sullivan's career that are now generally recognized as architectural gems--small in scale, exquisite in detail--they also make strong individualistic statements in busy small town midwestern settings. Hugh Morrison rates the Sidney bank as the finest of the series, perhaps influenced by the fact that Sullivan himself felt that it was one of his best. Vincent Scully writes that Sullivan's small banks both respect Main Street and ennoble it--he understands and manipulates the street as either Wright or Purcell and Elmslie could... Sullivan's bank swells with a good small-town bankers pride, dominating the traffic. These buildings were to influence 20th century architects profoundly after they had outgrown the excesses of the Beaux Arts style.

Morrison writes poetically of the Sidney bank--"One's first impression of the building is not so much of its form as of its beautiful harmony of soft, rich and luminous colors. The walls and base serve as a deep ground color against which the lighter and more brilliant glass mosaic and terra cotta ornament are relieved, like the melodic passages of solo instruments against the sustained full harmonies of an orchestral accompaniment. The red of the bricks is not a flat opaque color, but the rich and vibrant red of tapestry brick of varied tones. The base consists of two-foot slabs of verde antique marble, strongly veined and almost black. On the entrance facade the jambs and architrave of the door, the heraldic lions, the belt-course and impost moulding of the arch, the arch itself and the corbels on which it rests, are all in richly modelled terra cotta of a dull turtle green color. The tympanum of the arch, executed by Louis J. Millett, has a ground of light blue glass mosaic, with the single word "Thrift" in gold letters, and an inner archivolt in two shades of green, buff, and purple, the purple dominating. This is the "solo melody" of the facade, and even from a distance its frank, clear color is readily apparent. The foliage designs in the corbels, the strong projection of the arch, and its enriched soffit, are all full of vigor and spirit. On the long west facade, the tremendous windows lighting the banking room are boldly framed by strongly projecting sill, dividing mullions, and lintel, all in terra cotta. The color changes from mottled green below into brown above, gradually becoming lighter and merging into warm golden buff in the cornice. The long rectangular panel over the windows has a ground of light green glass mosaic, and the name of the bank in gold letters."¹

¹ Morrison, Hugh, Louis Sullivan, W. W. Norton and Company, New York 1935, pp. 220-222.

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and vigorous are the corbels under the mullions, and soft and luminous is the modeling in each soffit and jamb. The huge, beautifully modeled terra cotta brooches that pin the lacelike window trim to the brick fabric come directly over the void of the unornamented small windows. The same thing occurs, only more so, in the front facade, where the ends of the archivolt find, according to old standards, an insecure resting place over similar voids.

When I asked Mr. Sullivan to justify himself he said: "Every schoolboy knows there is steel over those windows," and then they looked all right!

If the design be vigorous and daring there is certainly no evidence to timidity in the color. The base is verde antique marble, the belt course, arch string and portal mottled green terra cotta. The green changes to brown in the window trim, which becomes lighter above until it emerges into golden hues in the frame of the great window, and dies into pale orange in the cornice. The two glass mosaic panels are in variegated turquoise blue shades. The translucent glass windows are shielded on the outside by plate glass, which not only softens the light within but combines with the pattern of the leading, the fleeting reflections of trees and sky. The arrangement of the interior is simplicity itself, and amply explained by the plan reproduced. Its architectural treatment is as interesting as the exterior; a high wainscoting, half the height of the banking room, forms the background for a lower screen, also of brick, the openings of which are filled with glass instead of the usual confusing metal grilles. This screen is, of course, the partition dividing the cages, working space, etc., from the public space. The most beautiful feature of this unusual arrangement is a remarkable cornice, or rather fascia, or perhaps it is a lintel without salience, of quartersawed oak of a steel-gray tone. It is beautifully carved, and besides its aesthetic purposes it performs important functions in connection with the lighting and ventilation. The harmonious ensemble does not prevent us from admiring certain especially interesting or beautiful features: the marble drinking fountain, the four great pylons with their ventilating grilles, and light reflectors above; the verde antique marble check stands; the great vault door, which, when open, falls exactly on axis with the public space, and forms its own picture--an apotheosis of polished steel and brass. The extraordinary harmony of Mr. Sullivan's architecture, with so final an expression of mechanical skill and untrammelled modernity as this vault door, is deeply significant. It tells that machinery and art greet each other with open arms when there is mutual understanding.

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The upper part of the room is unfinished. When peaceful times return these bare walls will be decorated with mural paintings, for which there will be plenty of subjects and inspiration.

There are other rooms besides the banking room well worthy of study. The ladies' writing room, of which a view is published, is especially good, yet it has no outstanding architectural feature or even ornament, only the plain Roman brick walls, the simple brick cornice and the marble floor. The usual method (for ventilating and steam heat) has been discarded. The Sidney bank has no windows; that is, none that open; it is hermetically sealed except the entrance doors. To insure insulation, the windows and skylights are doubled, with an air space between. This is also true of the walls, which on the inside are lined with hollow gypsum blocks, separated by several inches and a wall of air from the exterior supporting wall. Having secured an air-tight building, it was possible to operate successfully a heating and ventilating system. That employed is known as the "vapor modulation system," and operates on a pressure of four ounces. The heat is distributed through direct radiators equipped with modulation valves. The ventilation operates in conjunction with the heating system as follows: The outer air is admitted through a fresh-air shaft connected to a set of pre-heating coils. The air, partly warmed, passes through an air washer, which completely removes all dust, soot and odors. This washed air then passes through a second system of coils which raise it to the desired temperature. A large forcing fan then distributes the washed and warmed fresh air through a system of ducts to definite points in the banking room and all its adjuncts. An exhaust fan expels through ducts the vitiated air from toilet and minor rooms. A system of thermostats automatically controls all pre-heating and re-heating coils, thus maintaining a constant fixed temperature. In addition, 50 per cent of the air in the main banking room (but not in the accessory rooms) is "recirculated"; that is, it leaves the room through a system of registers in the walls and partitions and enters a system of branch metal ducts which are gathered into a trunk line. This trunk line enters the fresh-air chamber, and the combined air, thus washed and reheated, is again distributed by fan pressure to the various rooms. A system of gravity exhaust ducts supplements the exhaust fan, and the fresh air and recirculating ducts are controlled by dampers. The fans and pumps are run by direct-connected electric motors. The two boilers are of the Newport magazine-feed type. In warm weather the air washer and fans alone are operated.

This system of construction and equipment may be called ideal. The advantages of the system are obvious: economy of coal; noiseless and dustless quarters; regulated humidity; an abundant supply of clean, fresh air,

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and in summer a temperature of twelve to fifteen degrees below that of the outer air. Such an arrangement evidently makes for the comfort of patrons and the comfort and clear-brained efficiency of the working force. The arrangement is as enlightened as it is hygienic.

Daylight is provided in abundance through windows and skylights, which in the larger openings are modified and diffused through opalescent glass.

Artificial lighting by electric current is divided into two units, direct and indirect. Direct lighting is installed for all minor rooms and passages by means of wall and ceiling fixtures. All desks and counters are lighted by means of overhead Frink reflectors. The indirect lighting is so disposed that its source is completely hidden from view. The object of the indirect system is, first, to "floodlight" the banking room with a diffused glow in which there are no shadows or high lights--this for eye comfort; the second object is to illuminate evenly and naturally the mural decorations. The lights themselves are located in troughs let into the continuous oak lintel over the cages, and are clustered in powerful batteries in the vases on the pylons.

Besides the usual outside trunk lines a complete telephone system is installed for the use of the working force and of customers.

The plumbing and drainage system meet the most exacting sanitary requirements, and a tank in the basement supplies rain water to all lavatories.

The construction of the building is substantial throughout. The walls are brick, with steel columns where required. The main floor throughout is reinforced concrete. The main walls and partitions are plastered on "pyrobar" hollow gypsum blocks. The floors of the tellers' quarters and stenographers' rooms are of cork tile; all other floors are of gray pink Tennessee marble, laid with a hair joint and given a honed finish. All floors throughout finish against a sanitary coved marble base, and the wood finish is of quarter-sawed white oak, stained steel gray. All exposed metal work, including hardware and lighting fixtures, is of genuine bronze, and the letters on the facade, spelling the name of the institution, are of bronze, gold-plated.

The door leading to the safety-deposit vault and coupon rooms is operated electrically by the chief stenographer. In front of the vault is an ample space, separated from the public space by a great sheet of plate glass. The vault is commodious, and is divided into safety-deposit and cash compartments. It is fire and burglar proof, constructed of reinforced

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concrete, and lined with steel. Its immense circular door, beautiful and powerful, is controlled by three time locks. Behind the main banking room is a low-storied structure, continuous in place with the main building. This annex houses coupon rooms, the general toilet, customers' room, directors' room, locker rooms, etc."¹

The bank exists today with little or no alterations much as Sullivan conceived it in 1917.

¹ Tallmadge, Thomas E., A.I.A., The American Architect, Vol. CXIV, October 1918 No 2235, pp. 478-482.

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Of the interior, he writes: "the banking room is left open and unobstructed above a fringe of offices surrounding the central space, an arrangement giving the maximum effect of light and spaciousness. The range of windows in the west wall has opaque leaded glass in subdued colors--a light sea-green ground, with central ornaments in tomato and pale amber colors. The skylight is an iridescent mother-of-pearl color."²

When Sullivan was commissioned by the directors of the bank there was a little uneasiness--the story is told by Morrison: "A characteristic picture of his mode of procedure is contained in an anecdote told by the president of the People's Savings and Loan Association Bank at Sidney, Ohio, which was designed by Sullivan in 1917. Sullivan was called to Sidney, and the directors outlined for him in informal conference their requirements for a new building. The site was then an empty corner lot. Sullivan retired to the opposite corner, sat on a curbstone for the better part of two whole days, smoking innumerable cigarettes. At the end of this time he announced to the directors that the design was made--in his head, proceeded to draw a rapid sketch before them, and announced an estimate of the cost. One of the directors was somewhat disturbed by the unfamiliarity of the style, and suggested that he had rather fancied some classic columns and pilasters for the facade. Sullivan very brusquely rolled up his sketch and started to depart, saying that the directors could get a thousand architects to design a classic bank but only one to design them this kind of bank, and that as far as he was concerned, it was either the one thing or the other. After some conference, the directors accepted the sketch design and the bank was forthwith built with not a single essential change in the design and at a cost \$1,000 below Sullivan's estimate, despite the fact that it was built during the war years."³

The Sidney, Ohio, bank is one of the finest examples left of the small jewel-like structures that were executed at the end of his career.

² Ibid.

³ Op. cit, pp. 180-181.

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Morrison, Hugh. Louis Sullivan, Prophet of Modern Architecture. New York:
W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1935. pp. 180, 220-223, 305; Pls. 83-85.

Tallmadge, Thomas E. "The People's Savings & Loan Association Building of
Sidney, Ohio." American Architect. Vol. 114, no. 2235; October 23,
1918.

Schuyler, Montgomery, American Architecture and Other Writings, edited by
William Jordy and Ralph Coe. Harvard University Press Cambridge,
Massachusetts, 1961.

Scully, Vincent, American Architecture and Urbanism, Frederick Praeger,
Publishers N.Y.-Washington, 1969, pp. 127-128.

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The following described real estate situate in the county of Shelby in the State of Ohio viz: Commencing at the northwest corner of In Lot Number Sixty-five (65) in the original plat of the city of Sidney in said county; thence east with the north line of said In Lot Forty-one (41) feet and three (3) inches (more or less) to the center of the party wall on the line between the east half and the west half of said In Lot; thence south with the center line of said party wall One hundred and twelve (112) feet and nine (9) inches (more or less) to the center of a party wall; thence west with the center of said party wall Forty-one (41) feet and three (3) inches (more or less) to the west line of said In Lot; thence north with the west line of said In Lot One hundred and twelve (112) feet and nine (9) inches (more or less) to the place of beginning.