

**Structure/Site Information Form**

IDENTIFICATION 1

Street Address: 200 South Main Street UTM: 12/424810/4512810  
 Name of Structure: Continental Bank Building T. 01.0 S R. 01.0 W S. 01  
 Present Owner: Continental Building Co. Less than one acre  
 Owner Address: P.O. Box 1770  
 Salt Lake City, Utah 84110  
 Year Built (Tax Record): Effective Age: Tax #: 01 2205  
 Legal Description Kind of Building: Misc. Commercial Bldg

Com 0.76 ft N fr NE cor Lot 8 BLk 58 Plat A SLC Sur W 163.835 ft S 0.76 ft W 1.29 Ft  
 S 70 Ft E 50 Ft N 23.84 Ft S 89.59' E 116.755 Ft N 46.98 Ft W 1.63 Ft to Beg.

STATUS/USE 2

Original Owner: National Bank of Republic Construction Date: 1923-24 Demolition Date:  
 Original Use: commercial Present Use: commercial  
 Building Condition: Integrity: Preliminary Evaluation: Final Register Status:  
 Excellent  Site  Unaltered  Significant  Not of the  National Landmark  District  
 Good  Ruins  Minor Alterations  Contributory Historic Period  National Register  Multi-Resource  
 Deteriorated  Major Alterations  Not Contributory  State Register  Thematic

DOCUMENTATION 3

Photography: Date of Slides: Slide No.: Date of Photographs: Fall-spring Photo No.:  
1978-79  
 Views:  Front  Side  Rear  Other Views:  Front  Side  Rear  Other

Research Sources:  
 Abstract of Title  Sanborn Maps  Newspapers  U of U Library  
 Plat Records/ Map  City Directories  Utah State Historical Society  BYU Library  
 Tax Card & Photo  Biographical Encyclopedias  Personal Interviews  USU Library  
 Building Permit  Obituary Index  LDS Church Archives  SLC Library  
 Sewer Permit  County & City Histories  LDS Genealogical Society  Other

**Bibliographical References** (books, articles, records, interviews, old photographs and maps, etc.):  
 Salt Lake City Sanborn Maps, 1898, 1911, 1930, 1958, University of Utah Library.  
 Salt Lake County Recorder, "Abstract Records," Book A-10, p. 40, B-2, p. 31, B-36, p. 31, C-1, p. 186, C-11, p. 191.  
 Polk, R.L. & Co., Salt Lake City Directory, 1918-1948.  
 Salt Lake City Building Permit, April 13, 1896, #1860.  
 Salt Lake Tribune, 1938, Sept. 18, p. 1 James E. Cosgriff obituary  
 October 3, 1951, "Status Change Requested by S.L. Bank"  
 October 4, 1961, "Continental Bank names new President"  
 March 17, 1963, "White House Now a Bank"  
 April 23, 1953, "Drive-In Service Eyed by Continental Bank"  
 "Come and Get It," Newsweek Magazine, February 20, 1956.

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Building Materials: concrete, brick, stone

Building Type/Style: commercial

**Description of physical appearance & significant architectural features:**

(Include additions, alterations, ancillary structures, and landscaping if applicable)

Architecturally, the bank is a thirteen-story reinforced concrete, brick and stone-faced building. Its design composition is narrow and vertical and combines a Second Renaissance Revival treatment of the bottom two floors with a strictly utilitarian treatment of the upper floors. The overall design reflects a period of eclecticism during which traditional and modern elements were often joined. Decorative elements include carved stone faces and cartouches, a classical cornice and an original exterior clock. The building is unaltered and its fabric is in excellent condition.

**Statement of Historical Significance:**

Construction Date: 1923-24

The Continental Bank Building, constructed during the 1923-24 period, is important in the Downtown Salt Lake City streetscape as a commercial structure, but is most significant and nominated to the National Register for its association with businessman James E. Cosgriff. Cosgriff, who had acquired several banks in the intermountain area, arrived in Salt Lake City in 1905, purchased the Commercial National Bank, and consolidated all of these holdings in a merger with the National Bank of the Republic to form the Continental National Bank and Trust Company. In his capacity as a leader in banking and finance, Cosgriff also maintained interests in the sheep and wool industry, and because of his financial success contributed to the community and the Catholic Church in Utah through various philanthropic activities. The Continental Bank Building is the best remaining structure associated with James E. Cosgriff.

The Continental Building represents an early phase of high rise, steel and concrete architecture in Salt Lake City. Age and scale document the growth of the area as a commercial-financial center. Centrally located on Main Street, it continues to be a vital part of Salt Lake City's business community.

The Continental Bank Building was constructed in 1923-24 for the National Bank of the Republic. The property on which the bank now sits was originally the site of the "White House," an early Salt Lake hotel that was a popular place for visitors at the turn of the century. The National Bank of the Republic, O'Connor's Drug Store, a cigar store and bar managed by L. F. Harr did business in the bottom floor. In 1920, the Bank of the Republic consolidated with several other banks in the intermountain area to form Continental Bank and Trust Co., the present occupant and owner of the building.

The man behind this merger and the founder of Continental Bank was James E. Cosgriff. Mr. Cosgriff was a native of Vermont who came West as a young man in 1890 and started in the sheep business in Rawlins, Wyoming. He and his brothers ran a herd of more than 100,000 head. Mr. Cosgriff first entered the banking business in Wyoming where he purchased the First National Bank. He gradually acquired ownership of several banks in the intermountain area and in 1905, came to Salt Lake and purchased Commercial National Bank. Mr. Cosgriff consolidated all of these holdings in a merger with National Bank of the Republic to form Continental National Bank & Trust Co., James Cosgriff was the first president of the bank.

In an effort to improve his bank's efficiency and profitability, Mr. Costriff made frequent trips to eastern banking centers to study banking and marketing conditions and report in Salt Lake. He also represented Utah silver interests in a Senate sub-committee hearing on Chinese and San Francisco trade.

Yet in spite of his involvement in banking and finance, Mr. Cosgriff still maintained an interest in sheep and wool and was continually trying to improve standards of production. In 1913, at his own expense, he hired an Australian wool expert to teach Western woolgrowers Australian methods of wool preparation.

Mr. Cosgriff was also an active community and church leader. He was a committee member of the first Community Chest drive in Salt Lake City as well as a member of the Chamber of Commerce, the Country and Alta Clubs. He was a prominent member of the Knights of Columbus, president of St. Vincent de Paul Society of the Cathedral of the Madeliene and was a leading contributor in its philanthropic activities. In honor of his service within the Catholic church, he was made a Knight of St. Gregory, a title conferred on the church's distinguished laymen.

James Cosgriff died September 17, 1938 in Salt Lake City, survived by his wife, Mildred, a son, Walter E. and daughter Marian E. Cosgriff.

At the time of his father's death, Walter was vice-president of Continental Bank. He had started working at the bank as a clerk at the age of 15. When his father died in 1938, Walter inherited the presidency of the bank and a rather large fortune. He was only 23 years old at that time. He also inherited his father's concern for the survival of small business and banks. Walter Cosgriff had a personal vendetta against large banking claims, particularly when they absorbed banks that could be run better and built faster by local people.

In 1956, Newsweek magazine called him a "connoisseur of banks". Using personal funds, he bought or sold an interest in some 50 banks between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevadas in the decade after his father's death. He wasn't interested in developing his own banking chain either. He wanted merely to preserve the independent status of the banks and would only sit in on their board meetings and "try not to interfere."

Walter Cosgriff was also known for his liberality with bank funds and was accused by the Federal Reserve Board of giving loans to "anything that can swim, creep, run or fly." The Federal Reserve ordered Cosgriff to increase the capital reserves of the bank for this very reason. Cosgriff refused and became embroiled in a bitter controversy with the board which lasted over six years. The matter was only resolved when Cosgriff's successor agreed voluntarily to increase the bank's capital by selling additional shares of bank stock.

In 1953, Continental Bank purchased the adjoining property on 2nd South where the Dahnken Building and Cullen Hotel were formerly located. These buildings were torn down and a new three story addition to the bank erected. The addition also included a new drive-in window and expanded parking facilities.