NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Hamm Building

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 408 St. Peter Street ☐ not for publication N/A

city or town St. Paul ☐ vicinity N/A

state Minnesota code MN county Ramsey code 123 zip code 55102

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.)

Ian R. Stewart 4/15/97

Signature of certifying official/Title Ian R. Stewart Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State of Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

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

Signature of commenting 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:) _____

Edson H. Beall 5/30/97

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Hamm Building
Name of Property

Ramsey Co., MN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [X] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/business=office building
Recreation & culture/theater=cinema, play house

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/business=office building

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation rubble limestone
walls terra cotta and brick masonry
roof other: coal tar & asphalt built-up
other structure: steel

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

See continuation sheets

8. Statement of Significance

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

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

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or 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.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1915-1920

Significant Dates
1915

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

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Toltz, King & Day Inc. (Architect)
F.J. Romer Construction (Builder)
Rapp & Rapp (Theater Architects)

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested 8-21-95
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☒ previously determined eligible by the National Register 4-24-79
- ☐ 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

Name of repository:
MN Historical Society, Northwest Architectural Archives

Hamm Building
Name of Property

Ramsey Co., MN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .98

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

St. Paul East, Minn.
1967 REvised 1993

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	492420	4976800
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gabrielle Bourgerie - Historical Consultant

organization Oertel Architects date 1-6-97

street & number 1422 W. Lake St. Suite 312 telephone 612/825-6613

city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55408

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

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

name The Markham Company of Saint Paul

street & number 408 St. Peter Street telephone 612/222-2812

city or town St. Paul state MN zip code 55102

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7. Narrative Description

Summary
The Hamm Building is an excellent example of the Commercial Style and has retained its character to the present day with minor alterations. Prominently located in Saint Paul, Minnesota on St. Peter Street between Sixth Street and Seventh Place, the building is constructed of a steel frame faced in highly decorative, molded terra cotta structural tile covered with pulsichrome, a glaze developed for use on the Hamm Building. With the exception of modified sections on the Seventh Place and Sixth Street facades, the building's three main facades above the storefront level have symmetrically placed windows and are sheathed in cream colored terra cotta rendered in Renaissance Revival and Classical motifs. Designed by the Saint Paul architectural and engineering firm of Toltz, King and Day the building's steel frame was erected in 1915 and construction was completed in 1920. The F.J. Romer Construction Company, also of Saint Paul, was hired to complete the construction. The building occupies .98 acres (approximately 150 feet by 300 feet) in Saint Paul's central business district. It stands six stories above grade and two and a half stories below grade with a mechanical basement, subbasement, basement, first story commercial storefronts and five stories of office use above. The building lobby retains its original design of a Gustavino tile groin vaulted ceiling with walls clad in decorative terra cotta. The modified facade on Seventh Place was once home to the Capitol Theater designed by Rapp and Rapp of Chicago. In 1929, the theater changed its name to the Paramount when it became a member of the new Paramount Publix circuit.[1] The highly ornate theater exterior and lobby were of a Spanish Colonial Revival style, distinct and different from the terra cotta detail used elsewhere on the building. The Hamm building is an essential element in the architectural continuity of lower St. Peter Street facades. It is surrounded by a mix of buildings ranging from turn-of-the-century to newly constructed commercial/office structures, most of high quality design and execution.

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[1] Adams, Stephen. "St. Paul's Capitol Theater: A True Cathedral of Motion Pictures." Theatre Organ Vol. 33 No. 3, May-June 1991, p. 23.

Exterior Description

Overview:
The Hamm Building, a commercial building in the downtown business area of Saint Paul, is surrounded by other buildings of its type. This steel framed building stands six stories above ground and two and a half below. The building is rectangular in shape from the ground level through the fourth floor and the upper two floors follow a "u" shaped form. The empty space in the center of the "u" overlooks the roof and faces east. The foundation consists of a rubble limestone and the building walls are clad with structural terra cotta tiles on the three principal facades, and brick on the east elevation. Each facade is fenestrated differently. The south facade has six vertical divisions or bays, the west facade has ten vertical divisions and the north facade has five vertical divisions. The east facing elevation has irregular bays. The slightly pitched, coal-tar built up roof has a parapet and is the site of two one-story terra cotta penthouses and one two-story penthouse for stair, elevator and mechanical operations.

Steel framework:
The type of steel framework used on the building is an enhanced girder and beam system. A pair of girders or beams are adjacent to both sides of a column unlike the standard single beam to column design. The system provides the building with greater flexibility to run mechanical and electrical systems, pipes and conduits up column lines or at centerline wall locations. The stiffness of the system reduces the vibration of steel and concrete slab and creates large load capacities efficiently at low cost. The cantilevered beam design is a more structurally efficient system of carrying live and dead loads. In fact, the design provided a 30 to 40 percent savings in steel cost to achieve these high capacities at low vibration. Depth of beams and girders was minimized, allowing more clearance between floors.

Fenestration:
The facades are divided into four sections: the building base (storefronts, prism glass transoms and sign panels); the second story fenestration (defined by a cornice above and below it); the building body (upper four stories); and the building cap (the decorative terra cotta parapet). The storefronts are composed of three major horizontal components: the

display windows and commercial entrances at the pedestrian level; prism glass transoms above (many of which are covered); and flat, flush signage panels above the transoms. The second story band of windows is articulated with demicolumns (separating the windows within the bays), and a band of low relief garlands below a dentilled projecting cornice. The cornice forms a visual base for the four stories above. The remaining upper stories are defined horizontally by bands of windows and elaborate decorative panels that depict cherubs of various attitudes, and vertically by low relief bay piers with raised floral urns between the second and third floor bays, and mascarons at the sixth story bays. A parapet, decorated with high relief festoons situated above two faceless heads, lies above the sixth floor. Small gargoyle heads at the top of the parapet are spaced so as to mark each vertical division in the facades below. The parapet conceals the slightly pitched, primarily coal tar built-up roof. Two one-story, terra cotta faced penthouses (for elevator and stairs) and one two-story penthouse (for elevator, stairs and mechanical) project above the roof and are visible from the St. Peter Street facade.

Windows:
The commercial storefronts, consisting of original decorative iron work and various types of storefronts with fixed plate glass, are defined by the piers of the building's steel structural system. The bays on the side facades (Sixth Street and Seventh Place), are approximately twenty-two feet wide. Bays along St. Peter Street are approximately twenty-seven feet wide. Above the display windows and/or commercial entrances are smaller transom bays of prism glass in sets of three or four bays, reflecting the window placement above. The transoms are separated by iron bars, and each unit has a pivoting vent in its center. Windows on the second to sixth floors, like all office windows on the major facades, are two panel side-by-side sliders with transom above. The original commercial steel windows, 1/1 with a tilting upper and lower sash, were removed in the early 1980s. Although the anodized aluminum clad windows are in excellent condition, they do not resemble the original design, therefore, having a negative effect on the building. Still, because the original windows were fairly simple in design, the overall feeling of the building is not lost.

The windows of the upper five stories at the canted corner, and windows along St. Peter display burnt orange awnings - a total of 215 - during the summer and fall months. The awnings are built into the window units and add a great deal of color and interest to the

cream terra cotta facades.

South Elevation:
The Sixth Street facade (south elevation) features five full bays and a partial bay at the east end. There are three windows within each bay except for the partial bay which has only one window, making a total of sixteen windows each on floors two through six. The partial bay and first full commercial storefront bay on the eastern end have been modernized with simulated colonial style divided-light windows, mansard projecting roof, and a modern door. The westerly four storefronts remain basically as designed - two with doorways and two without. All transoms, most of which are still intact, are covered with flat metal or plywood panels to protect the somewhat fragile prism glass.

Alterations to the eastern most storefront on the Sixth Street facade have a negative effect on the building, but this is minimized by current restoration and renovation plans which include replacing the existing storefront with a replication of the original. The plan also includes rehabilitating the prism glass on the entire structure.

Canted Corner:
The southwest corner of the building, (at Sixth and St. Peter Streets), is defined by a canted bay. The bays display four windows on each floor. The storefront displays a commercial door and, like the majority of the Sixth Street facade, appears to be in good condition.

West Elevation:
The St. Peter Street facade (west elevation) displays ten bays, nine with four windows each and one with three windows. The fourth bay from Sixth Street contains the main entrance to the building. This bay features an arched entry with stylized keystone, flanked with ornamental hanging iron lamps. Above the keystone are four terra cotta tiles, each cast with one letter of the building name "HAMM." The original mahogany doors on the main entrance have been replaced by three sets of anodized aluminum/glass commercial doors. A tri-set plate glass window, separated by the original iron bars, fills the arch above the door sets. The spandrel wall around the arch is sheathed in a

diamond/floral patterned terra cotta. Two identical plaques located on the piers on either side of the entrance bay read: "HAMM" and below that, "1919."

Seventh Place Mall Facade:
The Seventh Place Mall facade has gone through major alterations over the years. It was originally home to the Capitol Theater which hosted live performances and moving pictures. The first two stories of the easterly end of the facade originally displayed an elaborate theater entrance rendered in dramatic Spanish Colonial Revival motif, with three two-story arches defined by fluted pilasters and infilled with Spanish Colonial Revival style wrought iron grill work. The most easterly portion of the theater facade displayed a suspended ornate iron marquee. In 1965 the then Paramount Theater's terra cotta was removed and replaced with a modern, flat Kasota stone. The new facade displays a narrow banding of windows five bays wide on the second story and a smaller, modern semicircle marquee.

The windows on the four floors above the theater do not follow the rigid bay pattern of the other two facades, but are evenly spaced across the easterly three and a half bays. The westerly portion of the north elevation contains two storefronts with three upper bays typical to those found on other facades. The negative visual effects of the alterations to this facade are mitigated by the fact that the view from the west is obscured by the large archway of the St. Peter Street entrance to the Seventh Place Mall.

East Elevation:
The east elevation, facing the alley, has masonry walls and irregular fenestration. Windows consist of a conglomeration including aluminum framed pivot, fixed sash and original metal tilting sash with wire glass.

Interior:
The building's ornate main lobby is accessed through the St. Peter Street entrance. The lobby, approximately 45 feet wide and 36 feet deep, is defined by a groin vaulted, Gustavino tile ceiling. Long time building tenants say that the vaults were at one time overlaid with a gold leaf, but a recent finishes analysis reported a bronze powder rather

than the rumored gold leaf.

The walls are sheathed in decorative glazed terra cotta in a variety of classical motifs. The lobby still features the original iron chandeliers consisting of one large chandelier in the center vault and four smaller ones that are placed symmetrically throughout the remaining vaults. The west facing wall contains four elevator bays with a decorative clock built into the terra cotta surround over the center of the elevator bays. The polished stainless steel elevator doors were added circa 1960 when automated elevators were installed. The floor is highly polished terrazzo marble laid out in a decorative pattern.

The lobby area is configured with two narrow hallways running north and south and a mezzanine level added to the expanded storefronts along the St. Peter facade. The mezzanine level, accessed by stairs off the lobby to the north, was added circa 1965 when the theater's interior was demolished.

Primary access to the upper floors is provided by a centrally located elevator/stair shaft. The interior upper office corridors are double loaded and were extensively remodeled in the 1960s; they now display little resemblance to the original design. An original narrow central light court provides light and ventilation to interior upper floors. The court was not a part of the 1915 design, but was added in 1919 when the design changed from a department store to an office building. The steel structural members which were laid in 1915 for the large floor plate were not removed with the construction of the glazed brick light court.

Alterations:
In 1965-66, the building entrance on Seventh Place and the theater section were completely remodeled in a style incompatible with the rest of the building. Remodeling dwindled the theater's seating capacity from 2,200 to 800 and absorbed three-fourths of the space occupied by the Paramount into offices, shops and a Seventh Place arcade.

The theater entrance (although once a character defining feature), does not completely compromise the building because the building's main character defining feature - the terra cotta - remains intact everywhere else on the building. Only the theater portion of the north facade has been altered, not the entire elevation. Also, the Seventh Place Mall is

fairly hidden from view due to the arch on St. Peter Street, making the impact of the alterations far less noticeable.

Alterations other than those to the Seventh Place facade include the replacement of windows on all three street facing facades with sliding-type sashes surmounted by a clear or blind transoms. Also, many of the windows on the east elevation were replaced with several different styles. The building's integrity is not compromised by window replacements on the east elevation because this side of the building faces the alley and another building of similar massing and height.

Terra cotta finials shown atop the roof cornice in early photographs were removed at an unknown date.

Interior modifications include the reworking of all interior floor plans except the street level, removal of the original theater design and ornament, and removal of marble wainscoting throughout the building's office corridors.

Alterations to the exterior have compromised the integrity of the building to some extent, but the building retains the most distinguishing characteristic; the uncompromised, highly ornate terra cotta exterior.

Restoration and Rehabilitation Plans:
Currently, the building is undergoing a Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit project. Changes to the building are primarily on the interior spaces. The materials that render the building significant will be restored when possible leaving the lobby and exterior terra cotta unchanged. The plans will not compromise the integrity of the building and it will continue to be used commercially.

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary
Known as "the pride of the Midwest" by the American Terra Cotta & Ceramic Company of Chicago, the Hamm Building in downtown Saint Paul, Minnesota, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for its significance as a building embodying distinctive characteristics of a method of construction and for its high artistic values. It is an excellent example of early twentieth century building trends and materials. Its three major facades are completely clad in highly decorative structural terra cotta, and it is the best example of a building of its type in Minnesota. The type of steel framework employed in the Hamm Building was relatively rare at the time of its construction. The cantilevered beam design employed at the building provided a large reduction in steel costs while achieving high capacities at low vibration. High artistic values are represented in the use of Renaissance Revival and Classical motifs, and the mottled glaze used on the terra cotta. The design and color of the terra cotta add to the opulent sculptural appearance of the building. The Hamm Building maintains its historic integrity and clearly conveys its architectural significance through location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The building is significant within the previously defined "Urban Centers" state historic context and within the broader context of the development and use of terra cotta in the United States.

Building History
Originally the site of St. Paul's second Cathedral removed in 1911[1], construction of the Hamm Building began in 1915 and was completed in 1920. The $1.8 million building which occupies approximately 45,000 square feet of ground space and measures 150 x 300 feet, was designed by Toltz, King & Day of Saint Paul, with the theater portion of the building designed by Rapp & Rapp of Chicago.

Construction was started by the Mannheimer Brothers who first established a department store at Seven East Third Street in 1871, then named Goodkind & Mannheimer. The business grew exponentially and two more Mannheimer brothers were called in from

[1] Nygaard, Robert C. "The Second Cathedral of St. Paul: History of the Catholic Parish of St. Paul from 1851 to 1857." Dissertation. St. Paul Seminary, 1964.

Chicago to help with the business. Within a few years of their arrival, the business was renamed Mannheimer Brothers. In 1912 the business was one of the leading retail houses in the Northwest.[2] In 1926, Mannheimer's and Schuneman's (another leading retailer in the city) consolidated. In the 1950s Schuneman's was bought out by the Dayton-Hudson Corporation.

The Mannheimer brothers obtained a lease to the property in 1911 from the property owner, the Saint Paul Archdiocese. Construction of a department store began in 1915 but operations were suspended during the war and were further burdened by difficulties in the materials market, consequently preventing the completion of the building. It stood as a steel skeleton against the skyline for three years.

Finally, an anxious Archbishop Ireland phoned real estate entrepreneur and owner of the Saint Paul Saints baseball club John Norton, asking if he could do something to help the Mannheimer family. Norton approached a close friend, William Hamm, and suggested that Hamm assume the lease and finish the building as a "monument to William Hamm."[3] Hamm accepted the idea and hired the R.J. Romer Construction Company to complete the construction along with thirty other (mostly local) subcontractors.[4] The name Hamm was mounted over the front entrance archway in low relief tiles. The Capitol Theater was built as part of the same transaction.

The steel framework was redesigned with provisions for the Capitol Theater and a light court. The original design as a department store called for a large floor plate, but did not allow for any natural light or ventilation to the interior. When the light court was added, the steel beams were left in place, as they were probably too costly to remove.

The American Terra Cotta & Ceramic Company manufactured the pressed terra cotta molds and tiles that sheath the building and adorn the office entry and theater lobbies.

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[2] "Mannheimer's, Schuneman's to be Consolidated," St. Paul Dispatch July 1926.

[3] Hiebert, Gareth. "That's St. Paul's Building History," Sunday Pioneer Press 27 March 1955:1, 8, 10.

[4] "Desired Office Space in the New Hamm Building," St. Paul Dispatch 2 September 1920: 1-25.

The glazed terra cotta incorporates a flourish of Renaissance Revival and classical motifs[5] and was applied to the three street facades. It was (and still is) considered the most distinctive feature of the building. The resulting effect is a sort of architectural skin whose surface is warmed by a rich glow of color and enlivened by the lights and shadows of decorative patterns.

Original tenants of the building as listed in *The Saint Paul Daily News* on September 5, 1920 were: Globe Business College, Caper & Caper (men's furnishings), Stahel & Nygren Tailors, Security Life Insurance Company, Sheridan, Sweeny & Kerst Inc. (Detectives), Bartles Oil Company, O'Connell Supply Company (cash registers), A.W. Lemke Flowers, Raudenbush & Sons Piano Company, A.J. Flandel Optical Shop, Leavitt Music Company, Golden Moon Sweet Shop, Daily Products Association of the Northwest, Guy T. Bisbee Company (lighting fixtures), Joseph A. Rogers Agency, Inc. (Insurance), Cash Register Ex. Company, W.D. Hurley Company Dental Laboratory, Saint Paul Dental Laboratories.

The architectural firms responsible for the physical eloquence of this building are Toltz, King and Day of Saint Paul, and Rapp and Rapp of Chicago. Construction was managed by F.J. Romer Construction Company.

Toltz, King & Day was originally the engineering firm of Max Toltz and Wesley King, and took on design commissions when architect Beaver Wade Day joined the firm in 1919. He was chief architect for the firm and was responsible in collaboration with Roy Childs Jones, for such projects as the Stearns County Court House in St. Cloud and the Ward County Court House in Minot, North Dakota.[6]

C.W. and Geo Rapp designed the building's theater. Rapp and Rapp of Chicago were known for their theater designs. One of their most famous designs was for the Times Square Paramount Theater in New York City with a 3,300 seat capacity. Another of their

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[5] "New Groupment of Up-To-Date Offices and Stores in Hamm Building." St. Paul Dispatch 2 September 1920: 16.

[6] Toltz King & Day file. Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota Library, Minneapolis.

well known works was the Tivoli Theatre in Chicago seating 4,500. In the 1920 issue of *Common Clay* (Vol. 6, number 2) The American Terra Cotta & Ceramic Company pronounced that the Capitol Theater in the Hamm Building was the largest west of New York.

The Romer Construction Company, founded in 1871, erected The Emporium and Golden Rule Stores, Lowry Medical Arts Building, Hamm Brewing Company, Griggs Cooper & Company Building and the old section of the St. Paul Auditorium. In addition to these St. Paul buildings, the company also constructed governmental buildings in Baltimore and Toledo.

At the time of its completion, the Hamm Building was distinguished in many ways. Italian marble and terrazzo, which were used in the lobbies and corridors (now remaining only in the entrance lobby and first floor corridors) gave those spaces a sense of grandeur. The building also provided more office space than any other building in Saint Paul.[7] The offices were almost completely illuminated by unusually large numbers of windows uniformly spaced along the street facades. The pipes and ducts were concealed in the ceilings and shafts, and the office entrance lobby was (and still is) ornately embellished with decorative terra cotta. The lobby features a groin vaulted ceiling clad with Gustavino tile. The building is one of two documented in Minnesota that use this type of tile. It complements the skillful use of terra cotta with rich wood and stone finishes.

Another feature that was uncommon at the time was the full use of the three floors below grade. The first basement was leased by St. Paul Recreation and housed approximately forty bowling alleys and over fifty billiard and pocket billiard tables. The second basement provided rooms for tenant storage, an electrical shop and an indoor skating rink.[8] The third basement, smaller than the other two, housed the exceptionally large mechanical systems that powered the Hamm Building, as well as all other buildings on the block.

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[7] "Hamm Building Edition," The St. Paul Daily News 5 September 1920.

[8] Adams, Stephen. "St. Paul's Capitol Theater: A True Cathedral of Motion Pictures." Theatre Organ Vol. 33 No. 3, May-June 1991, p.18.

Historic Context - Terra Cotta in the United States

In its heyday, the potential beauty of terra cotta, with its plastic form and vibrant colors, was realized and shaped into many of the fetching examples of architecture still gracing today's downtown urban landscapes. Terra cotta, Italian for "baked earth," is a building material and a manner of construction that appealed to the romantic sentiments of Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[9] It was developed as an inexpensive, lightweight and fireproof skin for the emerging technology of metal framed skyscrapers.

Terra cotta, a fire-hardened ceramic material, is very similar to ceramic tile and brick. It is durable, easily cleaned and its surfaces can be remarkably colorful. It is typically hollow, formed by either pressing the clay into a mold or by hollowing out portions of a solid. It may also be extruded through a pug mill or other device. Clay shrinks during firing and terra cotta will expand and contract with exposure to moisture; these are critical factors in the successful design of buildings which use terra cotta. It is commonly glazed with various mineral compositions to produce a wide variety of colors and finishes and to reduce water entry. Unlike tile and brick, architectural terra cotta can be carved and molded into any size and pattern, forming deep bosky relief; when combined with brick and stone, the material gives a building strong character of presence and lasting beauty.[10]

The use of terra cotta in artistic architectural expression has been documented in ancient civilizations including Egypt, Persia, China, India, Greece and Rome. It achieved its greatest popularity and widest use in the United States. Architectural terra cotta was introduced into the United States in the mid-nineteenth century through catalog samples of architectural ornament. It was first manufactured in Worcester, Massachusetts where examples of it still exist on the Massachusetts State Capitol. Its popularity grew in the last decades of the nineteenth century partly because cast iron, previously thought to be fireproof and an inexpensive substitute for stone, demonstrated its inability to withstand

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[9] Peterson, Rick. Terra Cotta in the Twin Cities. A tour in conjunction with Architectural Uses of Terra Cotta. (St. Paul: Northern Clay Center, 1993) 1.

[10] Jones, Ray Childs. "Terra Cotta A Recent Example of Its Use in Building." Common Clay Vol. 2, No. 6 (1920): 4-5.

high temperatures. Terra cotta, in contrast, withstood heat well and was less expensive than cut stone, carved wood or cast metal ornament because the clay pieces had the advantage of being reproduced indefinitely from a single master mold.[11]

The earliest American use of terra cotta was structural, employed primarily from 1870 to 1890, but was used in the designs of architects James Renwick and Richard Upjohn as early as the 1850s. Used most often as an ornamental unit in conjunction with stone or brick, it became an essential unit in a load-bearing wall which required little additional anchoring. Structural terra cotta was associated with Gothic, Romanesque, Queen Anne and other revival movements where it was used for decorative details such as string courses, capitals and window moldings. An early example of the blending of brickwork and terra cotta is the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (John Sturgis & Charles Brigham, 1870-85). An outstanding example of the application of terra cotta to steel construction is the Woolworth Building in New York by the former St. Paul architect Cass Gilbert. In Chicago, the Dearborn at Polk Street (Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz, 1885), includes structural terra cotta along with other materials.[12] Chicago became the first American city to make extensive use of terra cotta after the city's ravenous fire of 1871.

A second American use of terra cotta in the nineteenth century was to fireproof metal frame buildings. Fireproof terra cotta was invented in 1871 and consists of extruded hollow tile-like units.[13] These tiles were used between floor beams, as sheathing of skeletal frames, and inside walls and partitions. Terra cotta subflooring protected each level and helped to prevent the vertical spread of fire. Sheathing protected structural members. It was first employed in the United States Post Office in New York City (1872-1873) and was also used in 1872 in the Kendall Building in Chicago (John Van Osdel,

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[11] Berryman, Nancy. Terra Cotta. (Chicago: Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois, 1984) 2-3.

[12] Berryman 5.

[13] Jandl, Ward, ed. The Technology of Historic American Buildings: Studies of the Materials, Craft Process, and the Mechanization of Building Construction (Washington D.C.: Foundation for Preservation Technology, 1983) 120-121.

demolished 1940).[14] The terra cotta industry expanded enormously with the creation and use of fireproof terra cotta and with the development of steel frame construction in the 1880s and 1890s.

Unglazed terra cotta "lumber" was developed for use as a structural element and as a fireproofing material. The "lumber" was a variation of machine formed hollow blocks. It was made by adding either sawdust or straw to the terra cotta prior to firing. The filler burned off during firing, rendering the blocks lightweight with the ability to saw, nail screw, or otherwise work like wood. This type of terra cotta was fired at a lower temperature than structural terra cotta and was discovered to be not as strong under pressure.[15]

From the 1890s through the 1930s, terra cotta cladding was extremely popular. It sheathed the Hamm Building and the early skyscrapers of the Chicago School of Architecture, the decorative structures of the Art Deco Movement, the commercial buildings on neighborhood Main Streets and opulent movie theaters. It became essential to the designs of prominent architects such as Louis Sullivan of Chicago and Sanford White of Boston, who explored the qualitative potential of this relatively new material.[16] The eloquent qualities of terra cotta were soon realized and a vast selection of colorful glazes was formulated to enrich the raw clay surfaces. The material was soon mass produced, and ornament available from catalogues appears on thousands of small commercial and residential buildings across the country.

A new mass produced form of terra cotta cladding was developed by the Gladding McBean Company of California in the 1920s, known as terra cotta or ceramic veneer. It was much thinner than traditional cladding which consists of three-dimensional hollow units approximately four inches thick: veneer is usually 1 ½ to 2 inches thick. It was utilized primarily in floors, wall surfaces and roofs. The design of veneer improved over

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[14] Berryman 7.

[15] Jandl 120.

[16] Berryman 10, Jandl 122.

time, allowing for better anchoring systems, flashing, weep holes, drip caps, and other provisions for wear extension.[17]

The use, application and manufacture of terra cotta was so rapid that in less than fifty years every large city in America employed the use of terra cotta on its buildings. Even though the beauty, pragmatism and economics of the material caused it to be used at an unprecedented level of skilled artistic production, demand for it declined severely at the onset of the Great Depression and its production halted almost completely after World War II. The emerging slick and austere modern style had no use for a material so closely associated with antiquated ornament.

Durability, low cost of manufacture and installation, strength, ease of cleaning and a variety of shapes and colors made terra cotta one of the most popular building materials in the United States from 1870 to 1929. The Great Depression and the general lack of building activity after 1929 coupled with advances in industrial technology led to permanent decline in the use of terra cotta. In 1920 there were twenty-four companies throughout the U.S. that manufactured terra cotta. Two of the largest were based in Chicago, and one of them, the American Terra Cotta and Ceramic Company, had approximately 450 to 500 orders per year in the mid-1920s, yet in 1933 had only 51 orders.[18] Many impressive examples of terra cotta remain in place on buildings across the country but, unfortunately, very few companies now manufacture the product and little remains of the factories or equipment which once supplied leading American cities with this versatile, attractive material.

The Hamm Building utilized machine pressed terra cotta cladding supplied by the American Terra Cotta & Ceramic Company, one of the largest manufacturers of terra cotta in the central and western United States.[19] Execution of the terra cotta began with hundreds of drawings in pencil and color: working drawings showing the exact details of construction, and charcoal drawings showing the details of ornament at actual size and

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[17] Berryman 10.

[18] Geer, Walter. The Story of Terra Cotta. (New York: T. A, Wright Co., 1920) 159-160.

[19] Jones, Roy Childs 7.

the shape of every different piece of terra cotta in the structure. The next step involved modeling by sculptors of all ornamental detail. Work at the factory then entailed making the molds, glazing and firing the clay blocks. Significantly, the Hamm Building was the guinea pig for use of a new glaze called pulsichrome, which was produced to create a mottled surface. The glaze proved to be very successful and the company became known for its development.[20]

The last stage was fitting the blocks together piece by piece at the building site. The final result is a marvelous example of terra cotta's employment on a Commercial Style building, and is not only significant in Saint Paul, but in the entire state. Upon its completion, the building was commonly referred to as "the pride of the Midwest," and a complete issue of *Common Clay* (Volume 6 number 2) was dedicated to discussion of the building and its use of terra cotta. The building is a testimony to a time when the design and construction of a beautiful building was a matter of civic duty and public pride. Although many fine examples of terra cotta clad buildings exist in the Twin Cities, none displays nineteenth century use of terra cotta so abundantly and elegantly as the Hamm Building.

Minneapolis and Saint Paul are home for over two dozen buildings that display terra cotta on one or more facades, but only two documented buildings in the state have 100 percent terra cotta cladding on all major facades; the Hamm Building and the Henry J. Harm Jewelry Store (Larson & McLaren, 1923) located in Albert Lea. The Harm Jewelry Store was originally a two story building constructed in 1883, but was damaged severely by fire and rebuilt in 1923 which was when the terra cotta and additional two stories were added. It is currently a four story, two bay building with ornamented light blue/gray terra cotta. It features a bracketed cornice and only one facade clad in terra cotta (the building is sandwiched between two others).[21]

A comparable structure to the Hamm Building is the Albert Lea State Bank (Larson & McLaren, 1923) although it is not entirely clad in terra cotta. It is a four story, four by

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[20] Jones, Roy Childs 7.

[21] Roberts, Noreen. "Albert Lea Commercial Historic District Nomination." National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form. On file at the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, St. Paul 1984.

twelve bay building richly ornamented with cream-colored terra cotta and marble. Its symmetric facades are detailed with Classical elements including: cartouches, medallions and stylized pilasters.[22]

Both the Harm Jewelry Store and the Albert Lea State Bank are listed on the National Register as part of the Albert Lea Commercial Historic District, but neither possess the uniqueness or quality of artistry that is lavishly displayed on the Hamm Building. It remains the only structure in the state that was originally and completely clad in terra cotta.

The glazed terra cotta on the three street facades of the Hamm Building was, and still is, the building's most distinctive feature. The pressed terra cotta molds and tiles that sheath the building and adorn the office entry and theater lobbies exemplify the decorative, structural and fireproofing uses of the material.

Conclusion

The Hamm Building is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for its significance as a building embodying distinctive characteristics of a method of construction and for its high artistic values. It is an excellent example of early twentieth century building trends and materials.

As designed, the Hamm Building exemplifies the "skyscraper" mode of construction which became the rule for urban mid-to-high rise buildings, but the type of steel framework employed in the Hamm Building was relatively rare at the time of its construction. This feature, consisting of a structural framework of steel beams and girders, provided for a near total flexibility in interior arrangement of spaces. The cantilevered beam design employed at the building provided a large reduction in steel costs while achieving high capacities at low vibration.

The Hamm Building is the only one in the state that was originally designed for 100 percent use of terra cotta cladding on all of its major facades. Terra cotta was widely used in the state, but not to the extent that it was used on the Hamm Building. Although there are other buildings in the state that employ terra cotta on all major facades, the

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[22]Roberts.

Hamm Building is the most grand in artistry and scale. The use of pressed, highly ornate structural terra cotta tile render this building unique and architecturally distinguished within the commercial district of the downtown area and within the state.

The building also employs the first use of the "pulsichrome" glaze which was developed specifically for the Hamm Building. The mottled glaze contributes greatly to the overall effect of the exterior.

The high artistic values are rendered in the exquisite use of terra cotta in Renaissance Revival and Classical motifs. The rich ornamental motifs were repeated to develop a surface pattern of low relief. The resulting creation is one of a consummation of light and shade texture into which all the individual motifs merge. The building's aesthetic allure creates a sense of grandeur and elegance.

The Hamm Building retains its character and architectural integrity to the present day with only minor alterations. A modest six stories, the building covers half of a large city block, and is a hub of business activity. Anchored on a vital corner, the building helps define and shape Saint Paul's downtown landscape. The building's massing and scale are highly compatible with the surrounding buildings, and it is an essential element in the architectural continuity of lower St. Peter Street facades.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description
The property occupies city Lots 4 - 9 of Block 7, Saint Paul.

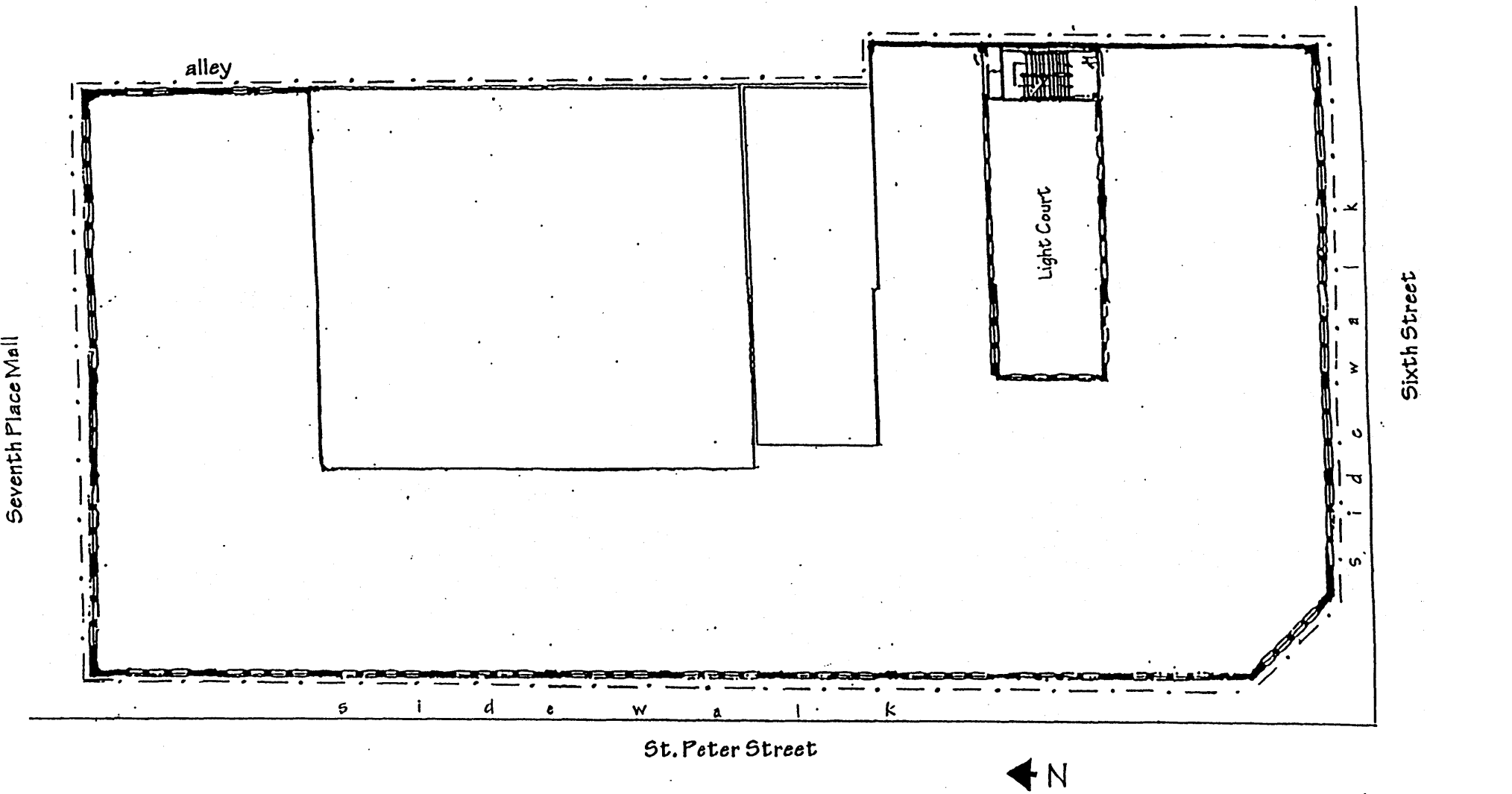
Boundary Justification
The boundaries include the entire city lots that have historically been associated with the property.
Sketch map attached.

THE HAMM BUILDING

408 SAINT PETER STREET

CITY OF SAINT PAUL, RAMSEY COUNTY

MINNESOTA



KEY:

Property boundary

0' 40' 80'

Approximate Scale

1 inch = 40 feet

8/10/96

Map prepared by: Gabrielle Bourgerie

97-499
5/30/97

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Hamm Building
Ramsey County, Minnesota

Section number 11 **Page** 1

Property Owner

The Saint Paul Archdiocese does not own the Hamm Building property. The nominated property is owned by the Markham Company of St. Paul, 408 St. Peter Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102

Signature of Certifying official/Title
Ian R. Stewart, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Minnesota Historical Society

5/21/97
Date