

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received APR 17 1986

date entered MAY 15 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic National American Bank Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 200 Carondelet

N/A not for publication

city, town New Orleans

N/A vicinity of

state LA

code 22

county Orleans Parish

code 071

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	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A 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 First American Bancshares, Inc. Wilmore W. Whitmore, Chief Executive Officer

street & number 200 Carondelet St.

city, town New Orleans

N/A vicinity of

state LA 70130

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Conveyance, City Hall

street & number 1300 Perdido

city, town New Orleans

state LA 70112

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title LA Historic Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1986

federal state county local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge

state LA

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The National American Bank Building (1929) is a twenty-three story steel and limestone Modernistic skyscraper located in the New Orleans central business district. The building has received only minor alterations since construction.

Stylistically speaking, the National American Bank Building consists of two somewhat related elements. First, the overall exterior design represents an abstraction of the commercial Gothic style. This can be seen in the skin of ascending limestone piers which terminate abruptly, without pinnacles or cornice, slightly above the roofline. Secondly, it features considerable Modernistic ornamentation, culminating in a remarkable rooftop water tower.

The previously mentioned piers ascend from a heavy base with a verticality which is broken at three points by minimal setbacks. The base contains the entrance hall, the elevator lobby, and the banking hall. The upper stories contain rental offices. Below the banking hall is the vault area, which has a lobby of its own.

The exterior decorative elements are predominantly of cast concrete. They include:

- (1) The reeded spandrel panels which vertically separate the windows.
- (2) The ornamental volute scroll panels which mark the upper story setbacks.
- (3) The exaggerated reeding and fluting pattern which crowns the upper story.
- (4) The octagonal water tower with its two-stage fluted buttresses, reeded panels, and elaborate finned copper cupola.

The Interiors:

The lobby is clad in marble and features a gold and silver leaf pressed metal ceiling with a repeating chevron and diamond point pattern. The bronze elevator doors are cast with fluting and panels of stylized flower and leaf motifs. Major spaces are separated by bronze filigree panels and doors. The hypostyle banking hall has walnut paneled walls and an ornate rather Jacobean-looking plaster ceiling. The banking hall retains its original bronze check stations, its original chandeliers, and its original decorative steam radiators.

Alterations:

The building is in an excellent state of architectural integrity. Some of the upper offices have been superficially modernized and virtually all the original double hung windows have been replaced, but the bank's major spaces and exterior architectural elements are completely intact. In fact, the building is so well preserved that it even retains its original 1929 air conditioning system, which is thought to be the earliest in the state. (The system is still operable.)

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1929 **Builder/Architect** Architect; Moise Goldstein
 Consulting Engineer; Jens Jensen
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) General Contractor; George T. Glover
 Criterion C

The National American Bank Building is of statewide significance as a rare example, for Louisiana, of progressive commercial architectural trends of the 1920's.

The building takes its place, along with other progressive skyscrapers, as an example of the abstract commercial Gothic style developed by Eliel Saarinen in his second place entry in the Chicago Tribune competition (1922). Of course, the Gothic is stylized to the point where it is almost unrecognizable. But the system of ascending piers and setbacks became a very popular and much admired way of articulating large skyscrapers during the 1920's and early '30's. The technique was popularized in renderings by Hugh Ferriss showing cutaway ribbed masses dramatically bathed in light. This style represented the "state of the art" prior to the onset of the International Style. But despite its national popularity, the technique made little headway in conservative Louisiana. In fact, the National American Bank Building is thought to be the only example in the state.

In addition, the bank building is one of only four Modernistic skyscrapers in the state and the only one in New Orleans. Moreover, its water tower is probably the most elaborately styled feature of a Modernistic commercial building in Louisiana.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Description and Evaluation of American National Bank Building by Mark P. Lowrey, F.A.I.A.
Copy in Register file, LA State Historic Preservation Office.
Christovich, Mary Louise, et al. New Orleans Architecture: The American Sector.
Gretna, La: Pelican Publishing Company, 1972.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property @ 1/4th of an acre
Quadrangle name New Orleans East, LA Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>15</u>	<u>782740</u>	<u>3316920</u>	B	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	D	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
E	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	F	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
G	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	H	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundaries follow property lines, See continuation sheet for legal property description.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

ASSISTED BY OWNER

name/title National Register Staff
 organization Division of Historic Preservation
State of Louisiana date February 1986

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone 504-922-0358

city or town Baton Rouge state LA 70804

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Robert B. DeBlieux*
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date March 27, 1986

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

Allores Byer date 5-15-86
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Nat'l American Bank Bldg.

Item number 10

Page 1

Orleans Parish, LA

Legal Boundary Description:

That portion of ground, together with all the buildings and improvements thereon and all the rights, ways, privileges, servitudes, appurtenances and advantages thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining, situated in the First Municipal District of the City of New Orleans, State of Louisiana, in Square No. 224, bounded by Common, Carondelet, Gravier and St. Charles Streets, being comprised of all of original Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7, designated by a plan of C. A. Hedin, Architect and Civil Engineer, dated March 23, 1850, deposited in the office of H. B. Cenas, late Notary Public; and portion designated by the Letter "A" on a survey of Gilbert & Kelley, Surveyors, dated January 29, 1945, annexed to act before William J. Waguespack, Jr., Notary Public, dated October 15, 1945 and which said parcel of ground commences at the southeast corner of Common and Carondelet Streets, and measures thence 110 feet 2 inches 7 lines front on Carondelet Street on a line running in the direction of Gravier Street; thence at right angles on a line running in the direction of St. Charles Street and parallel to Common Street, a distance of 53 feet, 1 inch, 2 lines; thence at right angles on a line running in the direction of Common Street, a distance of 53 feet, 1 inch, 2 lines; thence at right angles on a line running in the direction of Common Street and parallel to St. Charles Street, a distance of 3 feet to the division line between original Lots 7 and 8; thence at right angles on a line running in the direction of St. Charles Street and parallel to Common Street, a distance of 58 feet, 6 inches 2 lines to the rear line of original Lot 7; thence at right angles on a line running in the direction of Common Street, parallel to St. Charles Street, a distance of 22 feet, 1 inch, 5 lines to the Common Street sideline of original Lot 7; thence at right angles on a line running in the direction of Carondelet Street and parallel to Common Street, a distance of 19 feet 4 inches 3 lines to the St. Charles Street sideline of original Lot 5; thence at right angles on a line running in the direction of Common Street and parallel to Carondelet Street, a distance of 84 feet, 3 inches 5 lines to Common Street; thence at right angles on a line running in the direction of Carondelet Street, a distance of 106 feet, 3 inches 4 lines front on Common Street to the southeast corner of Common and Carondelet Street, being the point of beginning. All as shown on survey of Gandolfo, Kuhn & Associates, C. E. & Surveyors dated August 23, 1962. All as shown on survey made by S. F. Mandle, dated January 21, 1982 except that the angles shown on the survey are not all "right angles." Improvements bear #200 Carondelet Street.