UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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NAME		•		
HISTORIC			_	
	Exchange State I	sank		
AND/OR COMMON	3 First American S	State Rank		
	3 First American	State Bank		
LOCATION				
STREET & NUMBER				
	Northwest corner	r Main Street at F	irstnoffdreet LICATION	
CITY, TOWN			CONGRESSIONAL DISTRI	СТ
	Grand Meadow —	VICINITY OF	2nd	
STATE	Minnesota	CODE 27	county Mower	CODE 099
OT A COTET CA			HOWEL	
CLASSIFICA	IIION			
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESI	ENT USE
DISTRICT	PUBLIC	XOCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	XPRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	X_COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	BOTH	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESID
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	_IN PROCESS	X_YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED		
	BEING CONSIDERED	NO	INDUSTRIAL MILITARY	TRANSPORTAT
OWNER OF	•			
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CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

X_EXCELLENT

__GOOD

__FAIR

__DETERIORATED

__UNEXPOSED

__RUINS

__UNALTERED X_ALTERED

X_ORIGINAL SITE

_MOVED DA1

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The exterior of the First American State Bank (originally Exchange State Bank) is little changed from its initial construction. It still retains the simple cubic mass, the unconventional lack of visible corner supports, and the clear demarkation of the building's banking function from its second-floor offices by use of distinctive window areas--large windows on the first floor, partially opaque to cut glare on the southern exposure, a row of second-story windows above the large ones, forming, in Wm. Gray Purcell's words, an "absolutely unbroken and undisturbed march..." The red brown unglazed terracotta floral ornaments and polychrome glass mosaic framing the sign over the main (east) entrance are intact.

The original interior was long ago altered beyond recognition. It featured an open banking room with a main public space and various office alcoves. In place of the traditional metal tellers' grilles, Purcell and Elmslie persuaded their clients to install a counter atop which glass formed the principal barrier between the public and the tellers. As Purcell wrote years later, the design established "More friendly and human relations" between the bank's employees and customers. A large wood panelled indirect light fixture, which was the major artificial light source in the room, has been restored by the current owners as has the stencilled design pattern once carried around the walls.

The interior has once again undergone substantial renovation under the present owners. No attempt has been made to duplicate the original banking room, but rather to capture the feeling of the spaciousness and lighting which dominated the original room. The north wall has been removed and an addition to the bank on that side contains the banking functions. The original room now includes only a vault, small offices, and a check stand, serving principally as the bank's lobby.

This design reappears in modified form in all of the other small bank buildings executed by Purcell and Elmslie. As David Gebhard wrote, "Many of the firm's later banks were more dramatic and perhaps better integrated designs, but they simply elaborated on the design scheme which had been stated by this small building."

8 SIGNIFICANCE

SPECIFIC DAT	TES 1910	BUILDER/ARCH	HITECT William Gray 1 George Grant 1		
		INVENTION	e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e		
X1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)	
1800-1899	X_COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	_TRANSPORTATION	
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER	
1600-1699	X_ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE	
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE	
PREHISTORIC	_ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION	
PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designed by William Gray Purcell with ornamentation in terra cotta, glass mosaic and wood by George Grant Elmslie. The Exchange State Bank was the first of the firm's small bank buildings to be built. It closely followed, according to David Gebhard, the "basic concept of the earlier Purcell and Feick Atkinson Bank."

The bank represents the first major joint project of Purcell and Elmslie, for the latter joined the firm as a partner while the designs were underway. It stands as an excellent example of the Prairie School style, incorporating as it does the blocky, rectangular elements of the school characteristically personified in brick.

The firm of Purcell and Elmslie was probably one of the most gifted and consistent practitioners of the Prairie School architects. As the first of very few commercial buildings erected by the firm, the Exchange State Bank thus assumes a very high regional and national importance and is clearly a landmark in the history of early 20th century progressive design.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brooks, H. Allen. The Prairie School. Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1970.

Gebhard, David. The Architecture of Purcell and Elmslie. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Minnesota, 1957.

(see continuation sheet)

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