

**STAFF REPORT  
HISTORIC AND CULTURAL LANDMARKS COMMISSION  
CITY OF FORT WORTH, TEXAS**

DATE: April 8, 2024

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 9

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

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<b>REQUEST</b>	Recommendation for Designation as a Historic and Cultural Landmark
<b>APPLICANT/AGENT</b>	John Doubleday
<b>LOCATION</b>	115 W 7 <sup>th</sup> Street
<b>ZONING/ USE (S)</b>	H – Central Business / DUDD Overlay
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION</b>	Individual

**REQUEST**

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The owners request a recommendation to City Council to consider designating the property at 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> Street as a Historic and Cultural Landmark (HC).

**APPLICABLE CITY OF FORT WORTH ZONING ORINANCE PROVISIONS****4.401 Historic Preservation Overlay Districts***(c) Identification and Designation of Cultural Resources*

3. Eligibility for Designation
  - a. Eligibility for HC and HC District Designations.
    - i. Individual Property. An individual property may be designation as HC if it meets the following qualifications:
      1. Two or more of the criteria for significance; and
      2. The necessary criteria for assessing integrity.

**Criteria for Historic Significance**

1. Is distinctive in character, interest or value, and exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, ethnic or historical heritage of the City of Fort Worth, State of Texas or the United States.
2. Is an important example of a particular architectural type or specimen in the City of Fort Worth.
3. Has been identified as the work of an important architect or master builder whose individual work has contributed to the development of Fort Worth.
8. Is designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, State Antiquities Landmark or an American Civil Engineering Landmark, or is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1952, the building at 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> Street was the largest commercial building in downtown Fort Worth by square footage and serviced as the headquarters for the Fort Worth National Bank from 1952 until 1974 (Criterion 1); as an example of Mid-Century Modern style of architecture in Fort Worth (Criterion 2); as an example of work from Preston M. Geren Sr., architect and engineer, whose individual work contributed to the development of Fort Worth (Criterion 3); and in 2022 the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Criterion 8).

In regards to Criterion 1, 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> Street is prominently located in the heart of downtown Fort Worth. The sixteen-story building has a massive presence as it fronts the south side of West 7th Street, stretching the width of the block between Main Street and Houston Street. West 7th Street is an important corridor connecting downtown with west Fort Worth. Since the early decades of the twentieth century, this street has been lined with many of downtown's most significant commercial, social, and financial institutions. Originally established in 1874 under the name Tidball, Van Zandt and Company and assuming the name Fort Worth National Bank in 1884, it became the city's longest operating and largest bank, assisting businesses and residents with their financial needs. At the time the Fort Worth National Bank was celebrating its move into its new home in 1952, it was the largest bank in Fort Worth and the ninety-third largest bank in the country out of a total of 14,700 banks. More than 300 banks in the Southwest carried correspondent accounts with it. The bank remained one of the largest in the state. The period of significance begins in 1952 when the building was completed. It ends in 1972, acknowledging the bank's continued occupation of the building and corresponding to the National Register's fifty-year guideline.

In regards to Criterion 2, 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> Street is an example of a post-World War II Modernist skyscraper. The building is composed of three segments. The front section is a symmetrical fifteen-story slab that fronts West 7th Street. Behind the slab is a three- and four-story irregular rectangular-shaped base that fronts Main and Houston Streets. Historically, both the east and west elevations of the base were three stories tall. In 1961, a fourth floor was added on the base's east elevation and a small four-story addition was built at its southeast corner. Rising behind the center of the slab and setback from the base is a tower that rises to sixteen stories. The sixteenth floor of the tower rises above the roof of the fifteen-story slab and is referred to as the penthouse. The tower gives the building a T-shape above the base. The front slab and base feature rust-colored face brick curtain walls whereas the tower's curtain walls are built of a rust colored common brick. The building is largely unadorned although the grouping and alignment of windows and the contrasting color and texture of the Virginia greenstone spandrels on the front slab and base provide visual interest and are a character-defining feature. As with many mid- to high-rise buildings from the mid-twentieth century, its exterior is organized as a two-part vertical block with parapets that lack a cornice or other distinctive features. Instead, they are capped with stainless steel coping.

In regards to Criterion 3, 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> Street has been identified as the work of an important architect whose individual work has contributed to the development of Fort Worth. The building was designed by Preston M. Geren Sr., Architect and Engineer, a very prominent firm in the city and one that designed numerous buildings for the city's financial institutions between 1950 and 1960. In addition to being a registered architect, he was also a registered engineer. Mr. Geren Sr., was active in professional, civic, and community organizations. Civic work included service as chairman of the City of Fort Worth's Zoning Board of Adjustment from 1940 to 1946. He was a member of the committee which wrote the city's first building code in 1928 and was chairman of the committee that wrote the revised building code which was adopted in 1959. Mr. Geren Sr.

received the City of Fort Worth's Distinguished Service Award in 1951 and 1959, a Distinguished Service Citation from the Texas Construction Council in 1957, and the Loyal Service Award from the Fort Worth Technical Club in 1930. Other notable works from Mr. Geren Sr. are Farrington Field, Colonial Country Club, Landmark Tower, and the Fort Worth Convention Center.

In regards to Criterion 8, 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> Street is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Although it sustained alterations after the period of significance (1952-1972), the Fort Worth National Bank Building retains strong historic and architectural significance. On May 27, 2020, the National Park Service approved a Part 1 application for historic tax credits, the application demonstrated the building was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for Commerce and Criterion C for Architecture at the local level of significance. The City of Fort Worth Historic and Cultural Landmark Commission supported the nomination to the Texas State Board of Review in May 2022, and the National Park Service listed the property on September 9, 2022.

## EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. The designation of a property must not only be shown to have significance under Zoning Ordinance, but it also must have integrity. Within the concept of integrity for example, the National Park Service criteria recognizes seven aspects that define integrity.

### Seven Aspects of Integrity

1. **Location.**
2. **Design.**
3. **Setting.**
4. **Materials.**
5. **Workmanship**
6. **Feeling.**
7. **Association.**

In relation to the Seven Aspects of Integrity:

1. The building is still in its original **location** from when it was constructed in c. 1952.
2. The **design** of the T-shaped 16-story building is generally extant and identifiable. Historically, the base of the building was only three stories high on both the east (Main Street) and west (Houston Street) elevations but in 1961 a fourth floor was added on the east elevation as was a small four-story addition at its south end.
3. The building's original **setting** remains fairly intact with the retention of contemporaneous multi-story commercial buildings. Downtown retains its historic grid pattern with only minor realignments. The streets that border it are still primary circulation corridors in the business district.
4. The property's **materials** appear generally intact. It retains integrity of materials on its exterior, including its brick curtain walls and vertically aligned metal windows that are separated by Virginia greenstone spandrels. Although the exterior of the lower levels of the east, north, and west elevations have been altered with the introduction of new materials in 2011-2012, the texture and color variation between the historic rust-colored brick and greenstone spandrels remain a strong character-defining feature on the upper floors.
5. The building still displays the physical evidence of **workmanship** from 1952 and the 1950s through its brick, Virginia greenstone, and stainless-steel materials.

6. The building retains its **feeling** as a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century high-rise commercial building.
7. The building also retains its **association** because it is still used as an office building and it is surrounded by other historically relevant high-rise buildings that define the W 7<sup>th</sup> Street corridor.

## ***FINDINGS / RECOMMENDATIONS***

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### **Eligibility for Designation**

The structure meets the following City of Fort Worth criteria for historic designation:

- Criterion 1: Is distinctive in character, interest or value, and exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, ethnic or historical heritage of the City of Fort Worth, State of Texas or the United States.
- Criterion 2: Is an important example of a particular architectural type or specimen in the City of Fort Worth.
- Criterion 3: Has been identified as the work of an important architect or master builder whose individual work has contributed to the development of Fort Worth.
- Criterion 8: Is designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, State Antiquities Landmark or an American Civil Engineering Landmark, or is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### **Integrity**

Based on the evidence still extant at the property, the building at 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> Street sufficiently retains six aspects of integrity including location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association.

### **Summary**

Staff have found evidence that the property meets 4 of the 8 Criteria for Designation. The property also retains its original integrity and the identity for which it is significant. This is consistent with the requirements of the ordinance for Historic & Cultural Landmark properties.

Therefore, staff recommends the following motion:

**That the HCLC recommend that City Council consider designating the building at 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> St as a Historic & Cultural Landmark (HC) and that the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* be used when evaluating any proposed future change to the property.**

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS



Figure 1 Aerial Image of subject property circa 2022

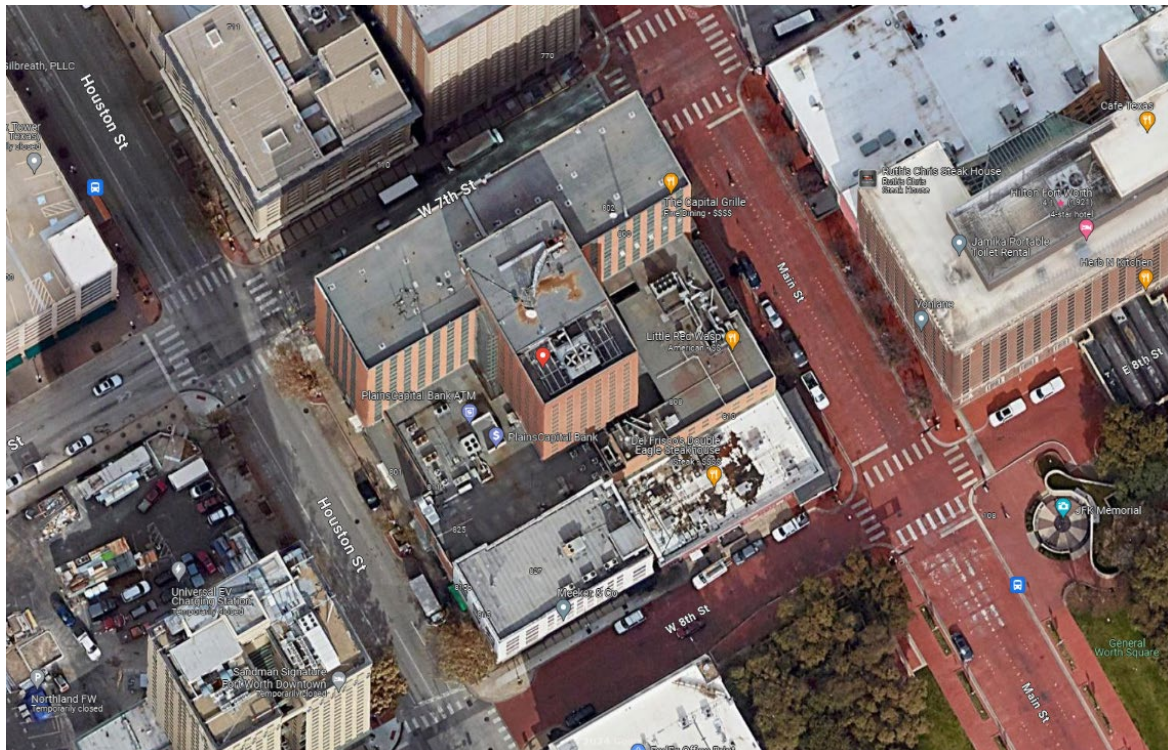


Figure 2 Google Aerial image of 115 W 7th St in 2024



Figure 3 Google Street View of 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> St circa 2007 before the 2011 exterior renovations to the first and second floors. NWC of 7<sup>th</sup> and Houston.



Figure 4 Google Street View of 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> St circa 2022 after the 2011 exterior renovations to the first and second floors. NWC at 7<sup>th</sup> and Houston. Note the awnings, additional storefront windows, and material changes.



Figure 5 Google Street View of 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> St circa 2007 before the 2011 exterior renovations to the first and second floors. NEC at 7<sup>th</sup> and Main St.



Figure 6 Google Street View of 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> St circa 2022 after the 2011 exterior renovations to the first and second floors. NWC at 7<sup>th</sup> and Houston. Note the awnings, Oncor signage, additional storefront windows, material changes, ramp and outdoor patio area for a restaurant tenant.



Figure 7 Aerial Image showing the historic context surrounding 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> St (outlined in blue) and adjacent buildings with designations ranging from Demolition Delay (DD), Historic and Cultural (HC), and Highly Significant and Endangered (HSE).



Figure 8 115 W 7<sup>th</sup> Street in 1952 (outlined in yellow)



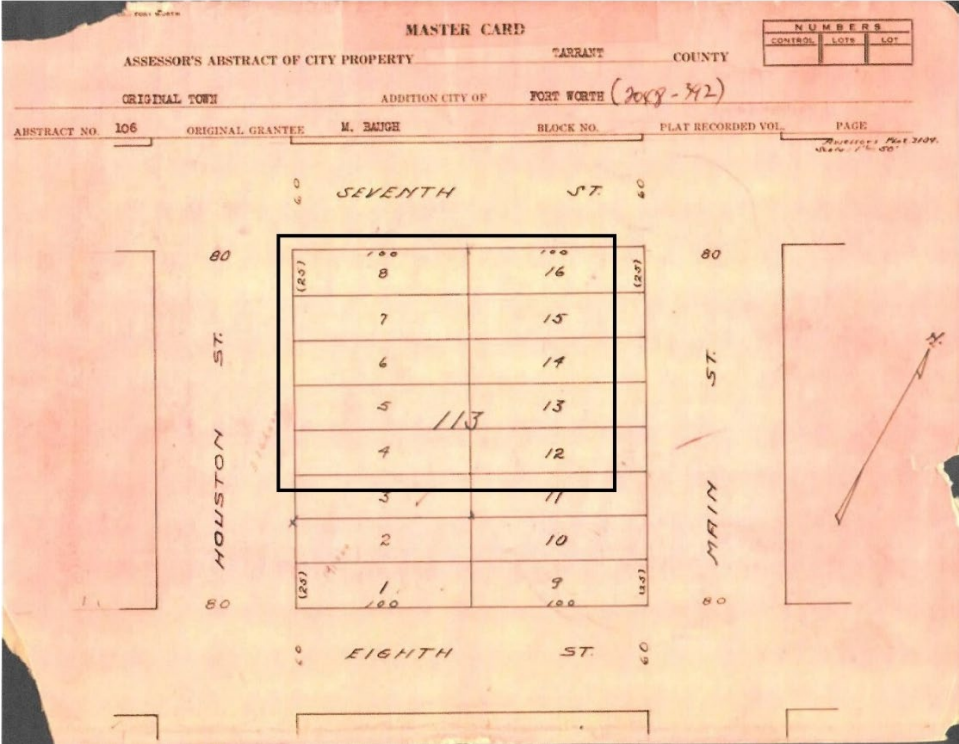


Figure 9 Block 113, Fort Worth Original Town, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas. The Fort Worth National Bank Building occupies Lots 3-8 and 11-16. Deed History Card, Tarrant County Tax Assessor's Office, accessed August 9, 2021 (www.tarrantcounty.com).

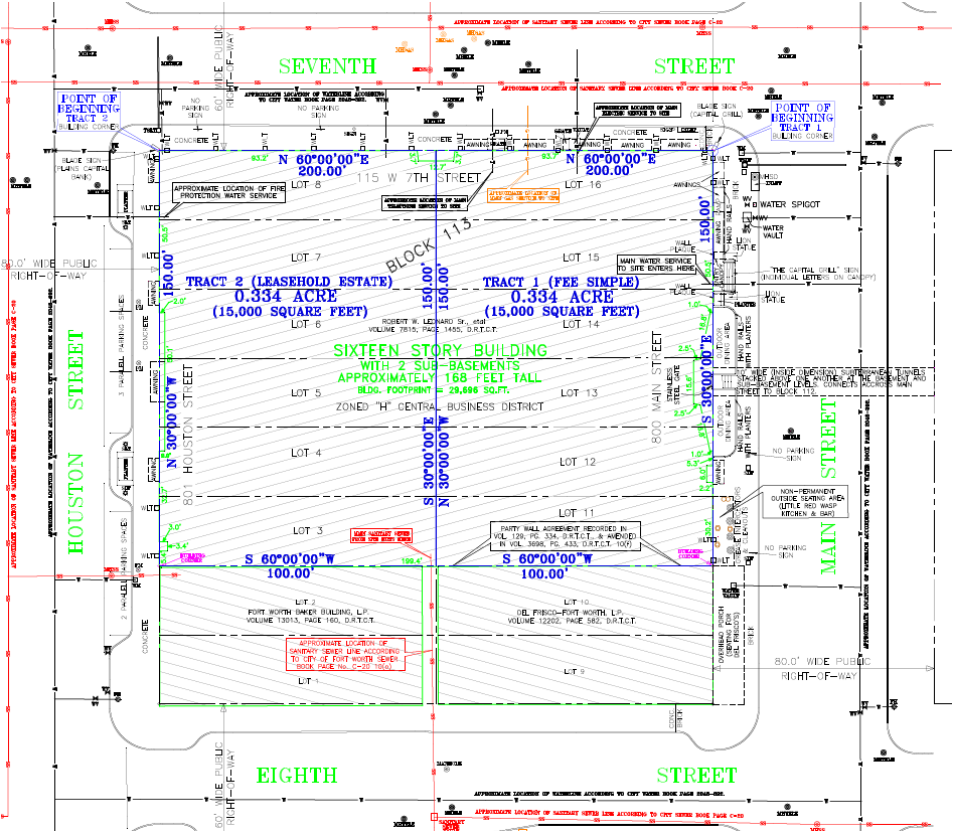


Figure 10 Survey of subject property.

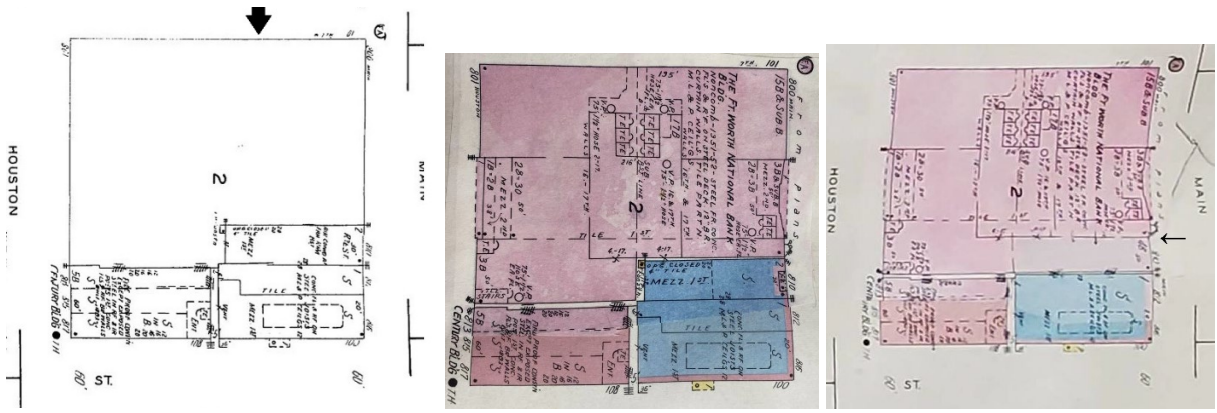


Figure 11 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Co., Fort Worth, 1951, V-1, Bank site from left to right: property cleared of buildings, property with the National Bank building, and property with the addition circa 1961.



Figure 12 Delineation of the three segments of the building: slab, base, and tower. Checkered area of the base indicates the area where a fourth story and a small four-story addition were constructed in 1961. Google Earth Pro image, retrieved October 8, 2021.



Figure 13 View Exterior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. East elevation, looking southwest. Courtesy, W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-3-29. Identifier 20097271.



Figure 14 View Exterior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. East elevation, looking southwest. Courtesy, W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-3-29. Identifier 20097271.



*Figure 15 Fort Worth National Bank, 07/31/1951. H. Warren Smith, steel foreman, and Ed Grimes, inspector, ride the beam as the last piece of steel is hoisted into position atop the new Fort Worth National Bank Building. Courtesy, Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR406-6-457. Identifier 20126776.*



*Figure 16 View Exterior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. East elevation, looking southwest. Courtesy, W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-3-29. Identifier 20097271.*



*Figure 17 View Exterior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. East elevation, looking southwest. Courtesy, W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-3-29. Identifier 20097115.*



*Figure 18 Exterior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. West elevation, Houston Street entrance, looking east. Courtesy, W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-592-13. Identifier 20097114.*



*Figure 19 Two women entering Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1953. North elevation, West 7th Street entrance, looking southeast. Courtesy, W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-53-1-43. Identifier 20098421.*



*Figure 20 Interior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. Banking room, first floor, looking west. Courtesy, W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-592-11. Identifier 20096915.*



*Figure 21 Interior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. Banking room, stairs at west (Houston Street) entrance, first floor, looking southwest. Courtesy, W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-592-9. Identifier 20096925.*



*Figure 22 Interior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. Elevator lobby off of West 7th Street entrance, looking west/northwest. Courtesy, W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-592-10. Identifier 20096914.*

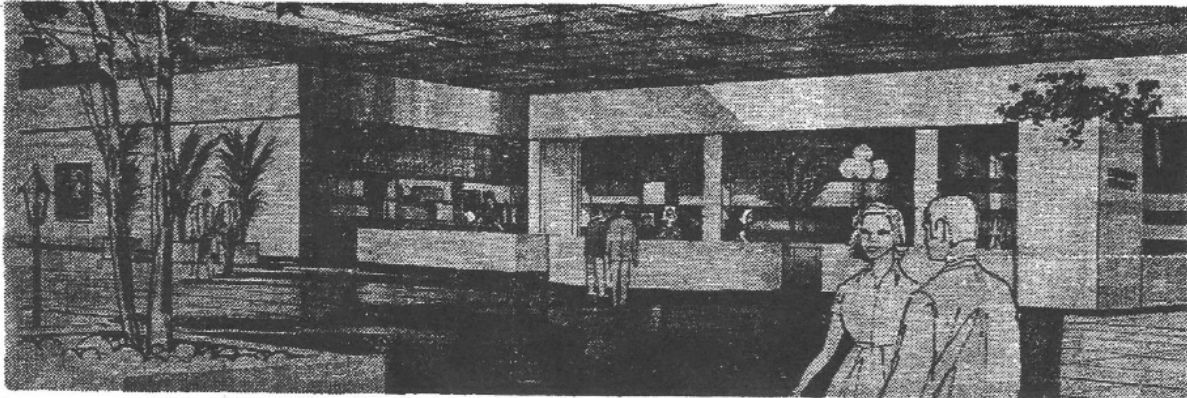


Figure 23 1974 proposed renovation to banking room when Texas Electric Service Company became the primary tenant. Fort Worth Star-Telegram, April 28, 1974, E-9.

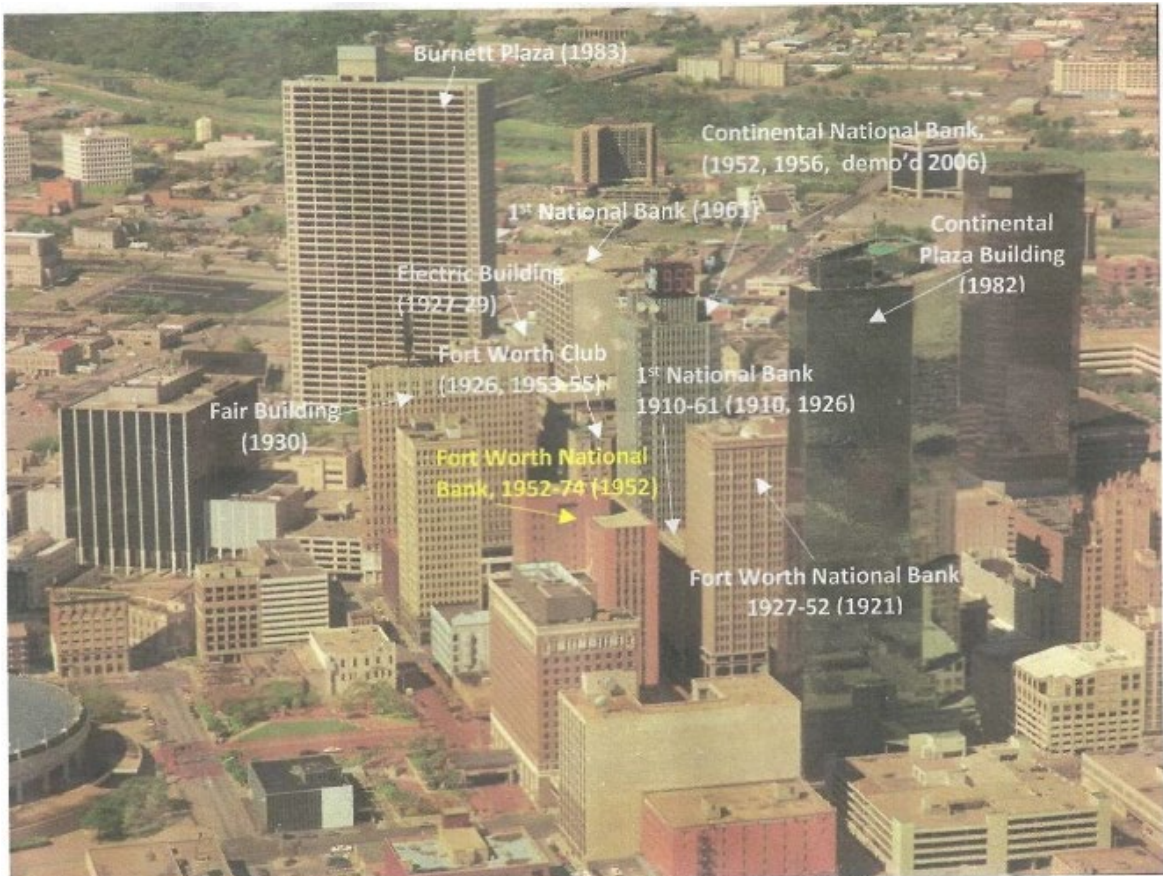


Figure 24 Buildings along West 7th Street, 1988. Dates of construction in parentheses; other inclusive dates are dates of occupation. Courtesy, W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-88-1-53. Identifier 10002155.





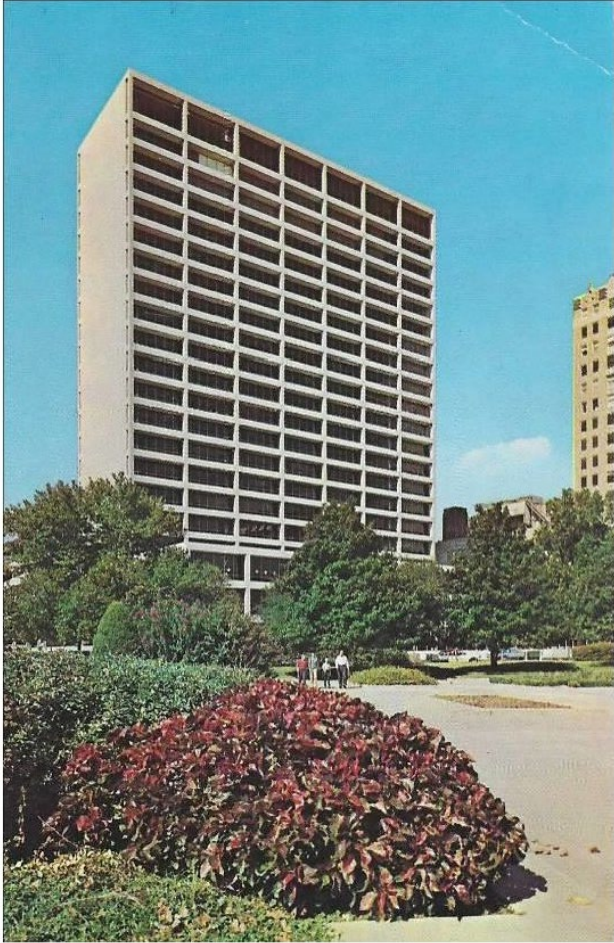
*Figure 25 Photo of Preston M. Geren Sr., used in the Texas A&M University College of Architecture Newsletter to name the school's 300-seat auditorium in his honor for his contributions to the school in 2006.*



*Figure 26 Continental National Bank Building, West 7th and Houston Streets. Designed by Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer (1952, 1956-57, demolished 2006). View looking north up Houston Street. Fort Worth National Bank Building is in the background, right side of the photograph. Strykers' Western Fotocolor, Artist Photographers, Fort Worth, Texas (authors' collection).*



*Figure 27 Rendering, c. 1957 of Mutual Savings and Loan Building, West 8th and Throckmorton Streets. Designed by Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer (1958, demolished 1998). View looking northeast. Courtesy, W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-57-224-8. Identifier 20101524.*



*Figure 28 Postcard, First National Bank, 500 W.7th Street, 1960, Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, with Preston M. Geren, associate architect. Strykers' Western Fotocolor, Artist Photographers, Fort Worth, Texas (authors' collection).*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Fort Worth National Bank
Other name/site number: Electric Service Building; Oncor Building; 115 W. 7th
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 115 W. 7th Street
City or town: Fort Worth State: Texas County: Tarrant
Not for publication: [ ] Vicinity: [ ]

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
[n] 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 [x] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
[ ] national [ ] statewide [x] local

Applicable National Register Criteria: [x] A [ ] B [x] C [ ] D

Signature of certifying official / Title: Mark Wolfe, State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: 8/8/22
Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting or other official
Date
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
[ ] entered in the National Register
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register
[ ] other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Fort Worth National Bank, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

**Category of Property**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions:** COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution; business

**Current Functions:** COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution; business; restaurant

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification:** MODERN MOVEMENT

**Principal Exterior Materials:** Brick, Virginia greenstone, stainless steel

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 7-7 through 7-13)

Fort Worth National Bank, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
		<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.
		<input type="checkbox"/>	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations:** NA

**Areas of Significance:** Commerce, Architecture (*local level*)

**Period of Significance:** 1952-1972

**Significant Dates:** 1952

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): NA

**Architect/Builder:** Geren, Preston M. (Architect and Engineer); Shreve, Lamb and Harmon (consulting architect)

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 8-14 through 8-31)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheets 9-32 through 9-34)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. *Part 1 approved 5-27-2020*
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- 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 (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government (Fort Worth National Bank Collection, Genealogy, Local History and Archives Unit, Fort Worth Public Library)
- University (Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington)
- Other -- Specify Repository:

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): NA

Fort Worth National Bank, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreege of Property:** less than one acre

### Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 32.752213° Longitude: -97.330107°

**Verbal Boundary Description:** See Section 10, page 35

**Boundary Justification:** See Section 10, page 36

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Susan Allen Kline and Steven C. Kline, consultants, for  
Organization: Benbrooke Electric Partners LLC  
Street & number: 115 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1323  
City or Town: Fort Worth State: TX Zip Code: 76102-7013  
Email: Lisa@PretiumPM.com  
Telephone: 817-870-1316  
Date: n October 27, 2021

## Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheet Map-37 through Map-43)

**Additional items** (see continuation sheets Figure-44 through Figure-74)

**Photographs** (see continuation sheet Photo-75 through Photo-94)

Fort Worth National Bank, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

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**Photographs**

Name of Property: Fort Worth National Bank  
City or Vicinity: Fort Worth  
County, State: Tarrant, Texas  
Photographer: Steven C. Kline and Susan Allen Kline  
Date Photographed: September 10, 2021

Photo 1: East and north elevations; looking west.

Photo 2: North and west elevations; looking east.

Photo 3: Entrance, north elevation; looking south.

Photo 4: North elevation; looking southwest.

Photo 5: North and west elevations; looking southeast.

Photo 6: North elevation above entrance; looking south.

Photo 7: East and north elevations; looking southwest.

Photo 8: East entrance; looking west.

Photo 9: South and east elevations; looking northwest.

Photo 10: South elevations of tower, base, and slab; looking north.

Photo 11: West and south elevations, slab, base, and tower; looking northeast.

Photo 12: West elevation entrance; looking northeast.

Photo 13: Roof of slab and east and north elevations of penthouse; looking southwest.

Photo 14: Original boiler (left), sub-basement; looking west.

Photo 15: Night depository, West 7<sup>th</sup> Street vestibule, looking east.

Photo 16: Stainless steel column and Maryland Verde Antique stone in first floor elevator lobby; looking northeast.

Photo 17: First floor elevator lobby; looking south.

Photo 18: First floor interior, Capital Grill Restaurant (non-historic); looking south.

Photo 19: First floor interior, PlainsCapital Bank (non-historic); looking west.

Photo 20: Second floor elevator lobby; looking south.

Photo 21: Second floor historic corridor; looking east.



Fort Worth National Bank, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

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Photo 22: Second floor, non-historic finishes; looking southwest.

Photo 23: Fourth floor, west stairs; looking south.

Photo 24: Fourth floor, women's restroom; looking south.

Photo 25: Fourth floor lightwell; looking west.

Photo 26: Tenth floor elevator lobby, historic finishes, looking south.

Photo 27: Tenth floor historic corridor; looking east.

Photo 28: Tenth floor, typical heating/air conditioning unit below historic window; looking southwest.

Photo 29: Sixteenth floor penthouse; looking southwest.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Fort Worth National Bank, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

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## Narrative Description<sup>1</sup>

When completed in 1952, the sixteen-story Fort Worth National Bank Building was downtown Fort Worth's largest office building, although not its tallest. It is situated along three of downtown's most prominent streets. The free-standing building is an example of a post-World War II Modernist skyscraper. Its front (north) elevation, organized as a two-part vertical block, has a symmetrical facade that is a fifteen-story, 200-foot-long slab overlooking West 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Its centered entrance with curved stainless-steel canopy provides a focal point. South of the slab is a four- and three-story base on the Main and Houston Street elevations to the east and west, respectively. Centered behind the front slab and setback from the base is an intersecting tower that extends 67 feet south, giving the upper floors of the building a T-shaped form. A penthouse on the sixteenth floor of the tower rises above the fifteenth floor of the front slab. The steel-framed building was constructed with concrete floors and roof on top of steel decks. Twelve-inch-thick curtain walls are faced with a rust-colored brick. The unadorned brick walls separate vertically aligned flush metal windows. The front slab's windows and those of the east and west elevations of the base are tied together vertically by spandrels of Virginia greenstone. In 1961, a fourth floor and a four-story addition were constructed on the east elevation's base that continued the repeating pattern of rust-colored brick walls and vertically aligned metal windows and greenstone spandrels. Exterior renovations on the first two floors in 2011-2012 introduced new materials and minor changes to window and door openings. Inside the building, historic materials remain in most elevator lobbies and some corridors. The first floor and office spaces on upper floors have been altered to meet tenant needs. Despite these changes, the Fort Worth National Bank Building retains sufficient integrity to convey its architectural and historic significance.

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## Setting

The Fort Worth National Bank Building is prominently located in the heart of downtown Fort Worth. The sixteen-story building has a massive presence as it fronts the south side of West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, stretching the width of the block between Main Street and Houston Street. Its three- and four-story base has an irregular rectangular shape that extends approximately 100 feet to the south, giving the building a footprint that fills the northern three-quarters of the block. The four-story Century Building, a two-part commercial block at 108 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street (1905, 1950) is located at the southwest corner of the block. Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steakhouse, a two-story, two-part commercial block at 812 Main Street (1905, altered), is located at the southeast corner of the block. Landscaping is limited to three street trees along the Main Street elevation and two street trees in low planter boxes along the Houston Street elevation. The road surfaces of 7<sup>th</sup> Street on the north and Houston Street on the west are topped with asphalt; Main Street on the east and West 8<sup>th</sup> Street on the south are topped with red brick. Traffic on three of the streets surrounding the building are one-way; West 7<sup>th</sup> Street is one-way eastbound, West 8<sup>th</sup> Street is one-way westbound, and Houston Street is one-way southbound. Traffic on Main Street is north- and southbound.

West 7<sup>th</sup> Street is an important corridor connecting downtown with west Fort Worth. Since the early decades of the twentieth century, this street has been lined with many of downtown's most significant commercial, social, and financial institutions, although some do not have West 7<sup>th</sup> Street addresses (Figure 28). The buildings range in height from four- to forty-stories and were designed by regionally known architectural firms, most of which were from Fort Worth, and one nationally-known firm (Figure 32). Starting at Main Street and traveling west, they include the former Continental Plaza Building, 777 Main Street, (1982); the Farmers and Mechanics/Fort Worth National Bank Building, 714 Main Street (1921, NR 2012); First National Bank Building, 711 Houston Street (1910, 1926, NR 2009); the Fort Worth Club Building, 306 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street (1926, 1953-55), the Fair Building, 307 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street (1930, NR 2020); Oil and Gas Building, 309 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street (1952); Fort Worth Star-Telegram Building, 400 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street (1920 with later additions); the Electric Building, 410 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, (1927-29, NR 1995); Neil P. Anderson Building, 411 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street (1921, NR 1978); First

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<sup>1</sup> Much of downtown Fort Worth's grid is not oriented to true north. However, the building's elevations are identified as north, east, west, and south for ease of description in this nomination.

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National Bank Building, 500 W. 7th Street (1961), and Burnett Plaza, 801 Cherry Street (1983). Other significant buildings in close proximity to the Fort Worth National Bank Building include the Hotel Texas, 815 Main Street (1921, NR 1979), W. T. Waggoner Building, 810 Houston Street (1919, NR 1979), Tarrant County Convention Center, 1101 Houston Street (1968 with later alterations), the old Fort Worth Club Building, 610 Main Street (1916, 2001, NR 1998), Blackstone Hotel, 601 Main Street (1929, NR 1984), and the Sinclair Building, 512 Main Street (1930, NR 1992). Also nearby is General Worth Square, a landscaped plaza just south of the Hotel Texas that was the location of President John F. Kennedy's last public speech before he was assassinated in Dallas on November 22, 1963.

### General Exterior Description

Although the Fort Worth National Bank Building is not the tallest in downtown, it has a commanding presence as its primary (north) elevation stretches across the south side of the 100 block of West 7<sup>th</sup> Street between Main and Houston Streets. The building is composed of three segments. The front section is a symmetrical fifteen-story slab that fronts West 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Behind the slab is a three- and four-story irregular rectangular-shaped base that fronts Main and Houston Streets. Historically, both the east and west elevations of the base were three stories tall. In 1961, a fourth floor was added on the base's east elevation and a small four-story addition was built at its southeast corner. Rising behind the center of the slab and setback from the base is a tower that rises to sixteen stories. The sixteenth floor of the tower rises above the roof of the fifteen-story slab and is referred to as the penthouse. The tower gives the building a T-shape above the base (**Map 8**).

The front slab and base feature rust-colored face brick curtain walls whereas the tower's curtain walls are built of a rust-colored common brick. The building is largely unadorned although the grouping and alignment of windows and the contrasting color and texture of the Virginia greenstone spandrels on the front slab and base provide visual interest and are a character-defining feature. As with many mid- to high-rise buildings from the mid-twentieth century, its exterior is organized as a two-part vertical block with parapets that lack a cornice or other distinctive features. Instead, they are capped with stainless steel coping.

Each of the three sections—slab, base, and tower—are described in greater detail below.

### Front slab

#### *North (front) Elevation*

The building's north elevation fronts West 7<sup>th</sup> Street is approximately 200 feet in length and is fifteen stories high (**Photos 1-7**). It has a symmetrical arrangement of windows and a centered entrance. The west end of the building sits at a slightly higher grade than the east end. A base of non-original black granite runs beneath the ground floor's windows. The original brick wall between the granite base up to the bottom of the second story windows has been replaced with creamy-colored rectangular-shaped thin set cast stone with a flat profile. These two materials were added in 2011-2012. The first two floors are symmetrically divided into eleven bays. The center (sixth) bay contains the entrance which is composed of four storefront style doors that provide access to a vestibule. Above the doors are three large, fixed windows. Above these windows is a slightly projecting flat curved canopy of stainless steel. Spandrels of Virginia greenstone separate the canopy from a ribbon of three 1/1 double hung metal-framed windows on the second story. This grouping of doors and windows are surrounded by a stainless-steel frame (**Photos 3-4, 6**). A thin blade sign with the name "Oncor" is centered between the canopy and the top of the frame. Between the top of the frame and the third-floor windows are three flagpoles. The five bays flanking the entrance each have a ribbon of three fixed ground floor windows above the black granite base. Above each of these windows are louvered vents that are linked by a greenstone spandrel to a ribbon of three 1/1 double hung metal windows on the second floor. Each of these groupings are surrounded by a green stainless-steel

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frame. The first-floor window groupings to the left (or east) of the entrance each have a black awning below the louvered vents.

Windows on the third through fifteen floors are flush 1/1 double hung metal windows. They are aligned so that there are two windows above each of the lower-story bays (**Photos 4-6**). The windows are separated horizontally by the historic rust-colored face brick walls and linked vertically by the greenstone spandrels. This creates a repeating pattern of vertical strips of rust and green across the façade that emphasizes this elevation's width and height.

#### *East and West Elevations*

The east and west elevations of the slab are approximately 58 feet wide. They share features similar to those of the north elevation (**Figures 3-4**) and also were altered in 2011-2012. The similar features include the non-historic black granite base and wide band of creamy-colored rectangular-shaped thin set cast stone and the repeating pattern of the historic rust-colored brick and greenstone vertical spandrels above the first floor. At the center of each elevation is a ribbon of three fixed windows with transoms on the first floor which are linked by greenstone spandrels to a ribbon of three flush 1/1 metal double hung windows on the second story. This grouping of windows is framed by a stainless-steel surround. However, the fixed windows have been lengthened. On the east (Main Street) elevation, the ribbon windows are flanked on the right by two fixed windows with transoms. These window openings have also been lengthened. All of these windows have a black awning above them. Two window openings to the left of the ribbon windows were enlarged to create a single recessed entrance. Above the entrance is a flat stainless-steel canopy. Stairs have been added in front of the entrance and an accessible ramp extends down from the entrance in front of the windows (**Photo 7**). The first-floor windows on the west (Houston Street) elevation consist of the ribbon of three fixed window in the center flanked by two single windows on either side. All have been converted to full-length windows that extend to the ground. The two outer openings each have a flat stainless-steel canopy between the transom and the window as these windows could be converted to entrances (**Photo 5**). A blade sign for the Capital Grille Restaurant is located at the northeast corner of the building between the second and third floor windows (**Photo 1**). A blade sign for PlainsCapital Bank is located at the northwest corner of the building between the second and third floor windows (**Photo 5**).

#### *South Elevation*

The south elevation of the slab begins above the base segment and is intersected at the center by the sixteen-story tower (**Figure 5**). Each segment flanking the tower consists of five bays with single flush 1/1 metal double hung windows on each floor. The windows are separated horizontally by bands of the rust-colored face brick and linked vertically by Virginia greenstone spandrels. This arrangement continues the alternating vertical bands of rust and green present on the slab's north, east, and west elevations (**Photos 9-12**).

#### **Base**

Historically, the base was only three stories high on both the east (Main Street) and west (Houston Street) elevations (**Figures 3-4, 16, 18 and 20**). In 1961, a fourth floor was added on the east elevation as was a small four-story addition at its south end. Both elevations continue the pattern of rust-colored brick walls alternating with vertically aligned windows linked together by Virginia greenstone spandrels. Each elevation is described in more detail below.

#### *East Elevation*

This elevation has a recessed entrance that is flanked by wide canted walls that rise to the second story. These walls are sheathed with the same creamy-colored rectangular-shaped thin set cast stone found on the front slab. The cast stone replaced the original granite panels during the 2011-2012 exterior renovations. Immediately above the entrance is a small

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curved flat canopy. Above the canopy is a glass grid within metal frames that rises to the second story. The canted walls and glass grid terminate below the large historic stainless steel flat canopy. Above the canopy are six vertical strips of Virginia greenstone panels and spandrels. The center two strips each have single flush 1/1 double hung metal windows at the third and fourth floors. In front of this area is an elevated outdoor dining area with glass and steel guardrails at its perimeter. South of the outdoor dining area is the original service entrance which now provides access to the Little Red Wasp restaurant. The opening has been elongated to include a transom. Below the transom is a flat metal canopy. The wall area around this entrance includes the black granite base and thin set cast stone. South of this area is the 1961 addition. At its center is a ribbon of fixed flush windows on the first floor surmounted by an awning. On the second floor is a ribbon of three flush 1/1 double hung metal windows. The first and second floor windows are linked by spandrels of greenstone and framed by a stainless-steel surround. The third and fourth floors each have a ribbon of three flush 1/1 double hung metal windows that are also linked by greenstone spandrels. The black granite base and thin set cast stone that cover the wall up to the level of the second-floor windows were added in 2011-2012 (**Photos 7-9**).

*West Elevation*

This elevation of the base has a truncated reversed L-shape. A historic stainless steel canopy level with the top of the second story windows fills the space between the legs of the "L" (**Figure 4**). The canopy tops a large grid of glass panels set in metal frames that surrounds a wall of thin set cast stone with black granite base. At the center of this wall is an entrance. Above the entrance is a flat metal canopy (**Photo 12**).

Setback from the large canopy is the wall of the third story composed of alternating vertical strips of brick and greenstone. Each strip of greenstone has a single flush 1/1 double hung metal window. South of this section is the end of the bottom leg of the "L." The wall surface below the second story window has the black granite base and the thin set cast stone above it. A new entrance was added near the north end of this section. It accesses a Subway sandwich shop. Between the transom and door is a flat metal canopy. To the right of this entrance is a full-height fixed window with transom. Historically, there was another fixed window with transom to the right, but it has been replaced with a large, recessed service entrance. To its right is an original service entrance. A flat metal canopy covers both. The wall above the first floor continues with the alternating pattern of rust-colored face brick and vertical strips of greenstone spandrels. At the center of the second and third floors are two vertically aligned flush 1/1 double hung metal windows within the strip of greenstone spandrels (the spandrel below the right window of the second floor has been removed and infilled with the thin set cast stone) (**Photos 11-12**).

*South Elevation*

The south elevation is constructed of rust-colored common brick. Flush metal double hung 3/3 windows are located toward the east end of the third and fourth floors. This location corresponds to the 1961 addition. The lack of windows elsewhere on this elevation is due to its proximity to the two buildings south of it (**Photos 9-10**).

**Tower**

The tower is located behind the center of the slab and is setback from the base (**Photos 2 and 9-12, Figures 3-5**). It rises from the fourth to the sixteenth floor. The east and west elevations are approximately 67 feet in length. The south elevation and the two floors of the north elevation above the slab's roof are approximately 58 feet wide. The tower's curtain walls are constructed of a rust-colored common brick that has a similar hue as the slab and base's face brick. It lacks the greenstone spandrels found on the slab and base. It has flush 3/3 double hung metal windows instead of the 1/1 metal windows found on the slab and the east and west elevations of the base. There are seven windows on each floor of the east and west elevations that are vertically aligned with the exception that the sixteenth floor has nine windows, two of which are above the slab's roof. There are five vertically aligned windows on each floor of the tower's south elevation

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**(Photos 9-10, Figure 5).** The north elevation of the sixteenth floor has two steel doors that provide access to the roof of the fifteen-story slab. Large metal vents are located above the sixteenth-floor windows on the east and west elevations. A metal fire escape is located at the north end of the tower's west elevation between the fourth and sixteenth floors **(Photos 11-12).**

### Roof

The roofs of the base, slab, and tower have a concrete deck topped with a rolled asphalt membrane. They are surrounded by a brick parapet capped with stainless steel coping. Telecommunication and HVAC equipment are located on the base and slab's roof. A flagpole is located near the center of the slab's north parapet. The penthouse's roof also has telecommunications and HVAC equipment on it **(Photos 11 and 13, Figure 7).**

### Interior

The building contains a basement and sub-basement. The basement retains its original vault. The sub-basement contains mechanical equipment including an original boiler and chiller that are still in use **(Photo 14 and Figure 8).** The public portions of the building begin on the first floor. The West 7<sup>th</sup> Street entrance accesses a small vestibule. The walls are covered with polished Maryland Verde Antique stone. This emerald green stone has an appearance similar to marble but is desirable for its strength. Light green veins spread across the stone. On the vestibule's east wall is a round Mosler stainless steel night deposit safe **(Photo 15).** Past the vestibule is the elevator lobby that continues the use of the Maryland Verde Antique stone on the walls. Two stainless steel columns flanking the entrance and curved walls give the space a distinctive appearance. **(Photo 16 and Figure 26).** The floor covering consists of large squares of buff colored French Hauteville marble (some squares may have been replaced over the years). The lobby contains six elevators: three on the east wall and three on the west wall. The floor indicators appear to be historic. The ceiling's fixtures are not original **(Photo 17).**

Extensive renovations were undertaken in other parts of the first floor in 2011-2012 to accommodate new retail uses. The major tenant of the building's east (Main Street) elevation is the Capital Grille, an upscale steakhouse. It features a main dining room, a bar with small dining area, and three private dining rooms, none of which have historic finishes. Mahogany paneling and commissioned portraits of prominent Fort Worthians adorn the walls **(Photo 18).** South of the Capital Grille is a casual dining restaurant, Little Red Wasp. The finish on the perimeter walls has been removed to expose the original clay tile. Large rectangular concrete columns in the center of the space and the concrete floor are also exposed. The main entrance on the west (Houston Street) elevation has a small vestibule that provides access to tenant space occupied by PlainsCapital Bank. This space contains no historic finishes. Stairs near the west entrance mark the location of stairs that provided access to the former banking room **(see Figures 24 and 25 for historic images).** The width of the stairs has been narrowed to accommodate an accessibility ramp and the stair's original French Hauteville marble has been replaced with tile **(Photo 19).** A separate street entrance further south provides access to a Subway store that features the franchise's usual finishes.

The renovations in 2011-2012 also included the disabling of two service elevators south of the Main Street entrance and one service elevator south of the Houston Street entrance. The elevator doors and shafts were removed between the first and second floors. A full-length window and transom were added at the location of the elevator south of the Houston Street entrance.

Floors two through fifteen contain office space. These floors have a lobby with six elevators. Most appear to contain the original Italian Botticino marble walls, and many appear to retain their original acoustical tile and two continuous rows of fluorescent lights on the ceiling **(Photos 20 and 26).** Numerous lobbies have paired slab wood doors with a narrow light at their north and/or south ends. The floors are carpeted. North of the elevator lobbies is an east/west double-loaded

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corridor that runs down the center of the fifteen-story slab (**Photos 21 and 27**). On the south side of the east half of the corridor is a mail chute, stair shaft, and men's restroom. The walls of the stair shaft are constructed of clay tile that is painted. The stairs are steel and have simple tubular metal railings and balustrade. The south side of the west half of the corridor contains another stair shaft (**Photo 23**) and women's restroom (**Photo 24**). Numerous restrooms appear to retain original tile walls, stall partitions, and fixtures. Many of the corridors also contain original acoustical ceiling tiles and continuous fluorescent light fixtures (**Photos 21 and 27**). Some entrances to offices have been altered as has the configuration of office spaces to meet tenant needs over the years. Original heating/air conditioning units remain under original metal double hung windows in the office spaces (**Photo 28**). The interior of the tower (south of the elevator lobbies on the fourth to the fifteenth floor) has a variety of configurations that include individual office spaces, large open areas, and conference suites (**Figures 11-12**). A unique feature of the fourth floor is a lightwell that separates the 1952 slab from the fourth floor that was added on top of the three-story base of the east elevation in 1961. The east and north walls of the light well are composed of multi-window-wall grids (**Photo 25**). The walls of the office space south of the light well are covered with dark stained wood paneling as this area contained executive offices.

The sixteenth floor (the penthouse) is an open shell with exposed concrete floor and steel columns, beams, and ceiling deck. The perimeter walls are plastered (**Photo 29**). Metal stairs on the north end access the fifteenth floor below and the mechanical room above the sixteenth floor. Access to the roof deck of the fifteen-story slab is through two steel doors on the north wall (**Photo 13**).

### Alterations

Few exterior alterations occurred prior to 2011 except for the removal of signage for the Fort Worth National Bank after it vacated the building in 1974 and the addition of signage for the new tenant. In 2011-2012, the exterior's first two floors were altered to provide an updated appearance. The alterations included the removal of all windows and storefronts on the ground level except for the West 7<sup>th</sup> Street entrance which was retained. The stainless-steel surrounds around the window groupings were also retained. The Missouri red granite base below the first-floor windows on the north, east, and west elevations and on the canted walls flanking the east entrance was removed. The base material was replaced with black granite below the first-floor windows. Creamy-colored rectangular-shaped thin set cast stone with a flat profile was installed above the black granite to a height even with the bottom of the second-story windows. The cast stone was also added to the canted walls flanking the east entrance and the wall surrounding the west entrance. Both entrances previously served as public entrances to the bank, but each now only access a single tenant. The outdoor dining area adjacent to the east entrance replaced stairs that originally provided access to the entrance to the banking room. An accessibility ramp was also added on the east elevation. Angular galvanized and painted steel lighting supports were placed between the window groupings of the first-floor windows on the north elevation and elsewhere on the east and west elevations. They are the same color as the mullions between the windows on the first and second floor. The flat metal awnings above first floor entrances and some windows were also added in 2011-2012.

A major interior alteration occurred in 1974 in what was historically the banking room that was located across nearly the full width of the south end of the first floor. Originally, the hall had a two-story volume with full height stainless steel columns like those in the first-floor elevator lobby. A narrow skybridge at the second **Figure 27**-floor level spanned the width of the banking room near the west entrance (**Figure 24**). When Fort Worth National Bank vacated the building in 1974, a second floor was added in the banking room, eliminating the space's high open volume and the skybridge (). The first floor of the banking room became a customer service area for Texas Electric Service Company. Further alterations occurred in 2011-2012 when the customer service area was divided into tenant space for three restaurants and a bank as previously described.

Upper floors have been modified to accommodate tenant needs over the decades, but intact elevator lobbies remain as do many of the historic corridors and restrooms.

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## **Integrity**

Although it sustained alterations after the period of significance (1952-1972), the Fort Worth National Bank Building retains strong historic and architectural significance. On May 27, 2020, the National Park Service approved a Part 1 application for historic tax credits. The application demonstrated the building was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for Commerce and Criterion C for Architecture at the local level of significance.

The seven aspects of integrity as applied to the Fort Worth National Bank Building are described below.

*Location:* The Fort Worth National Bank Building remains in its original location in the heart of downtown Fort Worth.

*Setting:* The setting remains largely intact with the retention of many nearby contemporaneous multi-story commercial buildings. Downtown retains its historic grid pattern with only minor realignments. The streets that border it—West 7<sup>th</sup>, Main, and Houston Streets—are still primary circulation corridors in the business district.

*Materials:* It retains integrity of materials on its exterior, including its brick curtain walls and vertically aligned metal windows that are separated by Virginia greenstone spandrels. Although the exterior of the lower levels of the east, north, and west elevations has been altered with the introduction of new materials, the texture and color variation between the historic rust-colored brick and greenstone spandrels remain a strong character-defining feature on the upper floors. Historic interior materials in the first-floor vestibule and elevator lobby include the emerald green Maryland Verde Antique stone on the walls, stainless steel columns, and French Hauteville marble on the floor. Walls of the elevator lobbies on the upper floors retain their buff-colored Italian Botticino marble cladding. Numerous upper floors also retain original acoustical tile and fluorescent lights on the ceilings in the elevator lobbies and some corridors.

*Design:* Its integrity of design, revealed through its slab-like appearance and its contrasting color and texture, reflects its local significance as an early post-World War II Modernist high-rise with minimal ornamentation. Slab-like forms with flush windows were common in Texas during this era. The design's vertical and horizontal emphasis remains. Although the primary entrances of the east and west elevations have been altered, they still read as important features of the building's base. The exterior of the slab and tower still reflects their primary function as office space. Retention of elevator lobbies and double-loaded corridors on the upper floors of the slab and tower also speak to the design of these floors for office use.

*Workmanship:* Workmanship is evident through the contrasting exterior materials and in the curvature of the Maryland Verde Antique stone used in the walls of the first-floor elevator lobby.

*Feeling:* The retention of its design and materials gives the feeling of a mid-twentieth century high-rise commercial building.

*Association:* The Fort Worth National Bank Building retains integrity of association as it is still used as a high-rise commercial building in downtown Fort Worth.



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## Statement of Significance

The Fort Worth National Bank Building was designed by the prominent firm Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer, and completed in 1952. It is prominently located along three of the Central Business District's major streets. Although not the tallest at the time of its construction, it was touted as downtown's largest office building. The bulk of its front slab provided it with a massive presence that was appropriate for the city's largest bank. The building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Commerce at the local level of significance for its association with Fort Worth's largest financial institution. It is also eligible at the local level under Criterion C for Architecture as a good example of an early post-World War II Modernist high-rise building in Fort Worth. Walls of rust-colored brick and Virginia greenstone spandrels beneath flush metal windows reflect an early post-World War II characteristic of smooth, unadorned walls while also creating visual interest through vertical bands of repeating colors. The building's simplified design was an expression of the bank's emphasis on functionality for bank employees and the customers it served as well its many tenants. The massing of the three- and four-story base gave the bank a separate identity whereas the tower and most of the front slab were devoted to tenant space. The period of significance is from 1952, the year it was completed to 1972. The latter date acknowledges the resource's continued use for the purposes for which it was constructed and corresponds to the National Register's fifty-year threshold for listing.

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## Historic Context

In 1849, Major Ripley Arnold established a military outpost on the bluff above the confluence of the Clear and West Forks of the Trinity River on land that was formerly the domain of the Wichita, Tawakoni, Comanche, Kickapoo and Jumanos nations. This area of Texas is on the edge of the Cross Timbers and the Great Plains which extend to the west. The fort was the northernmost and fifth of eight posts established in a defensive line in central Texas. Such posts were created in an effort to protect white settlers along the expanding western frontier. The post was initially manned by Company F, Second Dragoons. Arnold's troops had no violent engagements with Native Americans during their short tenure at the post. Fort Worth was never meant to be a permanent fort and the army abandoned it in 1853 and moved further west.<sup>2</sup>

Tarrant County was organized the same year the fort was established. Birdville, a small community northeast of the fort, was named the county seat. After the military abandoned the post, settlers in the community that had grown up around it took over its empty buildings. The approximately one hundred settlers first referred to their community as Fort Town to create a separate identity from the military post but later adopted the fort's name. In 1856, Fort Worth became the county seat following a contentious election. In a second election in 1860, Fort Worth convincingly won the title of county seat. By the start of the Civil War, its population numbered around 350; by 1870 it was around 500. When Fort Worth was incorporated as a city in 1873 it had a population of approximately 2,500 residents. Its first railroad, the Texas & Pacific, arrived in 1876. By 1900, the city had a population of 26,688 and was a major railroad hub served by nine rail lines.<sup>3</sup>

After the Civil War, Fort Worth earned the moniker "Cowtown" as it became a stop for drovers herding long-horned cattle from south Texas north to railroad shipping points in Kansas. The drives continued through the early 1880s when a stockyard was constructed and from there, the cattle were shipped to northern markets by rail. By the 1890s, a slaughterhouse was built north of the river. There, the livestock was slaughtered and dressed for refrigerated shipment by

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<sup>2</sup> Rick F. Selcer, "Fort Worth," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed May 26, 2021, (<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/fort-worth>). Published by the Texas State Historical Association; *Native Land Digital*, accessed November 25, 2011 ([https://native-land.ca/?fbclid=iwAR18KLTmo0EHZgtMZUAIgAMmVTHIVDGHmsZMeWPoaO8tTd\\_b0SAVQ1wKdmc](https://native-land.ca/?fbclid=iwAR18KLTmo0EHZgtMZUAIgAMmVTHIVDGHmsZMeWPoaO8tTd_b0SAVQ1wKdmc)).

<sup>3</sup> Janet Schmelzer, "Fort Worth, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed October 22, 2021, (<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/fort-worth-tx>). Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

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rail to northern markets. Fort Worth's reputation as Cowtown was further cemented in the early 1900s when the Armour and Swift packing companies of Chicago built extensive complexes of slaughterhouses in North Fort Worth. For many years, the packing houses were the city's largest employers and the related businesses spawned by their presence helped spur the city's growth.<sup>4</sup>

Other factors contributed to the city's growth through the mid-twentieth century. In 1917, Camp Bowie, a World War I military training camp, was established on the plains west of the city where a residential development from the 1890s named Arlington Heights had failed to take hold. More than 100,000 soldiers were trained there before the camp was closed in 1919. The camp's infrastructure helped bring development to the area and in 1922, Arlington Heights and seven other suburban communities were annexed into the city. The discovery of oil in West Texas in the 1910s brought numerous petroleum-related industries and businesses to Fort Worth. Camp Bowie and the area's related airfields also engendered the growth of the aviation industry. It was further augmented by the construction of the Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation factory, or bomber plant, west of town for the production of B-24 Liberator bombers as the United States prepared for entrance into World War II. The plant helped Fort Worth reach a population of 177,662 in 1940 as thousands of people came to the city in search of well-paying jobs. The factory remained in Fort Worth after the war as did the adjacent Tarrant Field Airdrome, later known as Carswell Airforce Base and now known as Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth. Both contributed to the city's post-war growth. By 1950, Fort Worth had a population of 278,778 people. In 1960, 356,268 people called Fort Worth home and by 1970, the population had grown to 393,476, making Fort Worth the state's fourth largest city behind Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio, respectively.<sup>5</sup>

### The Beginnings and Growth of Fort Worth National Bank

Among the people who helped put Fort Worth on a firm footing after the Civil War was Major Khleber Miller van Zandt (1836-1930). An attorney and veteran of the Confederate Army, Van Zandt came to Fort Worth in August 1865 after being discharged from the army in 1864 with a certificate of disability. When he arrived in town, the community had a population of 250 and few amenities, not even a saloon. He set up a dry-goods business which was successful enough to help him launch other enterprises, including a construction company that built the Texas & Pacific Railway's roadbed from Dallas to Fort Worth, leading to the arrival of the first train in the city in July 1876. In 1874, he, along with John Peter Smith, James Jones Jarvis, and Thomas A. Tidball, bought out the interests of a private bank named Tidball and Smith and established a new private bank under the names Tidball, Van Zandt and Company. Each of the four men subscribed \$7,500, giving the bank a capital stock of \$30,000 (equivalent to \$718,428.95 in 2021). Van Zandt served as president of Tidball, Van Zandt and Company and its successor bank for the next fifty-six years.<sup>6</sup>

In November 1883, Van Zandt and Tidball were joined by Noah Harding, Dr. E. J. Beall, and Colonel R. L. Ellison in organizing the Fort Worth National Bank. The bank opened in March 1884 after receiving Charter No. 3131 from the United States Comptroller of the Currency. It had a capital stock of \$125,000 (equivalent to \$3,482,181.12 in 2021). By 1900, the capital stock was increased to \$300,000 and then to \$500,000 in 1910 with a surplus of \$500,000 (equivalent in 2021 to \$9,750,107.14 and \$14,368,578.95, respectively).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid; "Texas Almanac: City Population History from 1850-2000," *Texas Almanac*, accessed October 26, 2021 (<https://texasalmanac.com/sites/default/files/images/CityPopHist%20web.pdf>).

<sup>6</sup> Patricia P. Kinkade, "Van Zandt, Khleber Miller." *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed August 30, 2021, (<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/van-zandt-khebler-miller>). Published by the Texas State Historical Association; Sandra L. Myres, ed., *Force Without Fanfare: The Autobiography of K. M. Van Zandt* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1968), 145; *CPI Inflation Calculator*, accessed August 30, 2021 (<https://in2013dollars.com/inflation/1874?amount=30000>).

<sup>7</sup> Myres, *Force Without Fanfare*, 148; Fort Worth National Bank, *Century One: 1873-1973* (Fort Worth National Bank, 1973), 19; *CPI Inflation Calculator*, accessed August 30, 2021 (<https://in2013dollars.com/us/inflation>).

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By the turn of the twentieth century, Fort Worth National Bank became a leader in issuing loans to the cattle industry. The following decades brought growth to the bank. A Savings Department was established in 1915 and the bank began to offer trust services after receiving authorization from the Federal Reserve Board in 1918. As the petroleum industry took hold in Fort Worth and West Texas in the 1910s, Fort Worth National Bank “gained a nationwide reputation as an authoritative source on oil credit.” In 1952, the same year it constructed a new headquarters, the bank hired a petroleum engineer to better serve the industry.<sup>8</sup>

Between 1916 and 1926, the Fort Worth National Bank merged with five other banks while maintaining its name. They included the Trader’s National Bank in 1916, which increased the bank’s capital stock to \$600,000 and its surplus to \$1,000,000 (equivalent in 2021 to \$15,027,688.07 and \$25,046,146.79, respectively). Two banks were acquired in 1919; the W. R. Edrington Company and American National Bank. In 1925, it merged with Exchange National Bank. In late 1926, the Fort Worth National Bank merged with the Farmers and Mechanics National Bank and moved on January 2, 1927 into that bank’s 24-story building at Main Street and West 7<sup>th</sup>, the tallest building in the city at that time. That gave the bank, then the city’s largest, a capital stock of \$3,000,000 and total assets of \$37,000,000 (equivalent in 2021 to \$47,069,482.76 and \$580,523,620.69, respectively).<sup>9</sup>

On March 19, 1930, a new era for the bank began following the passing of its long-serving president, Major Van Zandt. By then, the bank’s total resources stood at \$44,383,411.70 (equivalent in 2021 to \$725,557,158.34). Robert Ellison Harding, son of one of the original principals of the bank, Noah Harding, assumed control. Unlike many banks, Fort Worth National Bank remained solvent during the Great Depression. In 1934, it received the deposits of the failed Stockyards National Bank. Its resources did not substantially increase over the next few years but it remained Fort Worth’s largest bank. By 1938, its total resources stood at \$46,000,000 (equivalent in 2021 to \$721,731,068.97).<sup>10</sup>

By 1940, Fort Worth and the country were recovering from the Depression as the economy centered around the growing defense industry. By the end of March 1940, Fort Worth National Bank’s resources totaled \$52,766,286.25 (equivalent in 2021 to more than one billion dollars). By June 1945, its resources totaled \$158,241,551.91.<sup>11</sup> As Fort Worth benefited from the post-World War II boom, Fort Worth National Bank’s resources totaled \$195,700,562.68 in June 1950 (equivalent to \$2.2 billion in 2021).<sup>12</sup>

### Postwar Banking and the Fort Worth National Bank

Following World War II, the bank industry modernized its business practices. This was done in part to win back the public’s trust following the bank failures of the 1930s and also to meet changes in consumer preferences. The industry was encouraged to present a less “stuffy” environment while making banking a convenient, efficient, and pleasant experience. The construction of new banking facilities that incorporated new technologies and modern architecture was one way to accomplish this. While many suburban banks were constructed in the postwar era, established banks also

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<sup>8</sup> Fort Worth National Bank, *Century One: 1873-1973*, 19, 22; “Petroleum Engineer Joins Bank Staff Here,” *FWST*, June 15, 1952, Section 4, 1.

<sup>9</sup> Myres, *Force Without Fanfare*, 157, 157n; *CPI Inflation Calculator*, accessed August 30, 2021 (<https://in2013dollars.com/us/inflation>).

<sup>10</sup> “Report of the Condition of the Fort Worth National Bank of Fort Worth in the State of Texas, at the Close of Business on March 27, 1930,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram and Sunday Record*, April 6, 1930, 8; Fort Worth National Bank, *Century One: 1873-1973*, 26, 27. *CPI Inflation Calculator*, accessed August 30, 2021 (<https://in2013dollars.com/us/inflation>).

<sup>11</sup> “The Fort Worth National Bank Statement of Condition at the Close of Business, March 26, 1940,” *FWST*, March 29, 1940, 16; “The Fort Worth National Bank, Statement of Condition at the Close of Business June 30, 1945 as Reported to the Comptroller of Currency,” *FWST*, July 5, 1945, 12; *CPI Inflation Calculator*, accessed August 31, 2021 (<https://in2013dollars.com/us/inflation>).

<sup>12</sup> “The Fort Worth National Bank, Statement of Condition at the Close of Business June 30, 1945 as Reported to the Comptroller of Currency,” *FWST*, July 8, 1950; *CPI Inflation Calculator*, accessed September 1, 2021 (<https://in2013dollars.com/us/inflation>).

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reinvested in the nation's central business districts through the modernization of existing facilities or the construction of new ones.<sup>13</sup>

In the postwar-era, Fort Worth's business community sought ways to meet pressing needs in the central business district. Lawrence S. Waterbury, an engineer with the consulting firm Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Hogan & McDonald of New York, conducted a study of downtown parking conditions that was released in 1947. The study noted that 85,000 vehicles were entering downtown between 6:30 am and 6:30 pm. It concluded that 2,000 additional parking spaces were needed to meet demands. It was recommended that nine multi-story parking garages be constructed by private, not public funds.<sup>14</sup> As part of the private sector, the Fort Worth National Bank sought to address the issue of convenient parking for its customers. In January 1950, bank president R. E. Harding announced that the bank purchased a parcel at 709-11 Commerce that stretched east across the block to Calhoun Street for the purpose of building a "parking pavilion." This property was located two blocks east of the bank's building on Main Street. Designed by Preston M. Geren and constructed by Thomas S. Byrne, Inc., the reinforced concrete, open deck structure was the city's first helical-ramped garage and the first garage owned and operated by a bank. It featured seven levels, two of which were below ground, auto servicing facilities, and was available for use for free by bank customers as well as the general public for a fee. Work began on the garage in April and bank officials hoped that it would be completed by December 1, but unlike many construction projects, it was completed two months early, opening in early October 1950.<sup>15</sup>

The construction of the garage was the first phase of Fort Worth National Bank's ambitious plans to modernize its facilities. In June 1950, it was announced that the bank had traded its twenty-four-story building at 714 Main Street to Continental Life Insurance Company in exchange for \$1,312,500 cash and a site for a new building (Figure 14). Just three years prior, the bank had spent approximately \$87,000 constructing a new second floor above the banking floor in an effort to squeeze more space into its Main Street facility. The new site was located on West 7<sup>th</sup> Street between Main and Houston Streets, across the street to the south of the bank's current location. Three months prior, Continental Life announced plans to erect a twelve- to twenty-story building at the southeast corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Main Street. With this deal, the insurance company received a prominent building on a prominent site and avoided the delay of relocation had it constructed its own building.<sup>16</sup>

The site for the new bank consisted of nearly a half-acre parcel with a 200-foot frontage on West 7<sup>th</sup> Street and nearly 125 feet along Main and 150 feet along Houston. It reputedly was the largest real estate deal in the city's history to date. The bank would own the parcel on the east half of the block and lease the west half. The east parcel had recently been cleared and demolition of the Dundee Building on the west parcel would commence in September 1950.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Carol J. Dyson and Anthony Rubano, "Banking on the Future: Modernism and the Local Bank" in *Preserving the Recent Past 2*, edited by Deborah Slaton and William G. Foulks, (Washington DC: Historic Preservation Foundation, 2000), 2.43 to 2.56., accessed August 8, 2021 ([www.dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Banking\\_on\\_the\\_FutureModernism\\_and\\_the\\_Local\\_Bank\\_0.pdf](http://www.dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Banking_on_the_FutureModernism_and_the_Local_Bank_0.pdf)).

<sup>14</sup> "Solving Fort Worth's Parking Problem," *FWST*, September 18, 1947, 6.

<sup>15</sup> "Fort Worth National Buys Site for Parking Pavilion," *FWST*, January 25, 1950, 8; "Progress is Made on Plan for Downtown Parking," *FWST*, March 3, 1950, Section 2, 12; "Annex Building a Part of Long Range Plan," *The Fort Worth National Banker* 22 (Number 3, April-May, 1960): 8, Fort Worth National Bank Collection, Fort Worth Public Library Archives, Fort Worth, Texas [hereafter cited as FWNB Collection]; "Bank's Garage for Parking to be Rushed," *FWST*, March 31, 1950, 3; "New Parking Garage Will Be Opened Today," *FWST*, October 15, 1950, 23; "Now Fort Worth's Finest Free Parking Garage for Customers of Fort Worth's Largest Bank," *FWST*, October 15, 1950, 22; "Bank's Parking Garage Has Handled Over 400,000 Cars," Fort Worth National Bank Special Section (Section 5), *FWST*, August 31, 1952 [hereafter referred to as FWNB Special Section], 9.

<sup>16</sup> "Bank Building is Traded to Insurance Co.," *FWST*, June 27, 1950, 7; "Business as Usual While New Bank Floor Goes In," *FWST*, January 22, 1947, 22; "Continental Bank Plans Skyscraper of 28 Floors at Houston and W. 7<sup>th</sup>," *FWST*, March 1, 1950, 1.

<sup>17</sup> "Bank Building is Traded to Insurance Co.," *FWST*, June 27, 1950, 7.

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Construction of the new building was well-documented in local newspapers, the bank's in-house newsletter, the *Fort Worth National Banker*, and through photographs taken by W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Smith's earliest photographs included images of the vault under construction. Later photos followed the erection of the building's steel frame and then the addition of the brick and stone curtain walls. Photographs of notable features of the building's interior were also taken around the time of its opening in the summer of 1952. Photographs taken by Smith a year later included two well-dressed female models at the West 7<sup>th</sup> Street entrance and in the bank lobby's "rotunda" (see Figures 16, 18-22, and 24-26).<sup>18</sup>

The bank occupied 110,000 square feet of the building, including the vault, safe deposit department, and lower lobby in the basement, and the first three floors (what is referred to as the building's base in this nomination), keeping bank functions separate from tenant space. The building was touted as being "a scientifically engineered structure" to provide ideal working conditions for the bank's four hundred employees while imparting friendly service that met customers' requirements. It featured three public entrances, one each from Main Street, West 7<sup>th</sup>, and Houston Street. The West 7<sup>th</sup> Street entrance provided both bank employees and tenants access to the elevator lobby and the upper floors. The Main and Houston Street entrances were primarily for bank customers, leading directly to the banking room, described as one of the largest in the country. Its design was meant to "create a warm and friendly air of hospitality." Exterior stairs led up to the Main Street entrance. From the Houston Street entrance, one went down interior stairs to enter the banking room. The walls of the banking room were nearly three-stories in height and paneled with two types of Honduras mahogany. The ceiling was covered with a white acoustical material and had deep coves that were illuminated with both concealed fluorescent and recessed beamed fixtures described "as a pleasing contrast to rich wood paneling." A dramatic feature of the room was a skybridge at the second story level that spanned the width of the room near the west entrance. It was supported by full-height stainless steel columns, a departure from the typical classically inspired stone columns found in such spaces. Shorter stainless-steel columns were also located near the West 7<sup>th</sup> Street entrance (see Figures 24 and 26). The banking room had a "straight line of 30 teller windows" that were also of Honduras mahogany. More teller windows were in a rotunda that was in a lobby area on the north side of the first floor. There were child-sized teller windows in the "school savings department" for the reportedly 45,000 children who had accounts there.<sup>19</sup> The senior loan officers' quarters were located near the Main Street entrance on the north side of the main banking room. Walnut-paneled private offices for the bank's board chairman, H. B. Fuqua, and bank president Estil Vance were next to the senior loan officers. Committee and conference rooms were located nearby. As described by a Midland bank executive during a tour of the building shortly after it opened "'The best part . . . is that most everything is still on the ground floor where the public can be served.'"<sup>20</sup> The second and third floors included departments that had less face-to-face contact with customers. These included the comptroller, credit department, business development and correspondent banking department, the trust department, PBX operators, the petroleum engineer, and the advertising department (see Figure 23).

Amenities for bank employees included a third-floor dining room with a seating capacity of 136 people. A smaller dining room was available for bank officers and their guests; otherwise, officers were expected to eat in the main dining room as part of the bank's efforts to create a "closely-knit organization." The meals were prepared in an adjoining "all-electric kitchen of stainless steel." Snacks and coffee were available in a nearby "club room" where all proceeds went to the

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<sup>18</sup> Photos from the Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection and the W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Collection can be found online in the Digital Gallery, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries at <https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery>. Copies of the *Fort Worth National Banker* can be found in the Fort Worth National Bank Collection, Genealogy, History and Archives Unit, Fort Worth Public Library.

<sup>19</sup> "Formal Bank Opening Set for Tuesday," FWNB Special Section, 2; "Both Beauty and Service Emphasized," FWNB Special Section, 1.

<sup>20</sup> "More about Structure," FWNB Special Section, 2. The quoted statement was made by John P. Butler, president of Midland's First National Bank. See "Visitors Label Bank 'the Best,'" *FWST*, September 2, 1952, 1.

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employee club. Both employees and tenants benefitted from the building's air conditioning units found beneath the double hung windows on the upper floors.<sup>21</sup>

Stone was used extensively on the exterior and interior. Missouri red granite formed the base course on the exterior and in the recessed Main Street entrance to the banking room. The primary walls were constructed of a rust-colored Denton brick. Virginia greenstone (a metamorphosed basalt) was used as exterior spandrels below and above windows. Emerald green marble-like Maryland Verde Antique stone was used on walls in the first-floor lobby and for wainscoting and base coverings throughout the first floor (and reportedly on lower floors). Buff-colored Italian Botticino marble was used on the walls in the elevator lobbies from the second through fifteenth floors. French Hauteville marble was used on the floors of the 7<sup>th</sup> Street entrance, the main banking room floor, and the stair treads from the banking floor to the lower lobby.<sup>22</sup>

The building was designed by Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer, a very prominent firm in the city and one that designed numerous buildings for the city's financial institutions between 1950 and 1960. Consulting architect was the New York City firm Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon, best known for its design of the Empire State Building. The general contractor was Thomas S. Byrne, Inc., a prominent local construction firm established in 1923. Most of the subcontractors and material suppliers were also from Fort Worth. They included R. C. Montgomery, excavating contractors; Lydick Roofing Co.; Wills Electric Co.; General Engineering Corp., air conditioning; Penner & Cheney, painting contractors; Samuel A. Ellsberry Company, Pomeroy Steel double hung windows; Good Marble & Tile Co., marble; Monday Manufacturing Company, stainless steel; Ray F. Holmes Company, metal building specialties; Bucy-Ingram Co., doors and millwork; Penry Lumber Co., lumber and other building materials; Fort Worth Sand & Gravel Company, Inc.; Schmidt Plumbing Co., plumbing fixtures and installation; Chas. F. Williams Co., Armstrong and Kilnoise acoustical materials and Ken Tile floor covering, Modernfold doors, and Wise Metal toilet partitions; Ray L. Baldwin Tile Company; Woodward Builders Supply, finish hardware; Allied Iron Works, miscellaneous iron work; and Brochsteins Inc. (Houston), bank fixtures and office paneling of Honduras mahogany and other woods.<sup>23</sup>

The first tenants moved into the building March 29, 1952. By the end of July all tenants except the bank had moved in. They included the C & H Cigar Co. in the lobby; DuBose, Rutledge & Miller, insurance and surety bonds; Texas Pacific Coal and Oil Company, Commercial Employment Service, the building's designer and builder, Preston M. Geren and Thomas S. Byrne, Inc., and numerous oil operators, drilling companies, insurance companies, attorneys, and livestock breeders. The bank moved in August 22-24, 1952. Once the bank moved in, the building had a nearly 100 percent occupancy rate. A twenty-page special section of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* devoted to the history of the bank, features of the building, and congratulatory advertisements from subcontractors and other businesses was include in the August 31, 1952, issue of the newspaper. On September 2, 1952, a formal opening ceremony was held at 8:30 a.m. at the Main Street entrance. From 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., the bank was open for regular business with an Open House held from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.<sup>24</sup>

Keeping up with customer demand for convenience, Fort Worth National Bank announced in May 1960 its plan to construct a motor bank and annex. The two-story building was located directly east of the main bank at the southeast corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Main Streets and stretched the width of the block, or two hundred feet, to Commerce Street. Designed by

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<sup>21</sup> "Dining Room Pride, Joy of Employes," FWNB Special Section, 20.

<sup>22</sup> "Bank Exhibits Large Layout of Fine Stone," FWNB Special Section, 14. This article states that the Italian Botticino Marble was used on the elevator lobbies of the second through fourteenth floors but it appears to have also been used on the fifteenth floor. "New Bank Building is True 'City Within City,'" FWNB Special Section, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Various advertisements in FWNB Special Section.

<sup>24</sup> "15-Story Structure Climaxes Months of Preliminary Work by Planners," FWNB Special Section, 8; "Move Well Planned—Not a Minute Lost," FWNB Special Section, 1; Fort Worth, Texas, City Directory, 1953, 1127, Ancestry.com, *U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., accessed August 30, 2021 (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images4975094>).

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prominent Fort Worth architect Joseph R. Pelich (1894-1968), it echoed the verticality of Geren's design although greatly truncated. The interior featured Honduras mahogany and marble floors similar to what was used in the main bank. On the first floor was the Installment Loan Department. Motorists could conduct their business at five drive-in teller islands and those on foot could take advantage of two tellers in the northeast corner of the building. The bank's data processing, research and planning, and stationery departments were located in the basement where there was also space for servicing armored vehicles. A sub-basement housed the bank's archive and the building's engine room. It was connected to the main bank by a "twin-compartmented" underground tunnel; one side was designated for customers and the other side dedicated to a secure passageway for bank personnel conducting transactions or moving supplies from one building to another. The building had a total of 80,000 square feet, 20,000 of which was made available to the Hotel Texas for ballroom and convention facilities on the second floor. This was a much-needed amenity at the time as Fort Worth voters had rejected bonds for a public-funded convention center in 1958. The groundbreaking was held June 6, 1960 and the building was completed in April 1961. With this addition, the bank boasted of "*3 blocks of customer convenience*" along 7<sup>th</sup> Street, a reference to the main bank building, the motor bank and annex, and its parking garage at 7<sup>th</sup> and Commerce. The motor bank and annex building still exists but has been greatly altered and is not included in this nomination, nor is the tunnel.<sup>25</sup>

Five months after the groundbreaking for the motor bank and annex, the bank announced in November 1960 its plans to enlarge the main building in its continuing quest to meet customer and bank needs. It acquired the 25-foot strip of property immediately south of the building at 810 Main Street. The two-story building on the site was demolished to make way for a three-story addition containing 7,500 square feet. The space was intended "to enlarge the loan and discount department and to provide more customer facilities on the ground floor" and to expand "the bank's operating departments on the second and third floors." Bank officials boasted "This expansion, along with the new Fort Worth National Motor Bank and Annex Building now under construction, is a part of the bank's continuing program to meet the present and future needs of one of the nation's most progressive and fastest growing economic areas." The plans soon were revised to include a fourth floor on both the addition and the three-story base on the east elevation. The new floor included a light well that separated it from the 1952 front slab. It was finished out with dark paneled wood and was used for executive offices. Although the architect has not been identified, the new additions continued Geren's use of rust-colored face brick and greenstone spandrels. The incorporation of a ribbon of three metal double hung windows on the third and fourth floors of the addition instead of three individual windows provides a hint that it was not part of the original building.<sup>26</sup>

Fort Worth National Bank had been in the West 7<sup>th</sup> Street location slightly less than seventeen years when bank president Lewis H. Bond announced the organization's plan to build a new facility a few blocks northwest of its present location. The bank had commissioned architect John Portman (1924-2017) of Atlanta, Georgia to design the complex. Portman had received acclaim for the design of Atlanta's Peachtree Center as well as the Embarcadero Center then under construction in San Francisco. The bank's new facility was to include a building for the bank with additional office space available for lease in the upper floors and a parking garage and motor bank across the street. The bank with its office tower was sited in the middle of a full block with a twenty-foot setback from Throckmorton, Taylor, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets. It was jointly constructed by J. A. Jones Construction Co. and Thomas S. Byrne, Inc. and completed in 1974. The octagonal-shaped building was thirty-seven stories high, making it the tallest building in the city at that time. It was Fort Worth's first skyscraper sheathed with reflective glass. Portman described it as "kinetic architecture," and "the most unusual bank building in the world. It is extremely functional and designed for serving people and for making banking an exciting and pleasurable experience. The conveniences are built into the structure, with the most complete banking and tenant

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<sup>25</sup> "Ft. Worth National Plans Motor Bank," *FWST*, May 22, 1960, 1; "Hotel to Construct Convention Center," *FWST*, December 25, 1960, 1, 11; "Ground Breaking Initiates Construction," *Fort Worth National Banker*, Volume 22, Number 4, 1960, 11, FWNB Collection; "1911 Auto to Be First at Motor Bank Opening," *FWST*, April 9, 1961, 10; Advertisement for Fort Worth National Bank's New Motor Bank, *FWST*, May 3, 1961, 15.

<sup>26</sup> "Bank Reveals Building Plan, Site Purchase," *FWST*, November 20, 1960, 1.

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quarters.” The interior featured one of Portman’s signature design elements—a light-filled multi-story atrium—in this case, five-stories high. Suspended walkways above the main banking lobby led to escalators and high-speed elevators that served the bank’s offices and other tenants. A pedestrian skybridge above Taylor Street and a pedestrian tunnel beneath it connected the building to the bank’s new parking garage and motor bank to the west.<sup>27</sup>

*115 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street (1972-present)*

As the bank was making plans for its new quarters, its building at 115 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street was acquired by State Reserve Life Insurance Co. in 1969. The insurance company leased it back to the bank until its new building was completed.<sup>28</sup> Following the bank’s departure, it appears as if many of the bank’s fixtures, including counters, check desks, teller pedestals, pass windows, and wall paneling were sold to the highest bidder. Texas Electric Service Company (TESCO) became the building’s primary tenant, and it became known as the Electric Service Building. Previously, TESCO had more than nine hundred employees scattered in three downtown buildings. The utility company leased the basement and sub-basement and the first through the eighth floors from State Reserve. It made approximately \$800,000 in modifications to the building, most notably converting the banking room to two levels. The street level was converted to offices and a customer service area. Customer service desks replaced the bank teller windows on the lobby’s south side. The area from the West 7<sup>th</sup> Street entrance on the north to the elevator lobby was used for the display of electrical goods and appliances. More TESCO offices were added on the new second floor. Exterior modifications consisted mostly of the removal of the bank’s signage and the addition of new signage for the principal tenant. TESCO also used the bank annex at the southeast corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Main Street for a customer service area with drive-up windows for paying bills. It also leased one floor of the former Fort Worth National Bank parking garage for its company vehicles. Among the approximately sixty other tenants of the Electric Service Building were its owner, State Reserve Life Insurance Company, Leonard Enterprises, Anchor Insurance Managers Agency; Preston M. Geren, Architects & Engineers and Associates; and Tarrant County Junior College District.<sup>29</sup> The building became known as the Oncor Building after TXU, formerly TESCO, separated its regulated energy-delivery sector and renamed it Oncor in 2002. In 2011-2012 exterior modifications were made to the first two floors to provide an updated look and to meet the needs of new tenants. The interior’s first floor was also altered at the same time to meet tenant needs. The utility company vacated the building in 2021. It is now marketed as 115 W. 7<sup>th</sup>. Options for the building’s future are being explored.

**Significance under Criterion A: Commerce**

The Fort Worth National Bank Building at 115 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its association with Fort Worth’s largest financial institution during the period of significance. Originally established in 1874 under the name Tidball, Van Zandt and Company and assuming the name Fort Worth National Bank in 1884, it became the city’s longest operating and largest bank, assisting businesses and residents with their financial needs. At the time the Fort Worth National Bank was celebrating its move into its new home in 1952, it was the largest bank in Fort Worth and the ninety-third largest bank in the country out of a total of 14,700 banks. More than 300 banks in the Southwest carried correspondent accounts with it. The bank remained one of the largest in the state. The period of significance begins in 1952 when the building was completed. It ends in 1972, acknowledging the bank’s continued occupation of the building and corresponding to the National Register’s fifty-year guideline.

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<sup>27</sup> Harold Monroe, “Bank Building Will Tower Over City,” *FWST*, June 26, 1969, 4-A; “Bids for Building of Bank Scheduled,” *FWST*, March 21, 1971, 7-E; “\$30-Million Showpiece Milestone in Architecture,” *FWST*, April 21, 1974.

<sup>28</sup> “Work Under Way on New Home of Tesco,” *FWST*, April 28, 1974, 9-E.

<sup>29</sup> Classified advertisement for existing bank fixtures placed by Thomas S Byrne, Inc., *FWST*, April 21, 1974; “Work Under Way on New Home of Tesco.”



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As of June 30, 1952, two months before it moved into the building, the bank had capital, surplus, and undivided profits totaling \$12,551,065.90 (equivalent to \$131,787,640.15 in 2021) and deposits totaling \$207,909,571.66 (equivalent to \$2,183,074,492 in 2021). Loans on that date totaled \$87,449,234.88. A newspaper article published at the time of the bank's opening in the new building provided a glimpse of the bank's impact on the community the year prior. During 1951 "the bank made 35,170 monthly payment loans to individuals for the purchase of automobiles, educational expenses, to pay doctor and hospital bills, insurance premiums, to consolidate small debts into a single obligation and to meet other individual and family needs." That same year, the bank had a "total of 2,253 monthly payment loans made to finance homes or pay for home repairs." Such loans and other services continued through the bank's occupancy of the building, thus stimulating the local economy while meeting customer needs. By September 30, 1972, the bank's assets totaled \$802,680,429 (equivalent to \$5,267,542,308.11 in 2021) and its net income was \$5,043,604 (equivalent to \$33,098,349.60 in 2021). The second and third largest banks at the time were First National Bank of Fort Worth with total assets of \$684,978,921 (equivalent to \$4,554,749,309.43 in 2021) and Continental National Bank with total assets of \$254,396,746 (equivalent to \$1,691,604,467.88 in 2021), respectively. When it moved into new quarters in 1974, Fort Worth National Bank was still the city's largest correspondent bank, the sixth largest in Texas, and the seventy-eighth largest in the country (compared to ranking ninety-third in 1952).<sup>30</sup>

Fort Worth National Bank (and its predecessor) occupied several buildings throughout its history (Figure 1). However, the building at 115 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street best represents its impact and legacy within the city. Under the name Tidball, Van Zandt and Company, the bank's first home was on the first floor of a two-story building at 109 W. Weatherford Street, near the Tarrant County Courthouse. In 1880, the financial institution had a building constructed specifically for its use at the northwest corner of Main and 1<sup>st</sup> Streets. After receiving a national banking charter in 1884 under the name Fort Worth National Bank, the institution constructed a seven-story bank and office building at 5<sup>th</sup> and Main Streets. None of these three buildings is extant. In 1926, the bank merged with the Farmers and Mechanics National Bank which had constructed a twenty-four-story building at 714 Main Street in 1921. The Fort Worth National Bank operated from that location for twenty-five years. It then moved into a sixteen-story building constructed specifically for it at 115 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street in 1952. Then in 1974, it moved again into a new building at 5<sup>th</sup> and Throckmorton Streets. These three buildings are extant. Because the building at 714 Main Street was not initially constructed for Fort Worth National Bank, it is not the best building to represent the bank's significance. The building at 5<sup>th</sup> and Throckmorton is not yet fifty years old and was significantly altered when adapted for condominiums after it received substantial damage in 2000 as the result of being struck by a tornado. Therefore, the building at 115 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street retains the strongest historic association with the Fort Worth National Bank.<sup>31</sup>

After nearly a century of existence, the name "Fort Worth National Bank" disappeared in the 1980s. In 1970, the bank's stock was placed in a holding company called Fort Worth National Corp. Shortly after moving into its new building at 5<sup>th</sup> and Throckmorton in 1974, Fort Worth National Corp. changed its name to Texas American Bancshares, Inc. "to reflect more accurately the statewide nature of [its] operations."<sup>32</sup> In 1982, Fort Worth National Bank changed its name to Texas American Bank-Fort Worth. Like many banks in the 1980s, it had its share of financial woes. It was later known as Team

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<sup>30</sup> "Bank's Far-Flung Operations Run to Billions of Dollars," FWNB Special Section, 9; *US Inflation Calculator*, accessed August 23, 2021 (<https://usinflationcalculator.com>); The Fort Worth National Corporation, Consolidated Statement of Conditions, *FWST*, October 15, 1972, 25-A; First of Fort Worth, Statement of Condition, *FWST*, October 15, 1972, 26-A; Continental National Bank., Combined Balance Sheet, *FWST*, October 15, 1972, 23-A; *US Inflation Calculator*, accessed October 22, 2021 and December 31, 2021 (<https://usinflationcalculator.com>); "City's Biggest Correspondent for 450 Banks," *FWST* April 21, 1974.

<sup>31</sup> Fort Worth National Bank, *Century One: 1873-1973*, 11, 14-15, 20.

<sup>32</sup> Statement made by Lewis H. Bond, chairman of the board of Fort Worth National Corp. See "Name Change to be Voted On," *FWST*, April 21, 1974, 6-F.

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Bank and then was acquired by Bank One in 1995 and assumed its name. The “Fort Worth National Bank” name was revived in 1999 for a new chartered bank but disappeared again after it merged with Southside Bank in 2008.<sup>33</sup>

### Significance under Criterion C: Architecture

Designed by Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer, and completed in 1952, the Fort Worth National Bank Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance. It is an excellent local example of a post-World War II Modernist high-rise building as demonstrated through such characteristics as an emphasis on its structure and volume, smooth unadorned curtain walls, and flush windows which contribute to the walls’ smooth appearance. Although devoid of ornamentation, the contrasting colors of the rust-toned Denton brick and the Virginia greenstone spandrels create visual interest and give the building a vertical emphasis. With a façade that is two hundred feet long, this emphasis contributes to the front slab’s massive presence. Although not the city’s tallest building, it was its largest office building upon completion. Interior innovations such as fluorescent lighting and air conditioning allowed the building to be designed with flexible floor plans which became popular in the postwar era. Its external form clearly identified the Fort Worth National Bank Building’s dual functions of bank and tenant space, another principle of Modernism.

Technological advances such as air conditioning and fluorescent lighting influenced the design of post-World War II skyscrapers. As architectural historian Carol Willis noted in her book, *Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines of New York and Chicago*, “Fluorescent lighting and air conditioning were as important to the transformation of post-World War II skyscrapers as were the elevator and steel-cage construction to the first tall office buildings of the late nineteenth century.”<sup>34</sup> Because fluorescent lighting was stronger than incandescent lights, fewer windows were needed to provide supplemental light, ceiling heights could be lower, and office space could be deeper than the 24- to 27-foot depth that was nearly standard prior to World War II. Less dependence on windows for light also eliminated the need for light courts in large buildings which translated to more leasable floor space for building owners. Air conditioning also decreased the need for windows for cooling and air circulation. Fewer and smaller windows meant floor plans could be much more flexible, giving rise to open work areas. A simplified structure resulted in one that could be built quicker, an important consideration for a building owner whether it was the principal occupant or if the building was constructed purely as a speculative venture.<sup>35</sup>

Beginning in the late 1920s and continuing into the post-World War II era, many designers of high-rise buildings began to move away from highly ornamented exteriors, adopting Modernist preferences for simplified wall surfaces. However, simplified could also mean dynamic in appearance. A building that influenced the exterior design of Depression-era and post-World War II skyscrapers in various-sized cities across the country was the 1930 Daily News Building in New York City (NR 1982, NHL 1989). Designed by Raymond Hood and John Mead Howells, the 36-story building presented a bold “soaring” tower on its primary façade above the lower nine floors. Without any setbacks, the slab was decorated with narrow vertical bands of white glazed brick alternating with windows separated by black and beige brick spandrels. At the

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<sup>33</sup> “The Texas American Story,” *FWST*, July 21, 1988, 5; Fort Worth National Bank Records Finding Aid, Fort Worth Public Library Local History Archives and Genealogy Collection, accessed August 10, 2021 (<https://fortworthlibrary.lyrasistechology.org/repositories/2/resources/214>); “Fort Worth National Bank,” *US Bank Locations*, accessed August 10, 2021 (<https://www.usbanklocations.com/fort-worth-national-bank-34990.shtml>).

<sup>34</sup> Carol Willis, *Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines of New York and Chicago* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995): 100.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 132-133.

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time, “these stark stripes represented one of the simplest and also the most radical exterior treatments of the decade.”<sup>36</sup> Art Deco bas-relief at the entrance provided ornamentation for an otherwise uncluttered exterior.<sup>37</sup>

The Daily News Building’s slab form and style influenced Texas skyscrapers. Prominent Houston architect Albert C. Finn, FAIA (1883-1964), incorporated vertical banding for tower-like forms, or slabs, for several of his designs. A pre-World War II example was the 15-story People’s National Bank Building in Tyler, constructed in 1932 with a rear six-story addition added on top of a four-story wing in 1936 (NR 2002). The building has a symmetrical primary façade but unlike Hood’s design, the tower has stepped massing. Polished black granite covers the building’s base. Its verticality is emphasized using buff brick walls alternating with vertical rows of windows linked by spandrels (original casement windows have been replaced with smoked glass which also now covers original metal spandrels). Architect John B. Roberts designed an L-shaped, eight-story building for Lubbock National Bank that was completed in 1940. It had a red granite base, light cream-colored brick curtain walls and cast stone spandrels. A local newspaper called it “a strongly accentuated vertical design,” adding, “the windows and spandrels are a decided influence on the design.” This building has also been significantly altered.<sup>38</sup>

Finn’s design for the 24-story City National Bank Building in Houston (1947, NR 2000, **Figure 29**) caught the attention of the architectural community even before it was completed. In October 1947, *Architectural Record* featured it in “Building Types Study Number 130: Office Buildings.” Designed in association with Robert J. Cummings, the building’s flexible floor plan—aided by column spacing, air conditioning and fluorescent lighting—allowed for the economical construction of a building on a plot that would have proved difficult to develop a decade or so previously. Like the Daily News Building, its primary ornamentation was reduced to a granite base and contrasting colors in vertical strips above it. Tan brick was used for its curtain walls with red and maroon brick for the spandrels between windows. Its cornice was adorned with terra cotta chevrons at its upper parapets—an Art Deco holdover from its initial 1939 design. One symmetrical elevation stretched the entire length of a block, creating a massive presence.<sup>39</sup>

Preston M. Geren’s design for the Fort Worth National Bank bore numerous similarities to Finn’s City National Bank with a few notable differences. Completed in 1952, the 16-story Fort Worth National Bank’s primary façade stretched two hundred feet across an entire block. This symmetrical façade consisted of a two-story granite base (later altered) above which were vertical strips of rust-colored brick curtain walls alternating with vertical channels of flush metal double-hung windows separated by spandrels of Virginia greenstone, creating a smooth exterior shell. City National’s use of casement windows did not allow for a nearly flush wall surface as in Geren’s design. The Fort Worth example was also built with a

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, at virtually the same time, Hood, with Godley & Fouihoux, designed the McGraw-Hill Building [NHL 1989], considered by some to be New York’s first International style building with its horizontal banding of windows and blue-green terra cotta. Anthony W. Robins, Daily New Building, New York, New York County, New York. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, listed 1982. NRIS #82002291; S. Allen Chambers, *National Landmarks, America’s Treasurers* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2000), 322-323; Norval White and Elliot Willensky. *AIA Guide to New York City*. Fourth Edition. (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000), 254.

<sup>38</sup> Diane Elizabeth Williams, People’s National Bank Building, Tyler, Smith County, Texas. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, listed in 2002. NRIS #2002000896; “Lubbock National Building is Answering Need for More Office Space in City: Latest Design, Equipment Used,” *Lubbock Morning Avalanche* (Lubbock, Texas), October 12, 1940, 20, accessed June 24, 2022 ([www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com)). The Lubbock National Bank Building has been altered with the removal or covering of its red granite base. Its windows have been replaced with tinted glass which also covers the spandrels. A skybridge connections the building to the Lubbock County Courthouse located across the street to the south.

<sup>39</sup> “Architectural Record’s Building Types Study Number 130: Office Buildings,” *Architectural Record* 102 (Number 4, October 1947): 119-146; “City National Bank Building,” *Architectural Record* 102 (Number 4, October 1947): 138-139; Lila Knight, City National Bank Building, Houston, Harris County, Texas. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, listed 2000. NRIS #00000291.

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flexible floor plan aided by column spacing and the use of fluorescent lights and air conditioning (**Figure 13**). The Fort Worth National Bank's use of a three-story base on the east and west elevations (later altered to four stories on the east elevation) and a setback rear tower more clearly expressed the building's dual functions of bank and tenant spaces than did the City National Bank. Expression of function is another tenet of Modernism.

Constructed four years after the Fort Worth National Bank Building, Finn's design for Longview's First National Bank Building was another example of a Texas high-rise office building that used alternating vertical banding as its principal exterior ornamentation. Upon its completion, the nine-story two-part vertical block was the Longview's tallest building. The exterior was described as "a combination of Texas pink brick, variegated gray brick and reddish-brown brick spandrels" on a base of Indiana granite and a sub-base of Texas pink granite. The verticality of this mid-rise building has been diminished by the application of monochromatic paint on the exterior.<sup>40</sup>

*Bank Construction in Downtown Fort Worth, 1950-1974*

Numerous Modernist banks and other financial institutions were constructed in downtown Fort Worth during the third quarter of the twentieth century. They ranged in height from one to 37 stories. Not surprisingly, Preston M. Geren's firm designed most of them. Early examples expressed Modernist influences through their lack of ornamentation, a vertical and horizontal emphasis that expressed the building's structure and volume, smooth and unified wall surfaces, and windows essentially flush with the wall instead of being recessed apertures like those of downtown's pre-World War II buildings (i.e., the Farmers and Mechanics National Bank, 1921; Sinclair Building, 1930, etc.). The First National Bank (1960) defined Miesian precision in Fort Worth with its recessed glass curtain walls within a stone exoskeleton. Finally, Fort Worth National Bank's octagonal building was downtown's first skyscraper of reflective glass (1974). Below is a brief discussion of most of downtown's financial institutions constructed during this time.

Between 1950 and 1960, more than \$40 million was spent in downtown Fort Worth for the construction of new buildings or the renovation of existing buildings. Financial institutions such as banks and savings and loan associations led this construction boom, beginning with Fort Worth National Bank's seven-level, open-deck parking garage at Commerce and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets. The bank announced its plans to build a "parking pavilion" in January 1950 and it was opened to the public less than nine months later. Designed by Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer, and constructed by Thomas S. Byrne, Inc., it was the first helical-ramped garage in the city.<sup>41</sup>

On March 1, 1950, the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* ran a front-page article announcing the Continental National Bank's plans to build a 28-story brick office building at West 7<sup>th</sup> and Houston Streets, across the street diagonally to the northwest of Fort Worth National Bank's soon-to-be announced location. The bank, the third largest in Fort Worth, had been in the W. T. Waggoner Building since 1921 and had outgrown that location. Preliminary plans, designed by Preston M. Geren, called for the upper 13 floors to be set back 18 feet from the lower 15 floors. However, plans for the building were soon modified and only a four-story brick and granite building was initially constructed on the site. Continental's abridged building was completed in 1952, the same year the nominated building. When construction resumed on Continental's building, two floors had been added to the design and the 13-story setback was eliminated, making it the tallest building in the city at 30 stories. Instead of brick curtain walls, Geren's revised design included aluminum curtain walls and an all-welded structural steel frame. It had a vertical and horizontal emphasis with wrap-around windows at the corners. The

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<sup>40</sup> "Longview's Tallest Building is Designed to Meet Future Needs of a Progressive City," *The Longview News-Journal* (Longview, Texas), May 18, 1956, Bank Section, 1, accessed June 8, 2022 ([www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com)). The addition of large windows on the top floor has also affected the building's integrity.

<sup>41</sup> "Fort Worth's Downtown Grows by Rebuilding," *FWST*, March 16, 1961, 52; "New Parking Garage Will Be Opened Today," *FWST*, October 15, 1950, 23; "Now Fort Worth's Finest Free Parking Garage for Customers of Fort Worth's Largest Bank," *FWST*, October 15, 1950, 22.

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enlarged building was completed in 1956. A two-story-high revolving digital clock was added to the roof in 1957 (**Figure 30**). The building was severely damaged by the tornado that struck downtown in 2000. When plans to renovate it did not come to fruition, it was imploded in 2006.<sup>42</sup>

As discussed, Fort Worth National Bank constructed a new sixteen-story headquarters with leasable office space at 115 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street. It was designed by Preston M. Geren around the same time as the neighboring Continental National Bank and completed in 1952. Its Modernist elements were expressed through its functional and simplified design, smooth and unadorned wall surfaces, and flush windows. A small addition at the base's southeast corner was completed in 1961. The bank also constructed a Motor Bank and Annex to the east on 7<sup>th</sup> Street between Main and Commerce Streets. It was designed by Joseph R. Pelich and completed in 1961. It has been significantly altered. The tunnel connecting the former annex building with the 16-story building still exists but neither it or the annex building are included in this nomination.

In mid-1958, the Mutual Savings and Loan Association moved into a new, Geren-designed building at West 8<sup>th</sup> and Throckmorton Street (**Figure 31**). The six-story slab (with two levels below ground) was designed with the capacity to later add five. Its windowless west wall, which faced Throckmorton Street, was 50-feet-wide and sheathed in Georgia pink marble trimmed with brown brick. The West 8<sup>th</sup> Street elevation was 95 feet long and presented a steel-framed curtain wall of gridded windows and spandrels, giving the building both a vertical and horizontal emphasis. The first-floor lobby stretched the length of the building and had a two-story volume with a circular staircase leading to the second floor. The financial institution occupied the two basement levels and the first and second floors. The upper four floors provided leased office space. It was demolished in 1998.<sup>43</sup>

The Farm and Home Savings and Loan completed a new building at 913 Houston Street in 1959. The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* described it as “the ultimate in modern architecture, combining newest materials with original works of art to provide an efficient office space.” The one-story building was constructed with floor-to-ceiling glass curtain walls with a gray tint. The glass provided clear views of the interior which included a mezzanine accessed by a “large free-flying circular staircase.” Behind the staircase was a lichen-covered concave stone wall of Palo Pinto fieldstone. Water flowed down the wall “adding a pleasant illusion of forest coolness.” The building (extant) was designed by Wyatt C. Hedrick, Inc., a prominent Fort Worth-based firm with a wide reach across Texas and the South.<sup>44</sup>

Several financial institutions also dedicated new buildings in downtown Fort Worth in the early 1960s. The recently published architectural guide *Buildings of Texas: East, North Central, Panhandle and South Plains, and West* (2019) describes the 21-story First National Bank Building (later known as Bank America Center) as “the first modern high-rise in downtown Fort Worth.” The \$10,000,000 building was designed by Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill with local architect Preston M. Geren and completed in 1960. It presents an exoskeleton slab with recessed glass curtain walls shaded by the white stone-clad structural frame (**Figure 32**). The landscaped plaza with Isamu Noguchi's sculpture, *The Texas Sculpture* (1961), reinforced its modern presence. The exterior of this building retains excellent integrity. The

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<sup>42</sup> “Continental Bank Plans Skyscraper of 28 Floors at Houston and W. 7<sup>th</sup>,” *FWST*, March 1, 1950, 1; “New Skyscraper,” *FWST*, March 1, 1950, 2; “Landmark Tower,” *Architecture in Fort Worth*, accessed August 12, 2021 (<https://www.fortwortharchitecture.com/landmark.htm>); Geren, Preston M., *AIA Historical Directory and Membership File*.

<sup>43</sup> “Steel Contract Let for Mutual Loan Building,” *FWST*, March 17, 1957, Section 4, 2; “Work to be Started May 1 on New Mutual Building,” *FWST*, April 21, 1957, Section 4, 2; “Open House Will Dedicate Mutual Savings’ New Home,” *FWST*, June 22, 1958, 14; “Buildings Demolished in Downtown Fort Worth Since 1995,” *Architecture in Fort Worth*, accessed October 20, 2021 (<https://fortwortharchitecture.com/demolish.htm>).

<sup>44</sup> “Savings Firm Building Latest in Architecture,” *FWST*, June 28, 1959, Section 2, 13.

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plaza has been altered although Noguchi's sculpture remains. A financial institution still occupies the lower levels of the building.<sup>45</sup>

The Equitable Savings Association's three-story building at 811 Lamar Street was dedicated on June 19, 1961. Designed by Preston M. Geren, it was initially planned to be ten stories, but the expansion never took place. Geren "used special solar shading devices, carefully angled and proportioned to effectively shield the interior from direct sunlight and horizontal glare" while allowing for a full view of Burnett Park located across the street to the west. It was demolished in 2002.<sup>46</sup>

The Union Bank & Trust's home at 100 Main Street was completed in 1962 across the street from the elegant Tarrant County Courthouse. The four-story International Style building was designed by Preston M. Geren. In 1982, the exterior received a Postmodern makeover with the addition of brown brick walls and cast stone trim around large expanses of windows to make it more compatible with the county courthouse and the brick buildings of downtown's Sundance Square. This building still exists.<sup>47</sup>

As previously discussed, Fort Worth National Bank moved into downtown's first skyscraper sheathed with reflective glass in 1974. At 37 stories, it was the city's tallest building at the time of its construction. The octagonal-shaped building was designed by Atlanta's John Portman and included his signature feature—a multilevel atrium. The building was significantly altered after being struck by a tornado in 2000. Its reflective skin was removed, and balconies added at its corners when it was converted to condominiums.

*Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer (1891-1969)*

Preston Murdoch Geren, Sr. was born in Sherman, Texas on November 2, 1891. He attended high school in Sherman, after which he attended the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas (now Texas A&M University) where he pursued a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering. During his summer break, he worked as a draftsman for architect John Tulloch in Sherman. Over the five years following his graduation in 1912, he held various jobs, working as a structural detailer for Mosher Steel Co. and a structural draftsman for the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad, both in Dallas. From 1913-14, he worked with his future brother-in-law, Frederick Ernest Giesecke, in Austin under the firm name Giesecke & Geren. He then oversaw the San Antonio office of a Dallas steel company until the United States' entrance into World War I. In 1917, he entered First Officer's Training School at Leon Springs Camp, south of San Antonio, and was commissioned as a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Geren fought in battles in the Argonne Forest and Saint-Mihiel in France. He was wounded in action and was awarded the Purple Heart, the Croix de Guerre by the government of France, and a citation by the commander of the American Expeditionary Forces. After the war, he was employed as chief engineer for J. F. Johnson, General Contractor, in Austin, from 1919-21. From 1921 to

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<sup>45</sup> Gerald Moorhead, James W. Steely, Willis C. Winters, Mark Gunderson, Jay C. Henry, and Joel Warren Barna. *Buildings of Texas: East, North Central, Panhandle and South Plains, and West*. Society of Architectural Historians, Buildings of the United States. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019), 208.

<sup>46</sup> "Dedication Set Early Monday," *FWST*, June 18, 1961, 17; "Equitable Savings Association," *Architecture in Fort Worth*, accessed August 19, 2021 ([www.fortwortharchitecture.com/equitable.htm](http://www.fortwortharchitecture.com/equitable.htm)). The quoted description of the building is from Geren's application for Fellowship in the American Institute of Architects. See membership file for Geren, Preston M., *AIA Historical Directory and Membership File*, accessed August 11, 2021

([www.aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/35540586/ahd1015707](http://www.aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/35540586/ahd1015707)).

<sup>47</sup> E. D. Early, "Home Builders Set Up Land Division," *FWST*, August 6, 1961, Section 4, 5; "100 Main Place," *Architecture in Fort Worth*, accessed October 20, 2021 (<https://www.fortwortharchitecture.com/100main.htm>).

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1923 he was a professor and head of the Department of Architectural Engineering at Oklahoma A&M College (now Oklahoma State University) in Stillwater and engaged in engineering consulting.<sup>48</sup>

In 1923, Geren began a ten-year association with Sanguinet, Staats, and Hedrick, later Wyatt C. Hedrick, Inc., in Fort Worth where he oversaw the development of architectural plans and engineering design. Projects for this firm included the Fort Worth Club (1925-26), the Electric (1929-30) and Fair (1930) Buildings, and the Texas & Pacific Passenger Terminal (1930-31). In 1934, he started his own firm practicing under his name. When his son, Preston M. Geren, Jr. (1923-2013) joined him in 1949, the firm became known as Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer. Following the addition of associate partners in January 1969, the firm's name was changed to Preston M. Geren, Architect & Engineer and Associates.<sup>49</sup>

Like numerous Fort Worth architects, Geren's firm designed public facilities that benefited from New Deal work relief funds in the 1930s. These included Arlington Heights High School (1936-37), Lily B. Clayton Elementary School addition (1936-38, NR 2016), Elmwood Sanitarium (1937), Farrington Field (1938-39, NR 2022), and Fire Station No. 14, Polytechnic (1938-39). The schools and fire station were designed in Period Revival styles while Farrington Field and Elmwood Sanitarium were designed in the Classical Moderne style. He was also associated with five other Fort Worth architects who designed the city's two public housing complexes, Ripley Arnold Place and Butler Place (1938-39, the latter was listed in the National Register in 2011). Depression-era private projects included Mathews Memorial Methodist Church (1936-38), Diamond Hill Baptist Church (1939), Hemphill Heights Masonic Lodge (1939), and Rosen Heights Baptist Church (1941). Depression-era projects outside of Fort Worth included the Saginaw School, Saginaw (c. 1937), Blackstone Building, Tyler (1938, NR 2002), and Palo Pinto County Courthouse, Palo Pinto (1940-42, NR 2007).

During World War II, Geren partnered with Fort Worth architects Wiley G. Clarkson, Joseph R. Pelich, and Joe Rady on the construction of McCloskey General Hospital in Temple, Harmon General Hospital at Longview, and Childress Army Airfield in Childress. He was also a member of the Renegotiation Board, Southwest Division, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers at Dallas. Post-World War II projects in Fort Worth included the Fort Worth National Bank Parking Garage (1950), Continental National Bank (1952, 1956-57), Public Schools Gymnasium (1953 NR 2022), Colonial Country Club Clubhouse (with John Floore, 1954-55), Travis Avenue Baptist Church (1957-59), and the Equitable Savings Association (1961). His firm also designed the Panola County Courthouse in Carthage, Texas (1953).<sup>50</sup> Following its completion in 1952, Geren moved his firm from the Neil P. Anderson Building to the Fort Worth National Bank Building's penthouse,

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<sup>48</sup> Geren, Preston M., *AIA Historical Directory and Membership File*; Judith Singer Cohen, "Geren, Preston Murdoch, Sr." *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed January 30, 2021 (<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/geren-preston-muroch-sr>). Published by the Texas State Historical Association; "P. M. Geren, Top Designer of the City's Skyline, Dies at 77," *FWST*, September 22, 1969, 1. The description of his work experience follows chronologies found in Geren's AIA Membership File, which varies slightly from the chronology given in Cohen's entry in the *Handbook of Texas Online*.

<sup>49</sup> Geren, Preston M., *AIA Historical Directory and Membership File*.

<sup>50</sup> Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey, *Fort Worth: Upper North, Northeast, East, Far South and Far West* (Fort Worth: Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County, 1989), 40, 48, 105, 216; Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey, *Fort Worth: Near North Side, and West Side, Westover Hills* (Fort Worth: Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County, 1988), 132, 169, 174; Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey, *Fort Worth Southside* (Fort Worth: Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County, 1986), 81, 96, 104, 114; Judith Singer Cohen, *Cowtown Moderne: Art Deco Architecture of Fort Worth, Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1988), 21, 146; Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey, *Selected Tarrant County Communities* (Fort Worth: Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County, 1990), 155; Historic Sites Atlas, *Texas Historical Commission*, accessed August 9, 2021 (<https://atlas.thc.gov/AdvanceSerach>); Mavis P. Kelsey, Sr. and Donald H. Dyal, *The Courthouses of Texas: A Guide* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993, second printing 2000), 212, 213.

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providing him a view of the city he helped shape from a building his firm designed. The office was later moved to the building's eleventh floor. The firm was still located in the building at the time of Geren's death in 1969.<sup>51</sup>

Regionally or nationally known firms often collaborated with Geren's firm on the design of Fort Worth or area projects. These included Little Chapel in the Woods, Texas Woman's University, Denton (O'Neil Ford and Associates, 1939) and the followings projects in Fort Worth: Commercial Standard Building (MacKie and Kamrath, 1955), First National Bank (Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1960), Louis Kahn's Kimbell Art Museum (1969-72); Fort Worth City Hall (Edward Durell Stone and Associates, 1969-71), and Sid Richardson Physical Science Building, Texas Christian University (Paul Rudolph, 1969).<sup>52</sup>

Projects that received design awards or recognition in professional publications included Robert E. Lee High School, Midland, Texas (Design Citation, 1960, American Association of School Administrators and AIA); First National Bank, Fort Worth (Award of Merit, 1961, Texas Society of Architects); Lower School Building, Fort Worth Country Day School, Fort Worth (Design Citation, 1965, American Association of School Administrators and AIA); Carling Brewing Company, Fort Worth (Top Ten Plants, 1965, *Factory Magazine*); and the Student Center, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth (Merit Award, 1966, *Kitchen Design Institution Magazine*).<sup>53</sup>

Geren was active in professional, civic, and community organizations. In addition to being a registered architect, he was also a registered engineer. He became an associate member of the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1920 and a full member in 1930. In 1955, he was elected to life membership. The following year, he was named Engineer of the Year by the Fort Worth Chapter, Texas Society of Professional Engineers and served as president of the Texas Construction Council. He was elected to fellowship in the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1959. Geren was accepted into membership in the American Institute of Architects in 1942. He was a charter member of the Fort Worth chapter of the organization and served as its president in 1949. He was also a charter member of the Texas Society of Architects. Civic work included service as chairman of the City of Fort Worth's Zoning Board of Adjustment from 1940 to 1946. He was a member of the committee which wrote the city's first building code in 1928 and was chairman of the committee that wrote the revised building code which was adopted in 1959. Geren received the City of Fort Worth's Distinguished Service Award in 1951 and 1959, a Distinguished Service Citation from the Texas Construction Council in 1957, and the Loyal Service Award from the Fort Worth Technical Club in 1930. Despite his service to his professions and the community, Geren's application for Fellowship in the American Institute of Architects was repeatedly denied by the national organization in the 1960s. However, Geren remained active in his professions until his death. The mayor of Fort Worth and the county judge proclaimed February 5, 1969, as "Preston M. Geren, Sr. Day" in recognition of his extraordinary service to his professions and community. That same day, the Fort Worth Chapter of Associated General Contractors recognized his many accomplishments at a testimonial dinner. He died September 21, 1969.<sup>54</sup> Following his death, the firm, under the helm of Preston M. Geren, Jr., became known as Geren Associates. It was acquired by Houston-based CRS in 1981.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Various Fort Worth City Directories published between 1949 and 1971, available through *Ancestry.com* (accessed September 14, 2021).

<sup>52</sup> Moorhead, et al, *Buildings of Texas: East, North Central, Panhandle and South Plains, and West*, 207, 208, 215-16, 220-21, 227, 235.

<sup>53</sup> Geren, Preston M., *AIA Historical Directory and Membership File*.

<sup>54</sup> "Fort Worth Engineers Chapter Selects Geren Man of Year," *FWST*, February 20, 1956, 2; Geren, Preston M., *AIA Historical Directory and Membership File*.

<sup>55</sup> CRS became CRS Sistine Inc. in 1983. See "CRSS INC. History," *Funding Universe*, accessed October 18, 2021 (<http://fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/crss-inc-history>).



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*Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon Associates, Consulting Architect*

The New York architectural firm Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon is best known for its design of skyscrapers, in particular the design of New York City's Empire State Building (1929-1931, NHL 1986). The firm was started in 1924 by Canadian R. H. Shreve and William Lamb of Brooklyn. A third partner, Arthur Harmon, joined the firm in 1929 after it received the commission for the Empire State Building.<sup>56</sup> Other notable buildings include the twenty-two-story Art Deco R. J. Reynolds Building in Winston-Salem, North Carolina (1927-1929, NR 2014); Insurance Company of North America Building, New York City (1932, NR 1999); Hunter College (1938-40), described in the *AIA Guide to New York City* as a "proud self-confident monument in the city's early International Modernism," and the Mutual Life of New York (MONY) Building in New York City (1950).<sup>57</sup>

Regarding its work on the Fort Worth National Bank Building, Shreve, Lamb and Harmon Associates issued a statement that read:

The new office building and banking quarters were planned to produce economically a structure emphasizing in design the friendliness of this great banking institution. In it has been incorporated the best in building construction.

The collaboration of the bank officials and the co-operation of the general contractor and many sub contractors [*sic*] have resulted in an exceptionally functional bank and building. We are proud to have had a part in the design of this newest addition to Fort Worth's growing skyline.<sup>58</sup>

*Thomas S. Byrne (1891-1962), General Contractor*

Thomas S. Byrne was born in Austin, Texas on February 20, 1891, the same year as Preston M. Geren with whom he often collaborated. He attended the University of Texas at Austin before transferring to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, graduating in 1913 with a degree in architectural engineering. Following graduation, he worked for the Mosher Manufacturing Company until 1915 when he joined Wyatt C. Hedrick's construction company where he was employed as an estimator, job superintendent, and then was promoted to manager of Hedrick's Fort Worth office until 1921. However, during World War I, he served as a captain in the Army's ordnance department and supervised the construction of the U. S. Nitrate Plant No. 1 in Sheffield, Alabama and Plant No. 3 in Toledo, Ohio. After leaving Hedrick's firm, he was employed as superintendent of construction with the Invincible Oil Company.<sup>59</sup>

Byrne started his own construction firm in 1923. At the time of his death in 1962, it was one of the largest contracting and engineering firms in Texas. His company constructed many familiar buildings in Fort Worth, concentrating on commercial and institutional work, although it did construct a few residences. In addition to the Fort Worth National Bank, they included the Worth Mills (1924), McKee House (1924-27), Elks Lodge (1928, NR 1984), Montgomery Ward & Co. (1928), Hubbard Elementary School (1935), Cattle Exposition/Billy Bob's (1936), W. C. Stripling Department

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<sup>56</sup> "Shreve and Lamb (1924-1970s)," *North Carolina Architects & Builders*, accessed August 8, 2021 (<https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000414>).

<sup>57</sup> "Shreve and Lamb (1924-1970s)"; Norval White and Elliot Willensky, *AIA Guide to New York City*, Fourth Addition (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000), 400; "1740 Broadway," *Wikipedia*, accessed August 22, 2021 ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1740\\_Broadway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1740_Broadway)).

<sup>58</sup> "Architects, Engineers, Builders of Bank Praised," FWNB Special Section, 16.

<sup>59</sup> "Thomas S. Byrne," Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas Death Certificates, 1903-1982, Austin, Texas, *Ancestry.com*, Texas, U.S. Death Certificates, 1903-1982 [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2013, accessed August 6, 2021 ([https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2272/images/40394\\_b062614-00944](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2272/images/40394_b062614-00944)); "Funeral Services Today for Thomas Byrne," *FWST*, May 25, 1962, Sec. 3, 16.

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Store (1937), American Airways Hangar & Administration Building (1938, NR 2008), Rosemont Junior High School (1938), Dr. Pepper Bottling Company (1938), Second Church of Christ, Scientist (1948-49), Commercial Standard Building (1955), Amon Carter Museum of Western Art (1961), and the Seminary South Shopping Center (1961-62).<sup>60</sup> Projects outside of Fort Worth included Waples-Platter Coffee Roaster Building, Dallas (1925, NR 1978) and Deaderick Hall and Auditorium, Odessa College, Odessa (1952).<sup>61</sup>

Of his firm's work on the Fort Worth National Bank Building, Thomas S. Byrne said, "The construction of the new Fort Worth National Bank Building was without a doubt one of the most pleasant tasks faced by Thomas S. Byrne, Inc., in its 34 years [of] experience." Byrne's firm moved its headquarters into the building upon its completion. It remained there until at least 1971.<sup>62</sup>

A lifelong bachelor, Byrne died in Fort Worth on May 24, 1962, at the age of 71. He was buried in Greenwood Cemetery. After his death, his namesake company continued to construct important works in Fort Worth. These included the Kimbell Art Museum (1969-72) and the renovation of numerous buildings as part of the Sundance Square downtown redevelopment. Today, the company is the largest Fort Worth-based construction firm as well as the largest Hispanic-owned construction firm. It retains a statewide reach. Projects in the twenty-first century include the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, Austin (2001), restoration of the Tarrant County Courthouse Clock Tower, Fort Worth (2012), and Seguin Public Library, Seguin (2016).<sup>63</sup>

## Conclusion

The 1952 Fort Worth National Bank Building is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in area of Commerce and Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance. Designed by the prominent firm Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer, it commands a massive presence in downtown Fort Worth which was appropriate for the city's largest bank. It is an excellent local example of an early post-World War II Modernist high-rise building in Fort Worth. Walls of rust-colored brick and Virginia greenstone spandrels beneath flush metal windows reflect an early post-World War II characteristic of smooth, unadorned walls while also creating visual interest through vertical bands of repeating colors. The building's simplified design was an expression of the bank's emphasis on functionality for bank employees and the customers it served as well its many tenants. The period of significance is 1952, the year it was completed to 1972. The latter date acknowledges the resource's continued use for the purposes for which it was constructed and corresponds to the National Register's fifty-year threshold for listing.

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<sup>60</sup> Historic Sites Atlas, *Texas Historical Commission*, accessed August 9, 2021 (<https://atlas.thc.gov/AdvanceSerach>). "Funeral Services Today for Thomas Byrne"; Roark, *Fort Worth Central Business District*, 30; Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey, *Fort Worth: Upper North, Northeast, East, Far South and Far West*, 36, 228, 238; Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey, *Fort Worth: Near North Side, and West Side, Westover Hills*, 42, 120, 132, 133, 138, 202; Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey, *Fort Worth Southside*, 10; Cohen, *Cowtown Moderne: Art Deco Architecture of Fort Worth, Texas*, 121, 152, 154; "Sears Unit on Schedule," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, August 6, 1961, Section 4-1.

<sup>61</sup> Historic Sites Atlas, *Texas Historical Commission*, accessed August 9, 2021 (<https://atlas.thc.gov/AdvanceSerach>); Moorhead, et al, *Buildings of Texas: East, North Central, Panhandle and South Plains, and West*, 466.

<sup>62</sup> "Architects, Engineers, Builders of Bank Praised," FWNB Special Section, 16; *Polk's Fort Worth City Directory, 1971*, 87, Ancestry.com, U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995 [database on-line], Lehi, UT. USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011, accessed September 26, 2021 ([https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/42748\\_356448-00114](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/42748_356448-00114)).

<sup>63</sup> Roark, *Fort Worth Central Business District*, 87-89; "Our Company" and "Featured Projects," *Thos. S. Byrne, Inc.*, accessed August 23, 2021 (<https://tsbyrne.com/projects/featuredprojects>).

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## Section 10

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The boundary of the nominated resource consists of two tracts described below.

*TRACT 1:* BEING 0.334 acre of land comprised of Lots 11 through 16, Block 113, ORIGINAL TOWN OF FORT WORTH, Tarrant County, Texas, an unrecorded plat, and being more particularly described by metes and bounds, as follows:

BEGINNING at a building corner for a multistory building lying at the North corner of Lot 16, of said Block 113, ORIGINAL TOWN OF FORT WORTH, and said Point of Beginning being the intersection of Southeast right-of-way line of Seventh Street (a 60 foot wide public right-of-way) with the Southwest right-of-way line of Main Street (an 80 foot wide public right-of way);

THENCE S 30°00'00" E 150.00 feet, along the Southwest line of said Main Street, and the Northeast boundary line of Lots 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 of said Block 113, to a building corner at the East corner of Lot 11, of said Block 113;

THENCE S 60°00'00" W 100.00 feet, departing said right-of-way line and running along the Southeast face of a multi-story building and the Southeast boundary line of said Lot 11 of Block 113, ORIGINAL TOWN OF FORT WORTH to a point at the South corner of said Lot 11;

THENCE N 30°00'00" W 150.00 feet, along the Southwest boundary line of said Lots 11 through 16, to a point at the West corner of Lot 16, lying in the Southeast right-of-way line of aforesaid Seventh Street;

THENCE N 60°00'00" E 100.00 feet, along the Northwest boundary line of said Lot 16, and the Southeast right-of-way line of said Seventh Street, to THE PLACE OF BEGINNING, containing 0.334 acres (15,000 square feet) of land, more or less.

*TRACT 2 (Leasehold Estate):* BEING 0.334 acre of land comprised of Lots 3 through 8, Block 113, ORIGINAL TOWN OF FORT WORTH, Tarrant County, Texas, an unrecorded plat, and being more particularly described by metes and bounds, as follows:

BEGINNING at a building corner for a multistory building lying at the West corner of Lot 8, of said Block 113, ORIGINAL TOWN OF FORT WORTH, and said Point of Beginning being the intersection of Southeast right-of-way line of Seventh Street (a 60 foot wide public right-of-way) with the Northeast right-of-way line of Houston Street (an 80 foot wide public right-of way);

THENCE N 60°00'00" E 100.00 feet, along the Southeast right-of-way line of said Seventh Street, and the Northwest boundary line of said Lot 8, to a point, at the North corner of said Lot 8;

THENCE S 30°00'00" E 150.00 feet, along the Northeast boundary line of said Lots 3 through 8, to a point at the East corner of said Lot 13;

THENCE S 60°00'00" W 100.00 feet, along the Southeast face of the aforesaid multistory building, and the Southeast boundary line of said Lot 3 of Block 113, ORIGINAL TOWN OF FORT WORTH, to a building corner at the South corner of said Lot 3, lying in the Northeast right-of-way line of aforesaid Houston Street;

THENCE N 30°00'00" W 150.00 feet, along the Northeast right-of-way line of said Houston Street, and the Southwest Boundary line of said Lots 3 through 8, to THE PLACE OF BEGINNING, containing 0.334 acre (15,000 square feet) of

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land, more or less.

**Boundary Justification:** This is the property historically associated with the nominated resource. It does not include the tunnel constructed in 1961 under Main Street that connected the building to the bank's Motor Bank and Annex located on the block to the east.

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**Maps**

**Map 1:** Location of Tarrant County, Texas



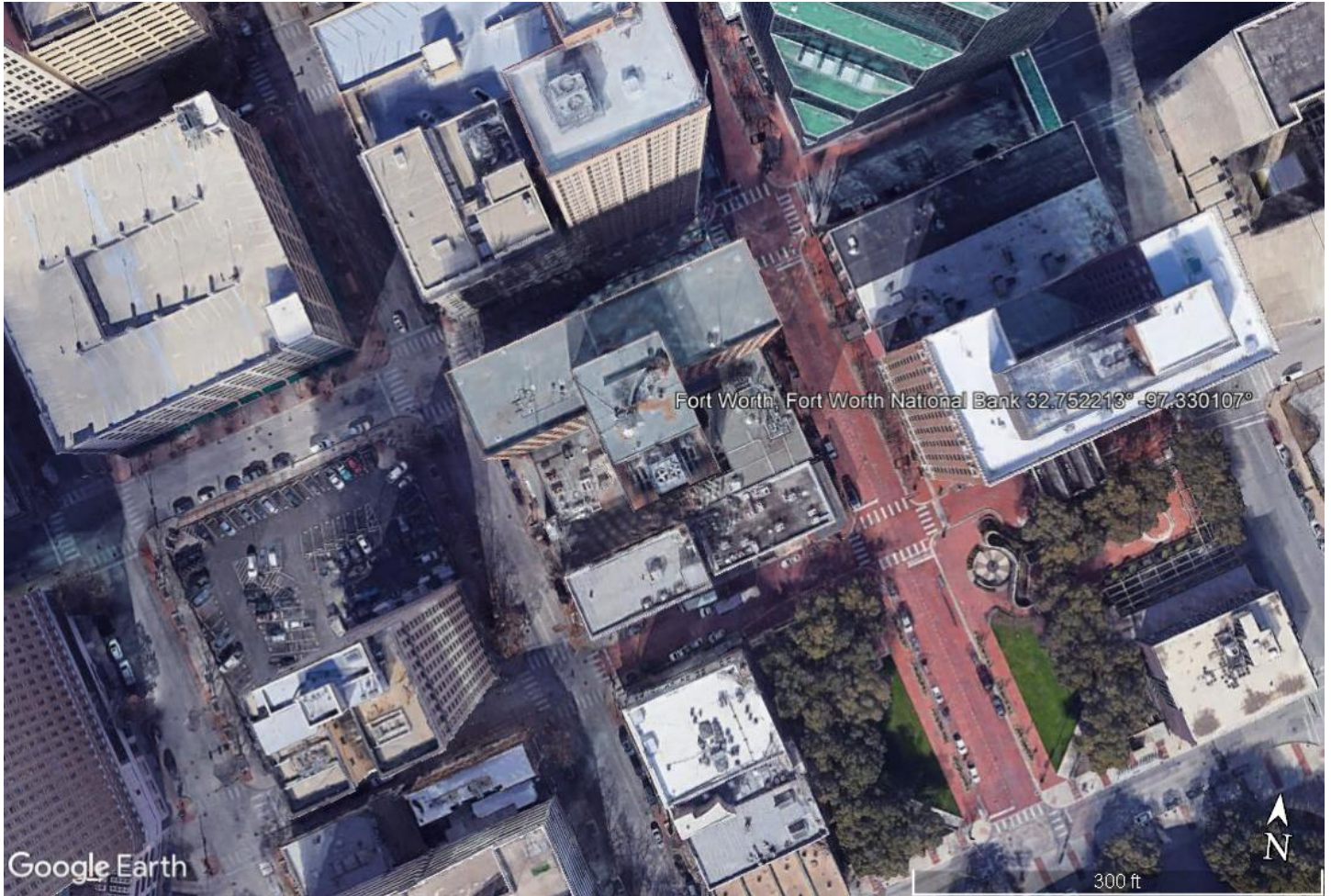
**Map 2:** Downtown Fort Worth, Google Earth Pro image, retrieved August 17, 2021





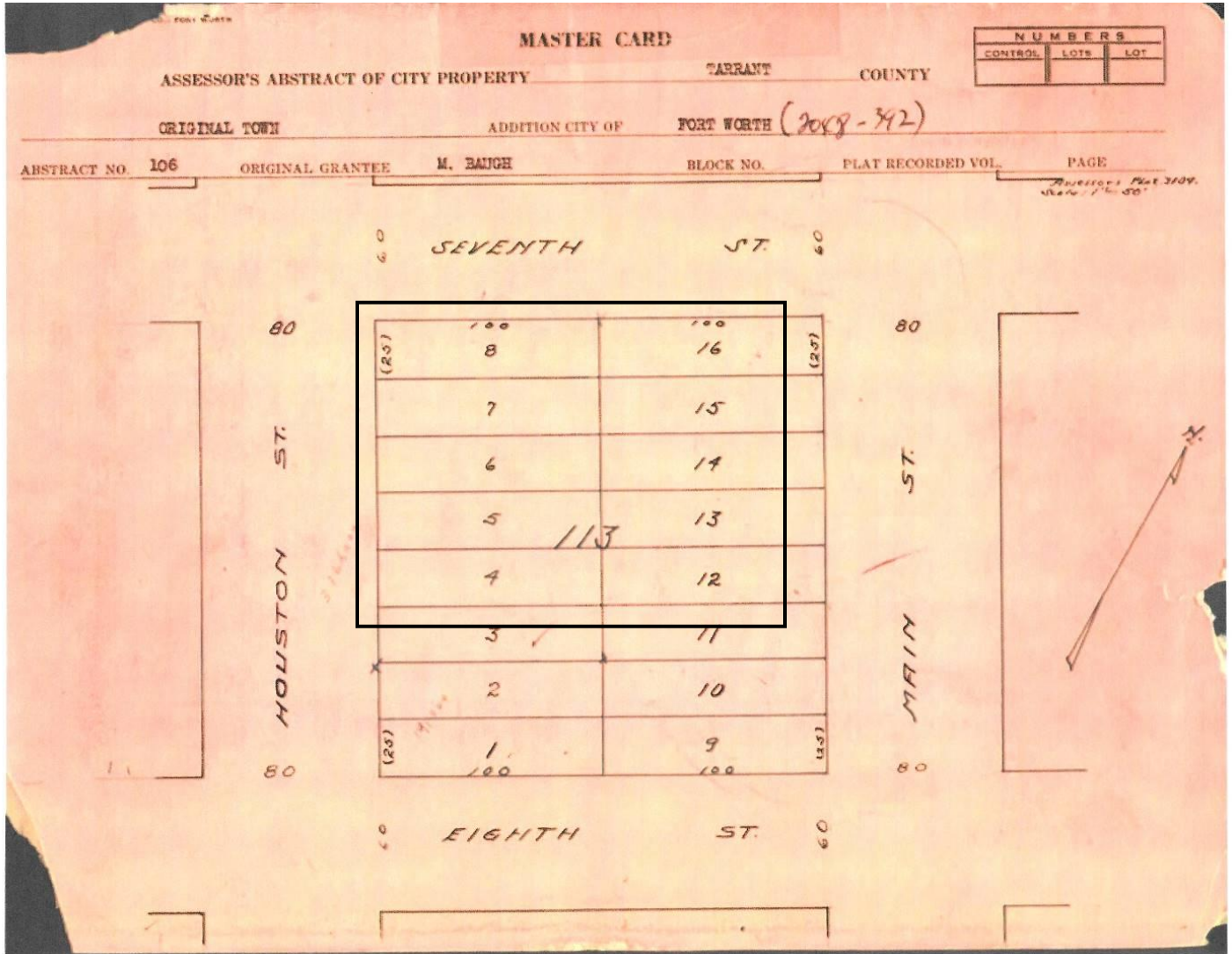
Fort Worth National Bank, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

**Map 3:** Fort Worth, Fort Worth National Bank 32.752213° -97.330107°. Source: Google Earth, accessed 8/9/22.



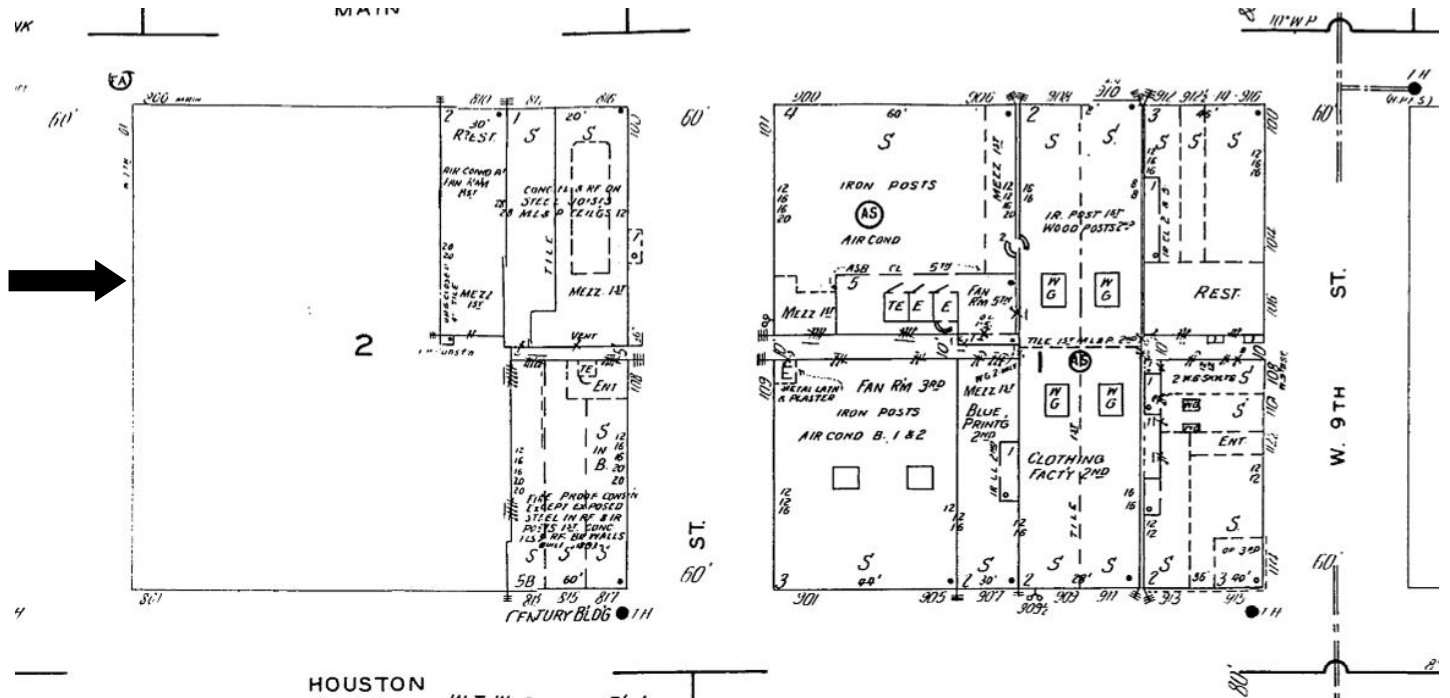
Fort Worth National Bank, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

**Map 4:** Block 113, Fort Worth Original Town, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas. The Fort Worth National Bank Building occupies Lots 3-8 and 11-16. Deed History Card, Tarrant County Tax Assessor's Office, accessed August 9, 2021 (www.tarrantcounty.com).



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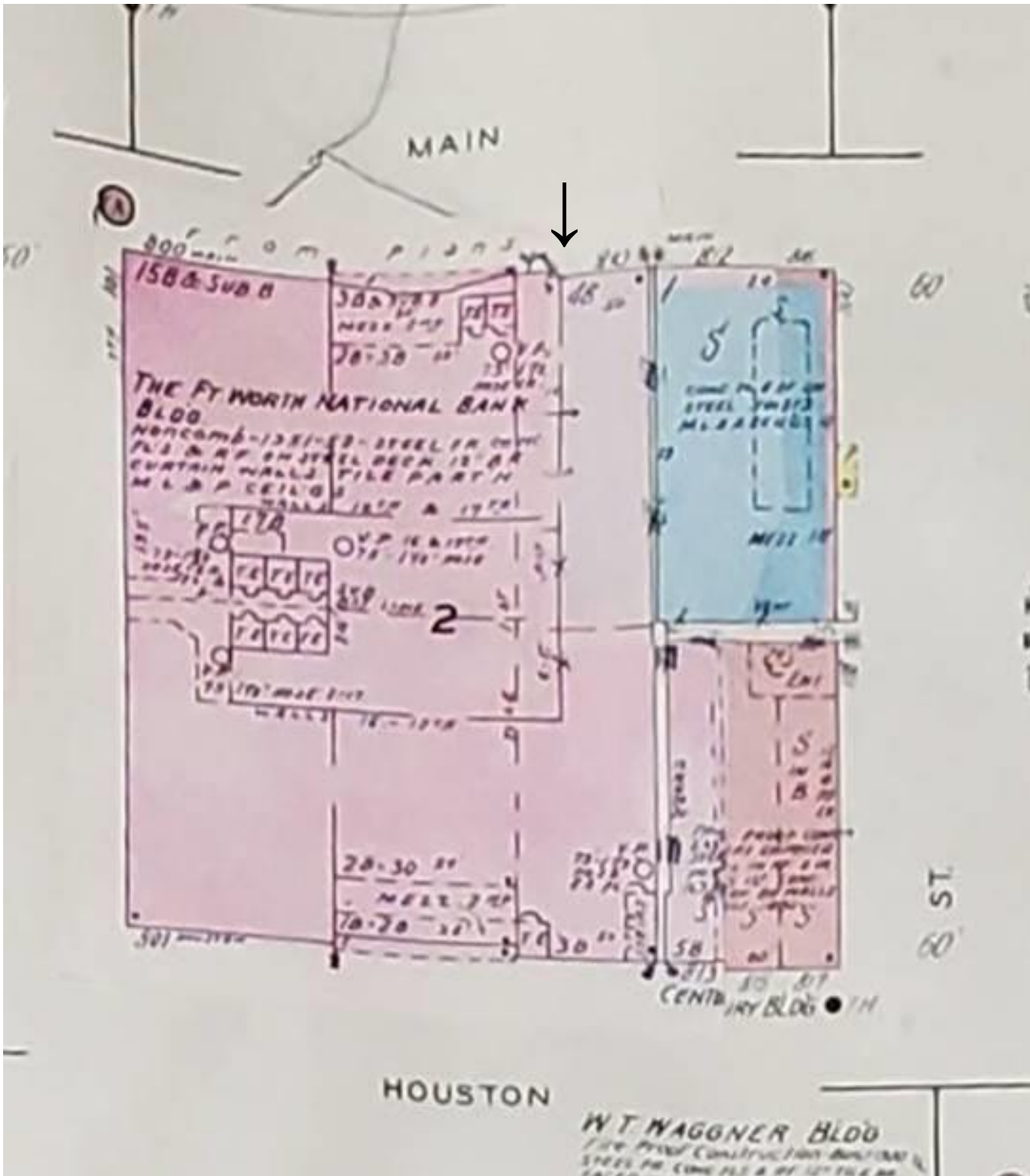
Map 5: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Co., Fort Worth, 1951, Volume 1, Sheet 4. Bank site cleared of buildings. ↖





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**Map 7:** Sanborn Insurance Map, Fort Worth (1951, updated 1961 or after), Volume 1, Sheet 4. Bank building after addition at southeast corner (addition indicated by arrow). *Courtesy Tarrant County Archives.* ↖



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**Map 8:** Delineation of the three segments of the building: slab, base, and tower. Checkered area of the base indicates the area where a fourth story and a small four-story addition were constructed in 1961. Google Earth Pro image, retrieved October 8, 2021.



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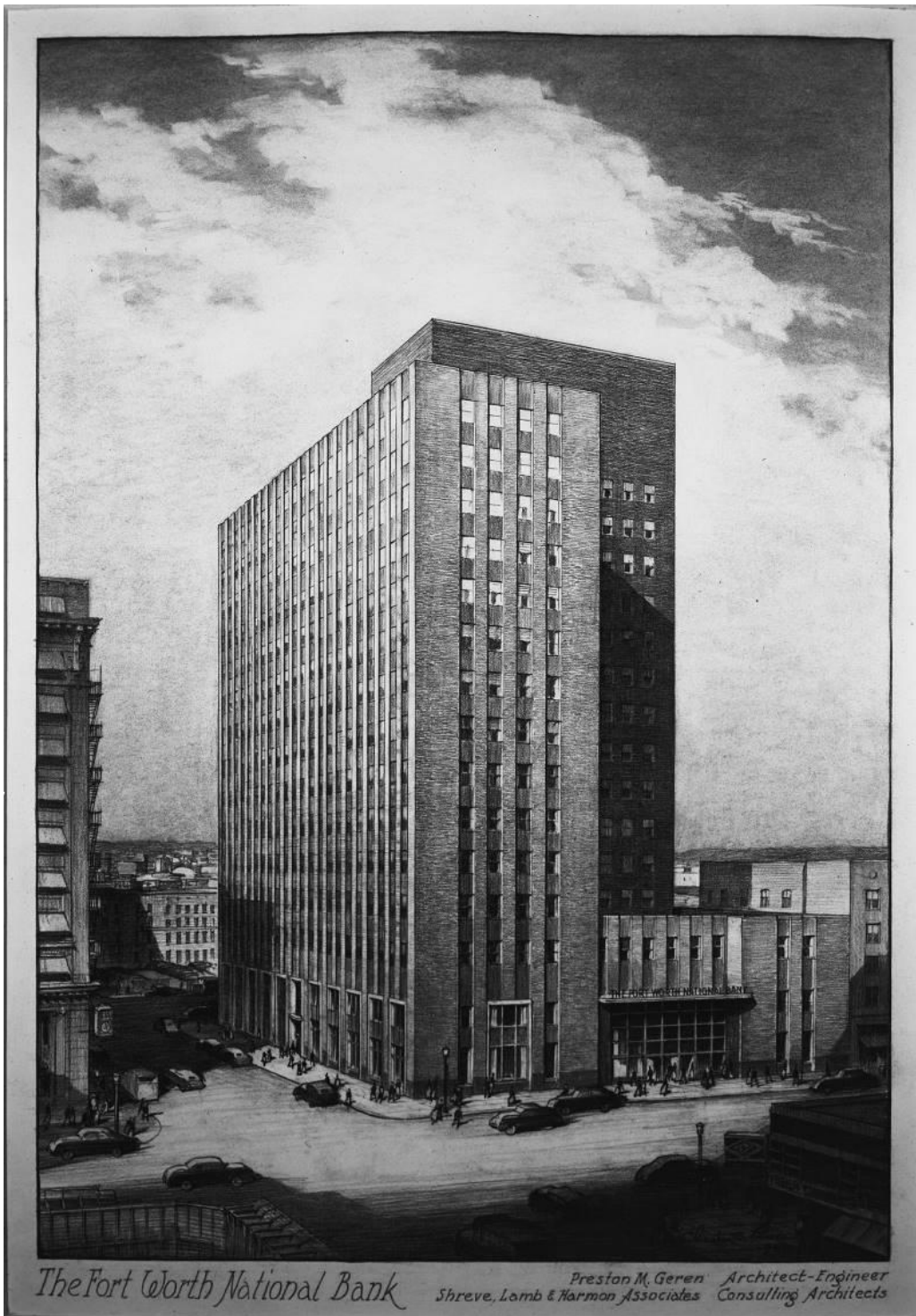
Figures

**Figure 1:** The four buildings that housed the Fort Worth National Bank prior to the construction of its building at 115 W. 7th Street. Fort Worth National Bank Special Section (Section 5), *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, August 31, 1952, 2.



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**Figure 2:** Postcard of architectural drawing of Fort Worth National Bank Building, c. 1950. Looking southeast at the north and west elevations. Preston M. Geren, Architect-Engineer; Shreve, Lamb & Harmon Associates, Consulting Architects. Courtesy *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-50-48-51. Identifier 20095391.





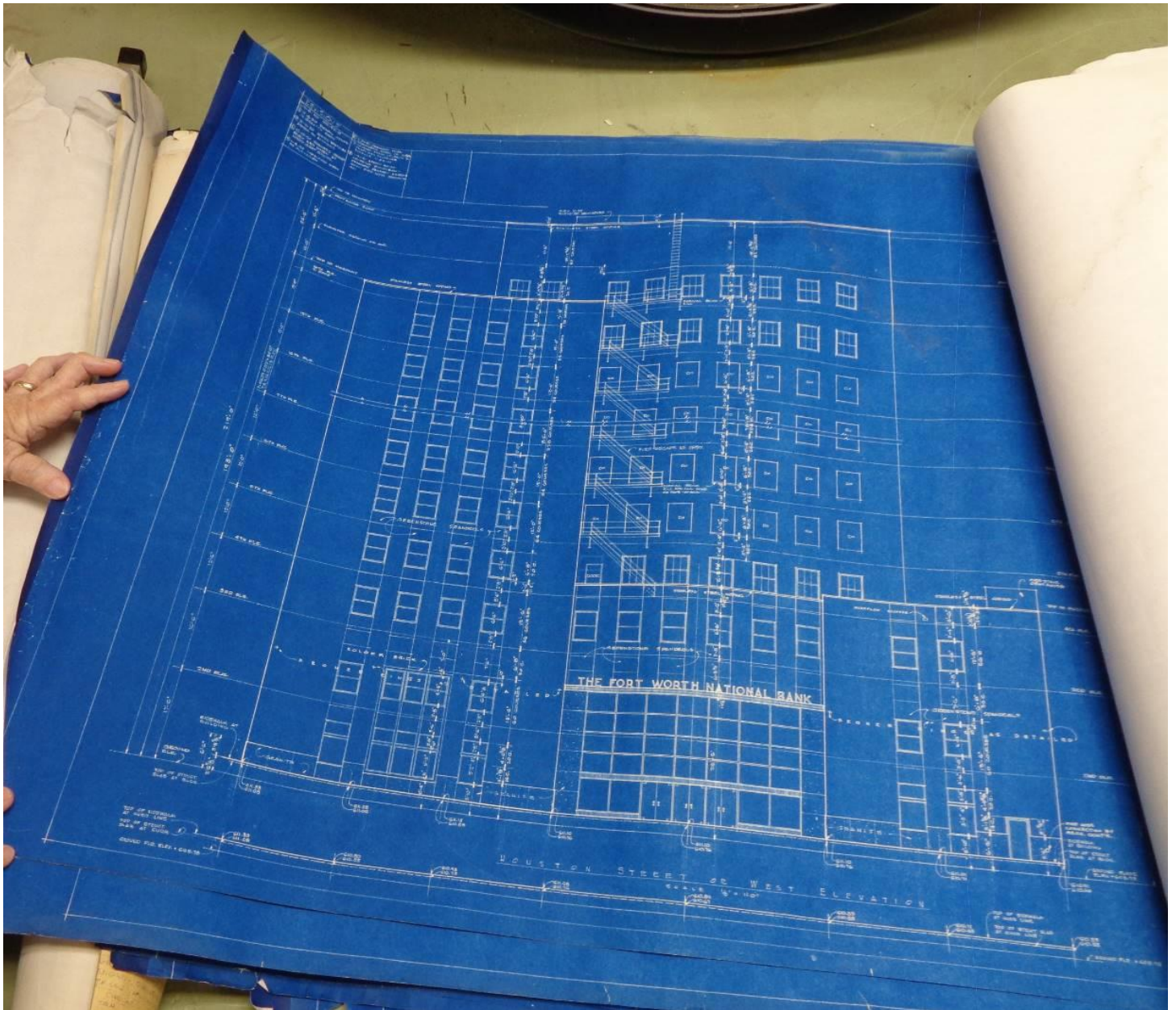
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**Figure 3:** Blueprint, Fort Worth National Bank Building, Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer. Main Street (east) elevation (Floors 1-7 and 14-16) before 1961 addition. Plan provided by Benbrooke Electric Partners LLC.



Fort Worth National Bank, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

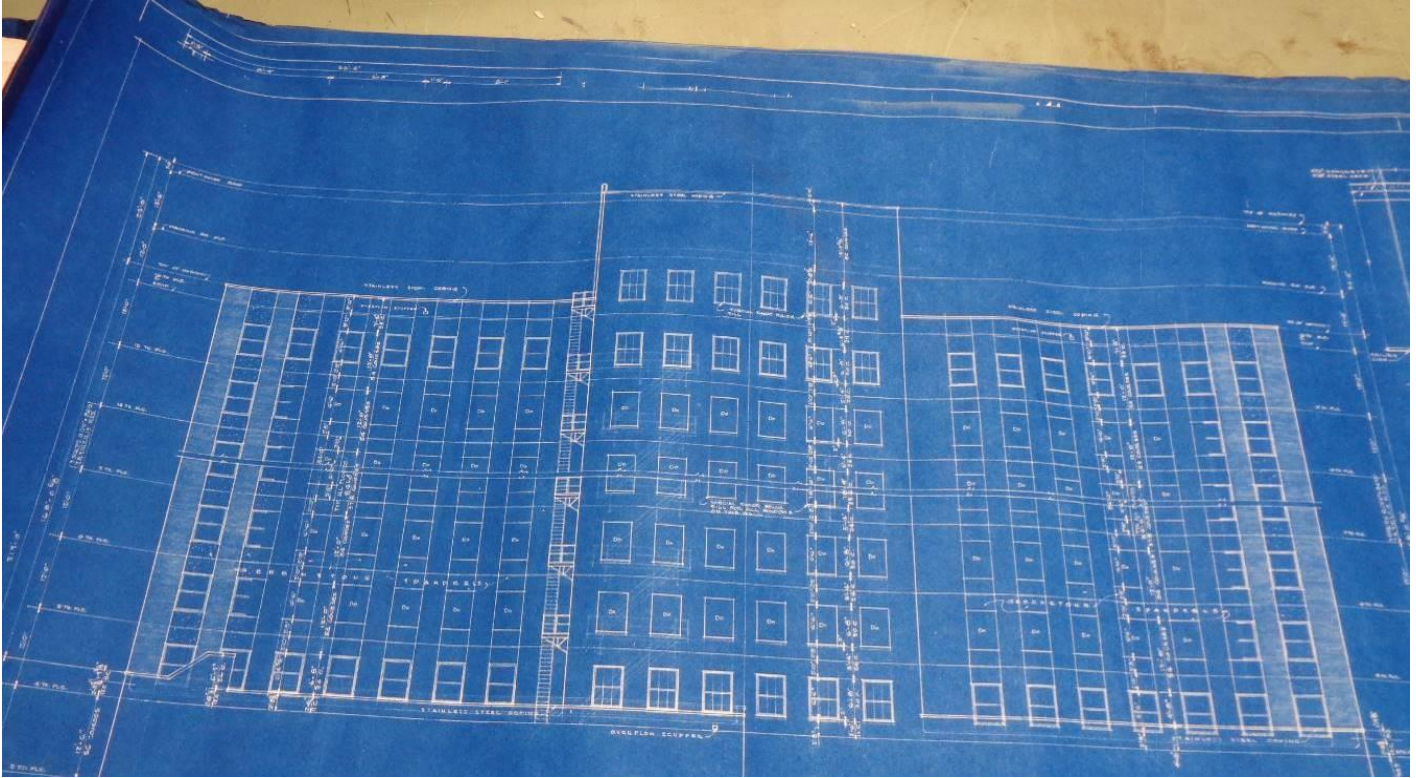
**Figure 4:** Blueprint, Fort Worth National Bank Building, Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer. Houston Street (west) elevation (Floors 1-7 and 14-16). Plan provided by Benbrooke Electric Partners LLC.



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**Figure 5:** Blueprint, Fort Worth National Bank Building, Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer. South elevation (Floors 5-7 and 14-16) before 1961 addition. Plan provided by Benbrooke Electric Partners LLC.



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Figure 6: Photo key, exterior (Photos 1-12). Google Maps, 2021.

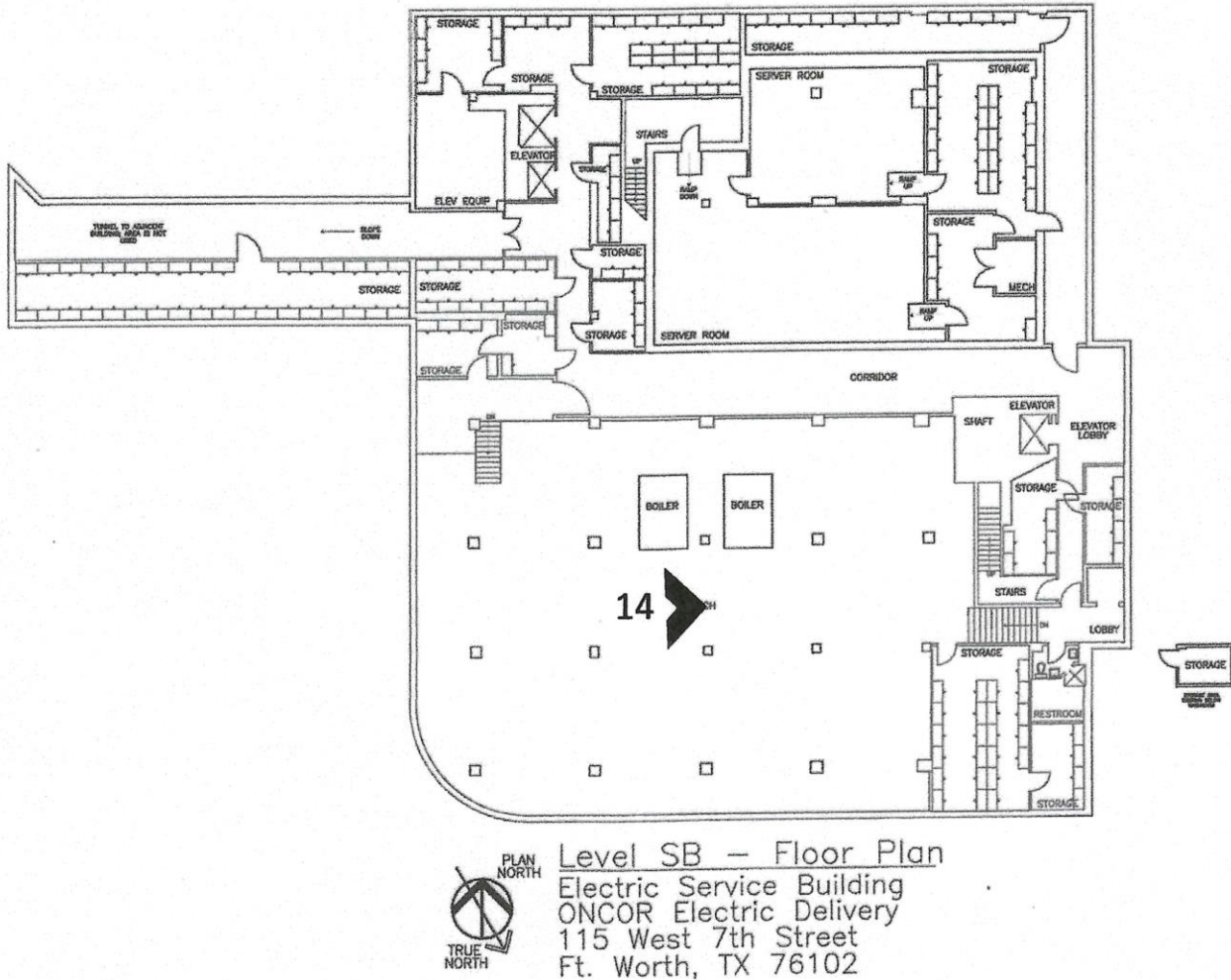


Figure 7: Photo key, roof (Photo 13). Google Earth Pro image, retrieved October 19, 2021.



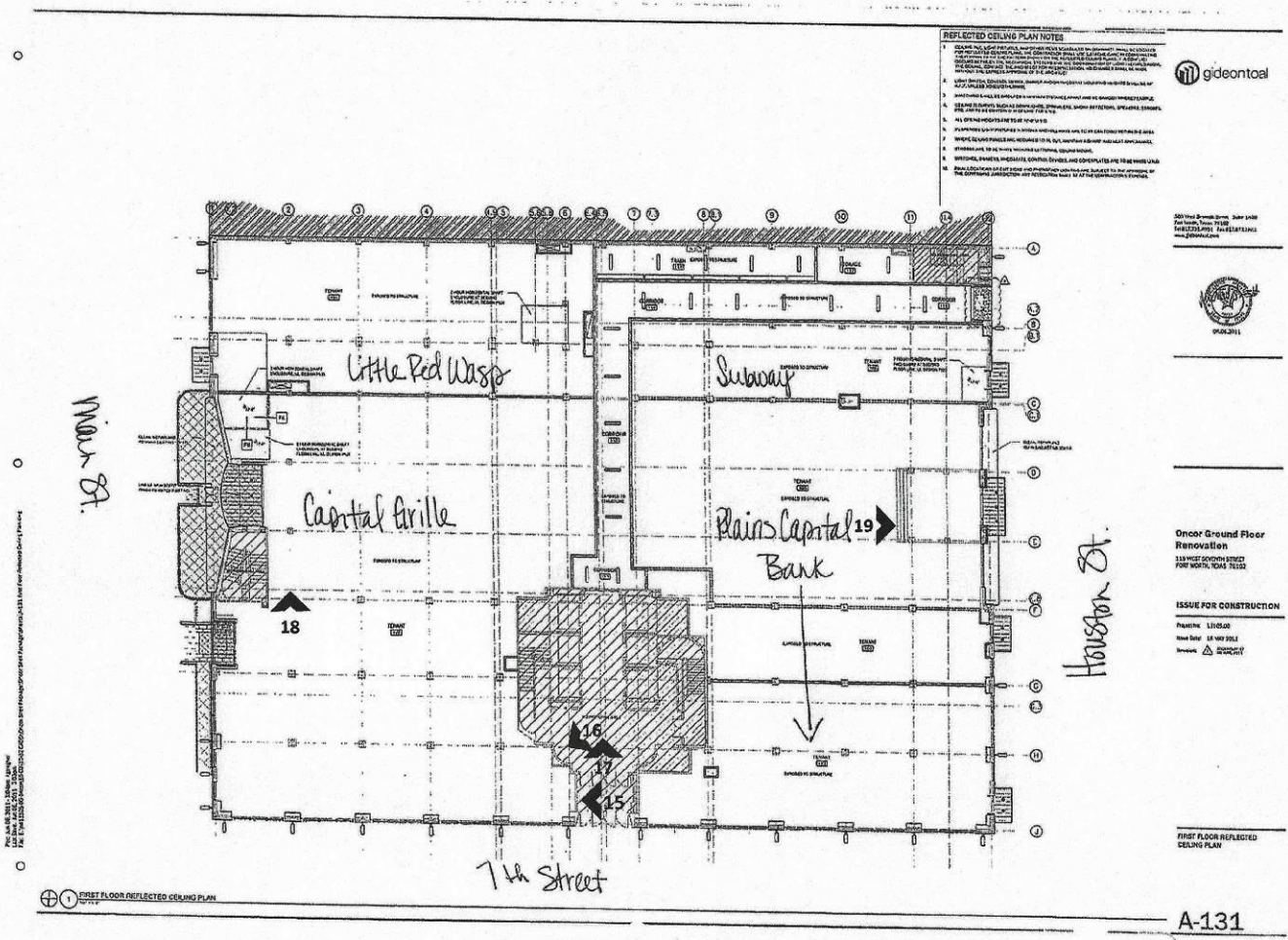
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**Figure 8:** Photo key, sub-basement (Photo 14). The tunnel that extends east under Main Street is not included in this nomination. Plan provided by Benbrooke Electric Partners LLC.



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Figure 9: Photo key, first floor (Photos 15-19). Plan provided by Benbrooke Electric Partners LLC.



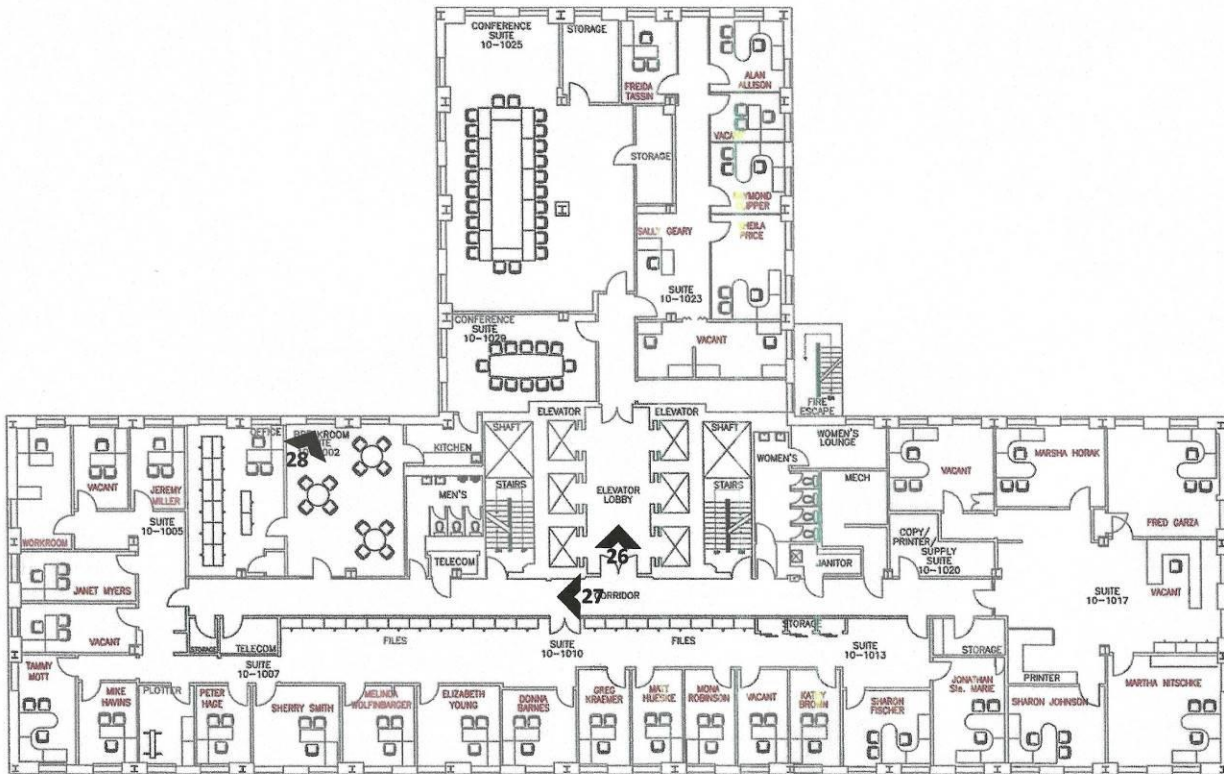






Fort Worth National Bank, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

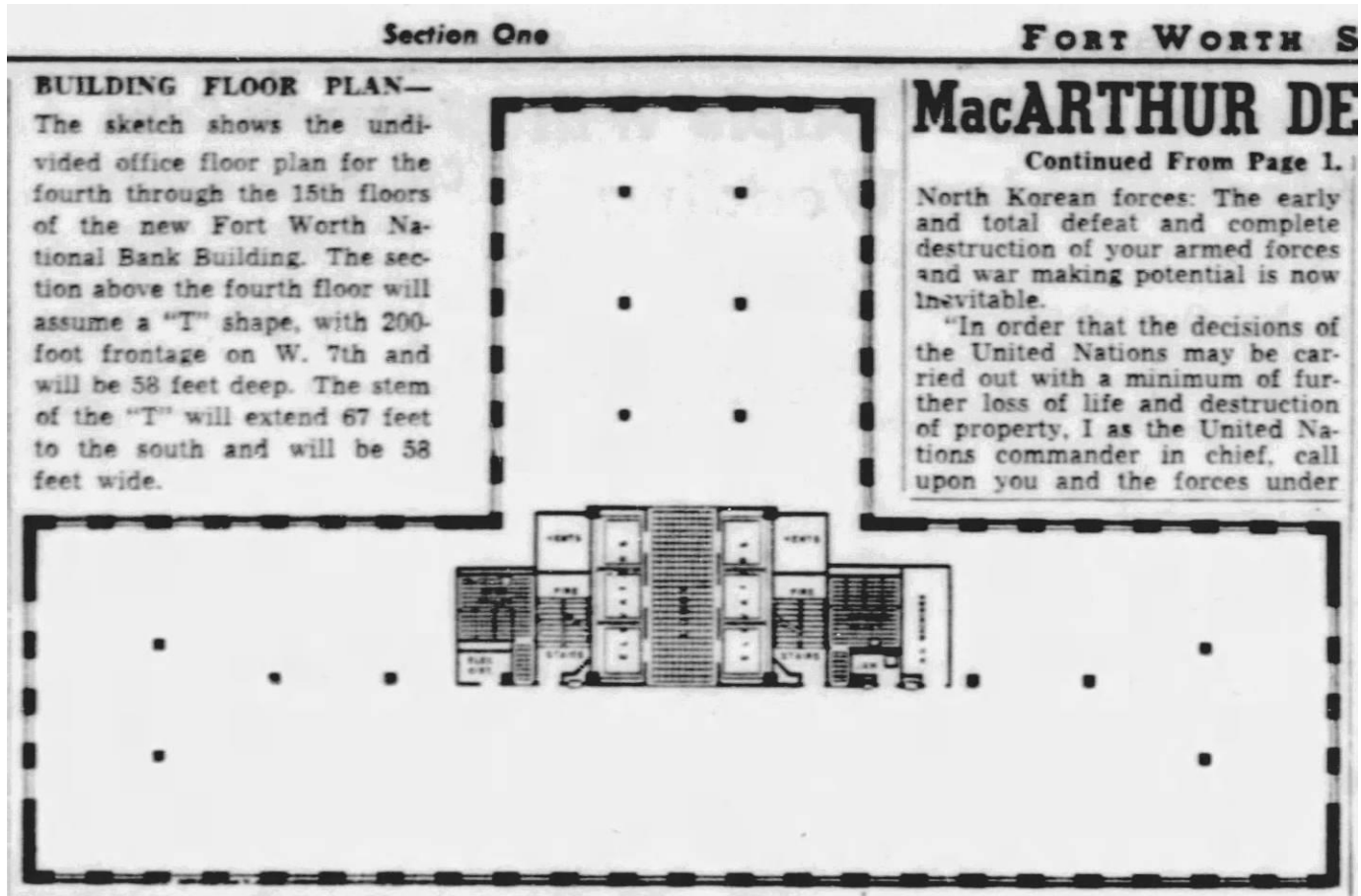
Figure 12: Photo key, tenth floor (Photos 26-28). Plan provided by Benbrooke Electric Partners LLC.



PLAN NORTH  
Level 10 – Floor Plan  
Electric Service Building  
ONCOR Electric Delivery  
115 West 7th Street  
Ft. Worth, TX 76102

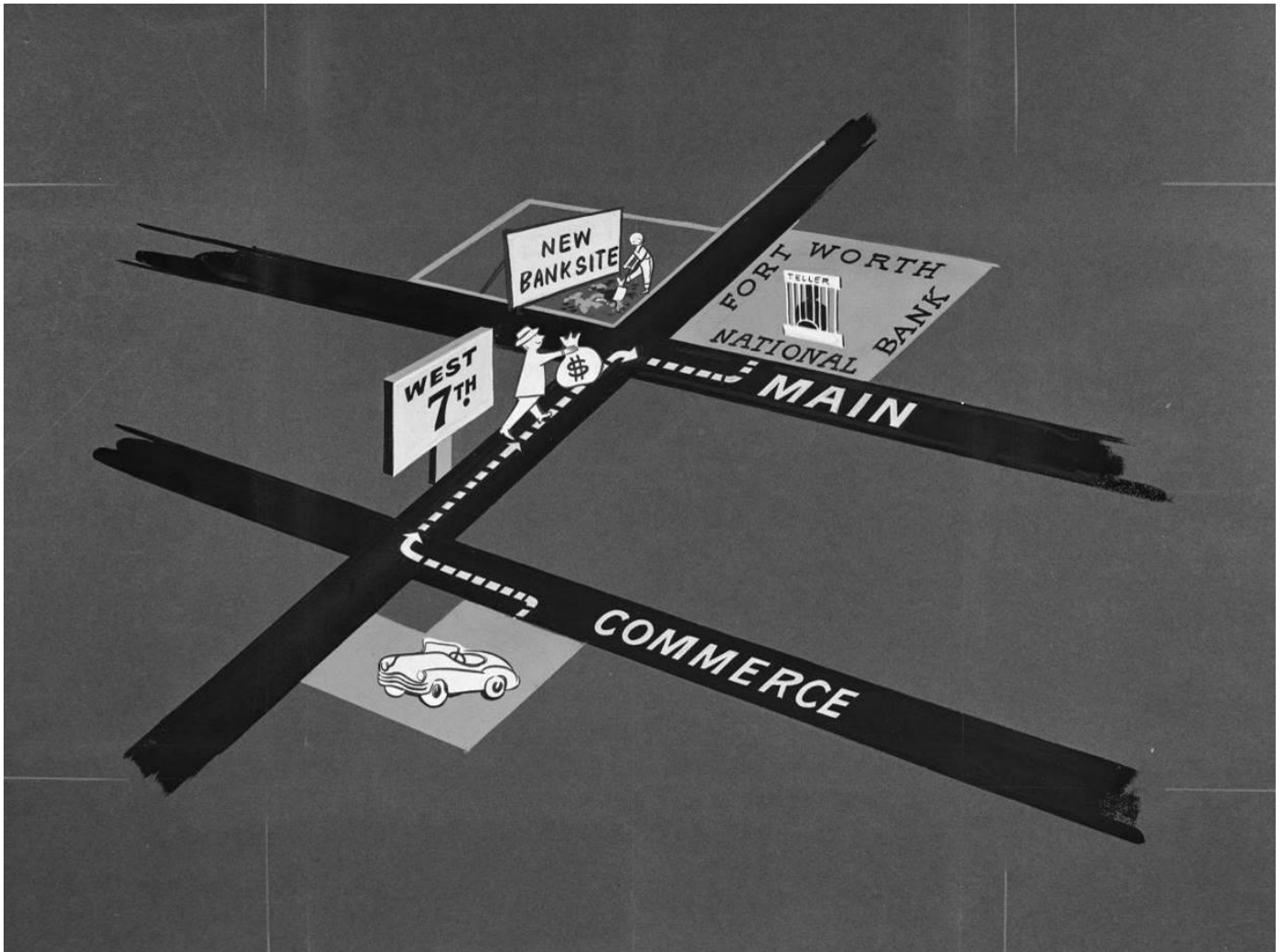
Fort Worth National Bank, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 13: Sketch of tower floor plan, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, October 1, 1950, 6.



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**Figure 14:** 1950 graphic showing present location of Fort Worth National Bank, its future location, and the location of its parking garage (then under construction). WBAP-TV (Television station: Fort Worth, Tex) [Opagues on Fort Worth National Bank], photograph, August 30, 1950; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc1242959/>); accessed September 7, 2021, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History; <https://texashistory.unt.edu/>; crediting UNT Libraries Special Collection.



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**Figure 15:** Fort Worth National Bank, 07/31/1951. H. Warren Smith, steel foreman, and Ed Grimes, inspector, ride the beam as the last piece of steel is hoisted into position atop the new Fort Worth National Bank Building. Courtesy, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection*, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR406-6-457. Identifier 20126776.



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**Figure 16:** Fort Worth National Bank Building, Construction Progress #97. Looking east. Courtesy, *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-3-214. Identifier 20096485.



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**Figure 17:** Postcard: Fort Worth National Bank Building, Fort Worth, Texas. Courtesy, Jenkins Garrett Texas Postcard Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR416-8. Identifier 20088508.



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**Figure 18:** Exterior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. East elevation, looking southwest. Courtesy, *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-3-29. Identifier 20097271.



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**Figure 19:** Exterior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. Main Street entrance, east elevation, looking southwest. Courtesy, *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52592-14. Identifier 20097115.





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**Figure 20:** Exterior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1958. West elevation, looking southeast. Courtesy, *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-58-1-150. Identifier 20191685.



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**Figure 21:** Exterior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. West elevation, Houston Street entrance, looking east. Courtesy, *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-592-13. Identifier 20097114.



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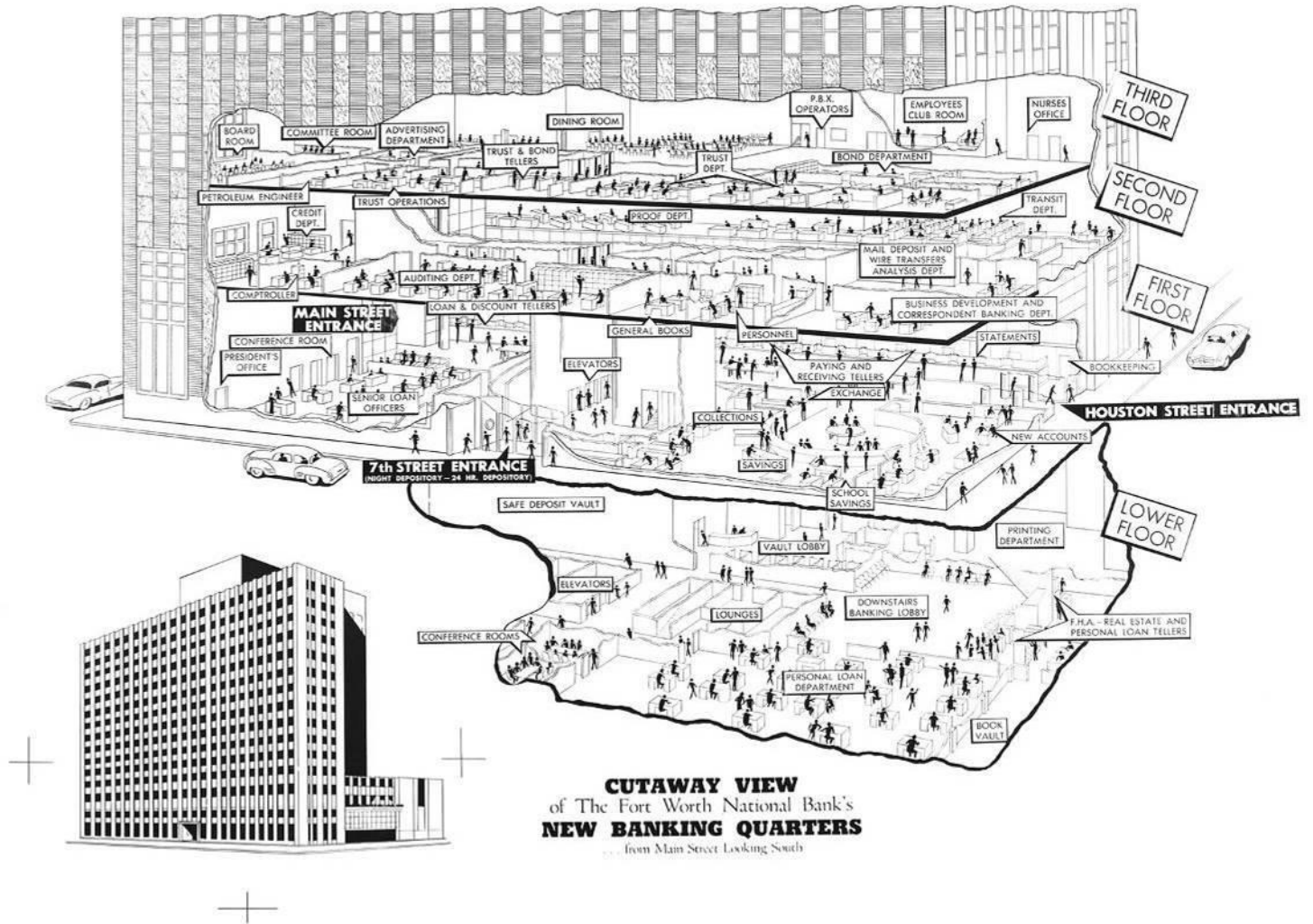
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**Figure 22:** Two women entering Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1953. North elevation, West 7<sup>th</sup> Street entrance, looking southeast. Courtesy, *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-53-1-43. Identifier 20098421.



Fort Worth National Bank, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

**Figure 23:** Cutaway View of The Fort Worth National Bank New Banking Quarters, 1952. Caption is incorrect; view is from West 7<sup>th</sup> Street (north elevation) looking south. Courtesy, *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-17-128. Identifier 20097589.



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**Figure 24:** Interior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. Banking room, first floor, looking west. Courtesy, *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-592-11. Identifier 20096915.



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**Figure 25:** Interior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. Banking room, stairs at west (Houston Street) entrance, first floor, looking southwest. Courtesy, *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-592-9. Identifier 20096925.



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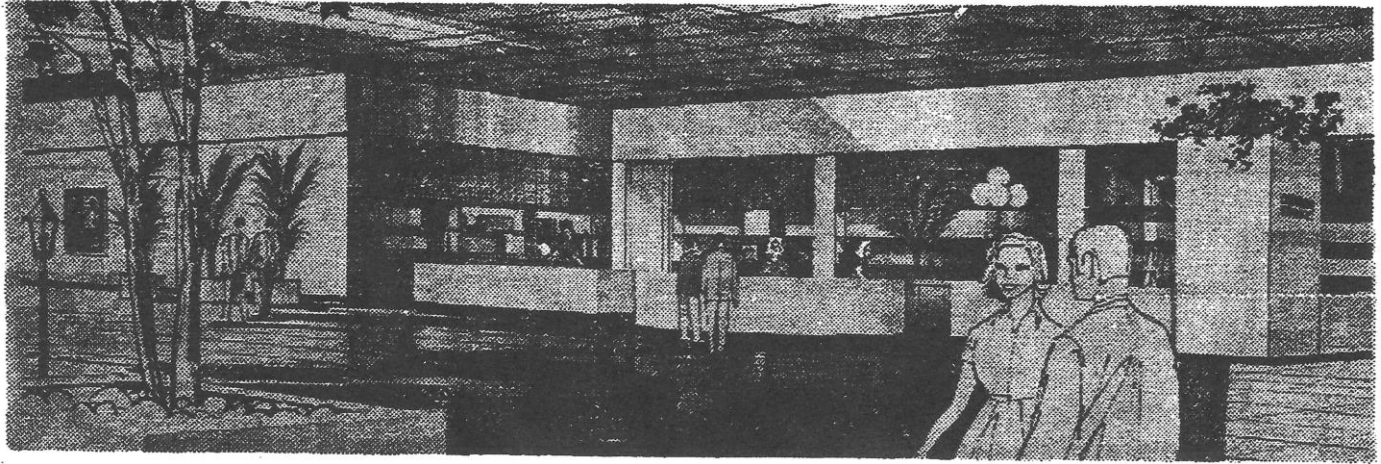
**Figure 26:** Interior of Fort Worth National Bank Building, 1952. Elevator lobby off of West 7<sup>th</sup> Street entrance, looking west/northwest. Courtesy, *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-52-592-10. Identifier 20096914.



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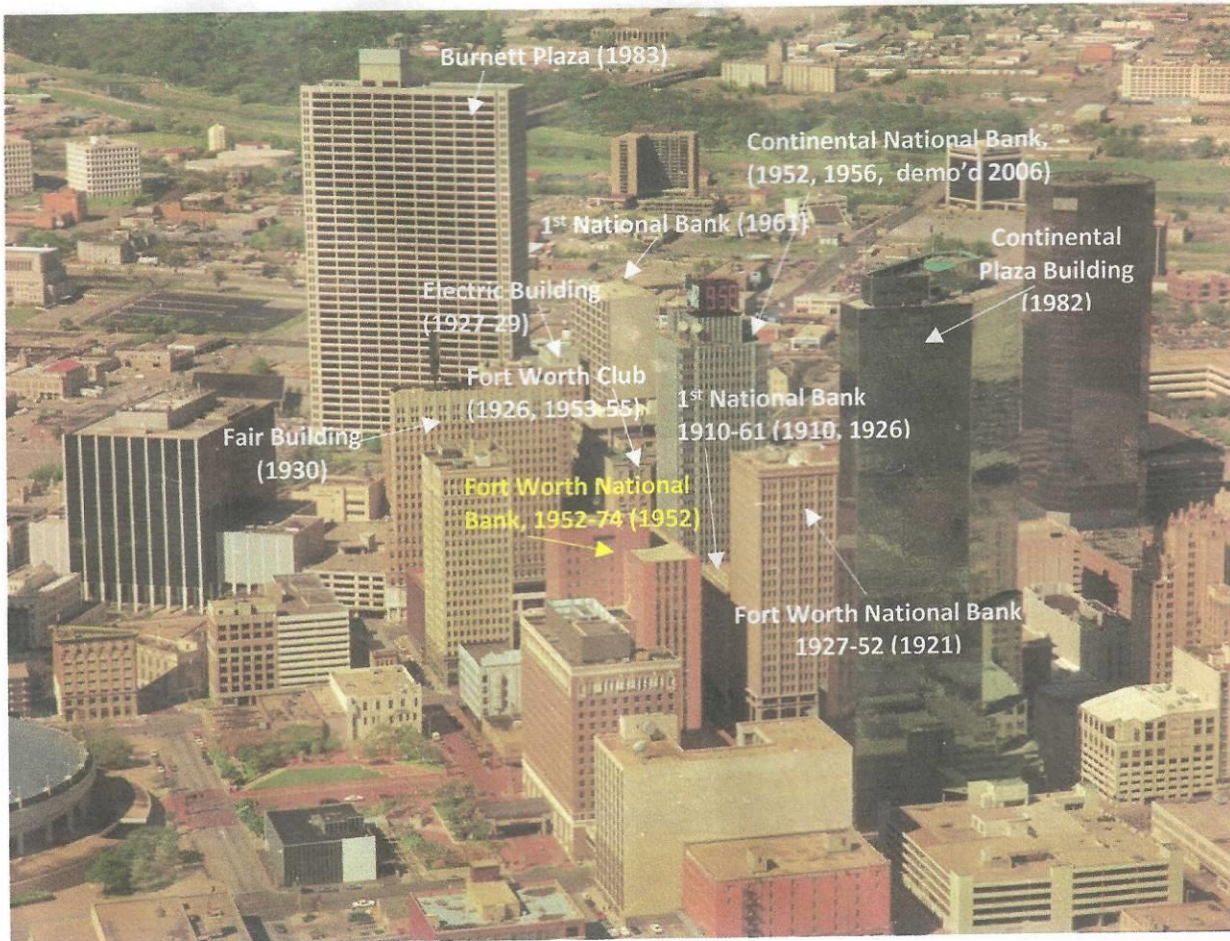
**Figure 27:** 1974 proposed renovation to banking room when Texas Electric Service Company became the primary tenant.  
*Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, April 28, 1974, E-9.





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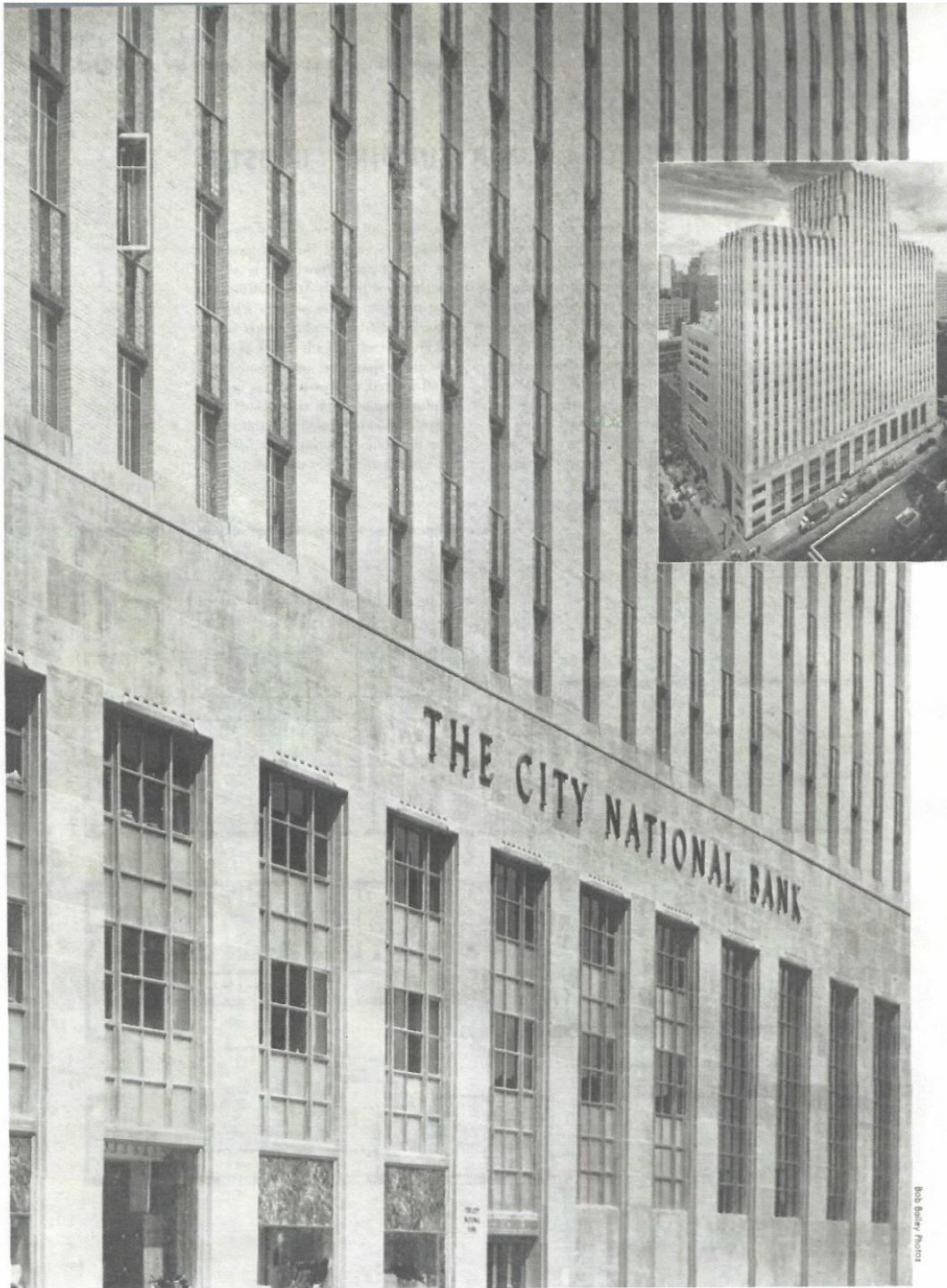
**Figure 28:** Buildings along West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, 1988. Dates of construction in parentheses; other inclusive dates are dates of occupation. Courtesy, *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-88-1-53. Identifier 10002155.



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**Figure 29:** City National Bank Building, Houston, Texas. Designed by Albert C. Finn, FAIA, and constructed in 1947. Image from “Architectural Record’s Building Types Study Number 130: Office Buildings,” *Architectural Record* 102 (Number 4, October 1947): 138.



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**Figure 30:** Continental National Bank Building, West 7<sup>th</sup> and Houston Streets. Designed by Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer (1952, 1956-57, demolished 2006). View looking north up Houston Street. Fort Worth National Bank Building is in the background, right side of the photograph. *Strykers' Western Fotocolor, Artist Photographers, Fort Worth, Texas* (authors' collection).



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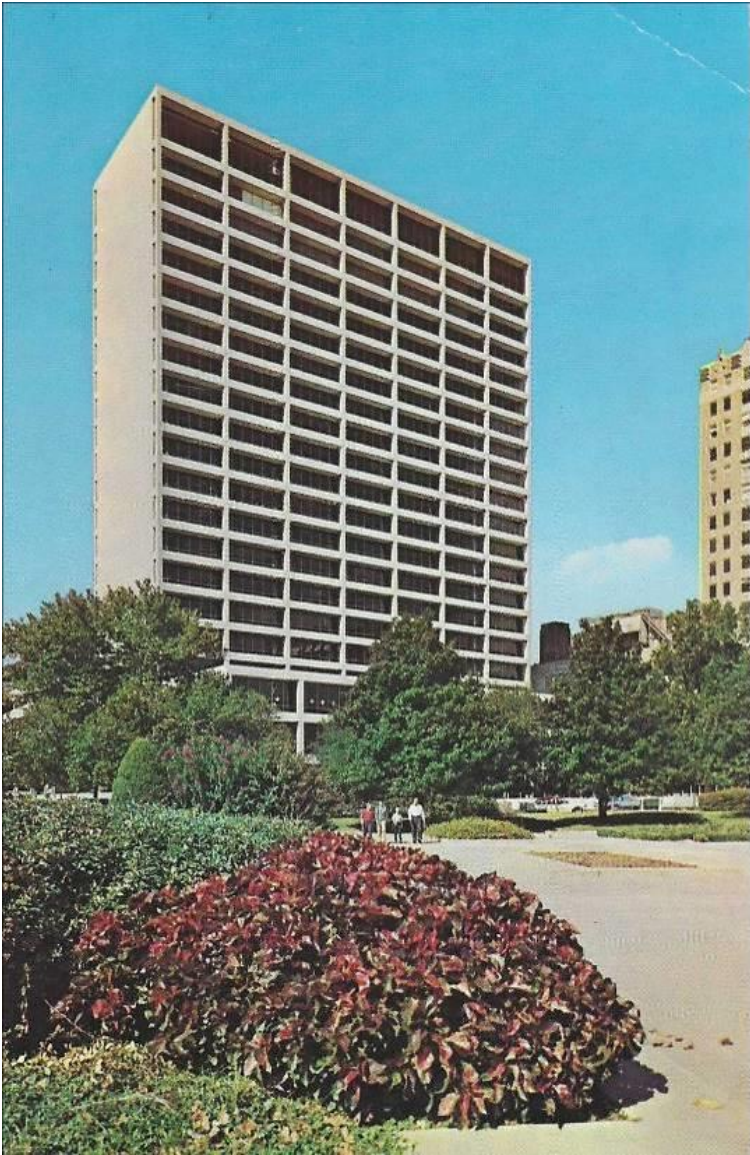
**Figure 31:** Rendering, c. 1957 of Mutual Savings and Loan Building, West 8<sup>th</sup> and Throckmorton Streets. Designed by Preston M. Geren, Architect and Engineer (1958, demolished 1998). View looking northeast. Courtesy, *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-57-224-8. Identifier 20101524.



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**Figure 32:** Postcard, First National Bank, 500 W.7<sup>th</sup> Street, 1960, Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, with Preston M. Geren, associate architect. *Strykers' Western Fotocolor, Artist Photographers, Fort Worth, Texas* (authors' collection).



Fort Worth National Bank, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

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**Photographs**

Name of Property: Fort Worth National Bank  
City or Vicinity: Fort Worth  
County, State: Tarrant, Texas  
Photographer: Steven C. Kline and Susan Allen Kline  
Date Photographed: September 10, 2021

**Photo 1:** East and north elevations; looking west.



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**Photo 2:** North and west elevations; looking east.



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**Photo 3:** Entrance, north elevation; looking south.





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**Photo 4:** North elevation; looking southwest.



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**Photo 5:** North and west elevations; looking southeast.



**Photo 6:** North elevation above entrance; looking south.



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**Photo 7:** East and north elevations; looking southwest.



**Photo 8:** East entrance; looking west.



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**Photo 9:** South and east elevations; looking northwest.



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**Photo 10:** South elevations of tower, base, and slab; looking north.



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**Photo 11:** West and south elevations, slab, base, and tower; looking northeast.



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**Photo 12:** West elevation entrance; looking northeast.



**Photo 13:** Roof of slab and east and north elevations of penthouse; looking southwest.



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**Photo 14:** Original boiler (left), sub-basement; looking west.



**Photo 15:** Night depository, first floor, West 7<sup>th</sup> Street vestibule, looking east.





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**Photo 16:** Stainless steel column and Maryland Verde Antique stone in first floor elevator lobby; looking northeast.



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**Photo 17:** First floor elevator lobby; looking south.



**Photo 18:** First floor interior, Capital Grill Restaurant (non-historic); looking south.



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**Photo 19:** First floor interior, PlainsCapital Bank (non-historic); looking west.



**Photo 20:** Second floor elevator lobby; looking south.



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**Photo 21:** Second floor historic corridor; looking east.



**Photo 22:** Second floor, non-historic finishes; looking southwest.



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**Photo 23:** Fourth floor, west stairs; looking south.



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**Photo 24:** Fourth floor, women's restroom; looking south.



**Photo 25:** Fourth floor lightwell; looking west.



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**Photo 26:** Tenth floor elevator lobby, historic finishes, looking south.



**Photo 27:** Tenth floor historic corridor; looking east.



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**Photo 28:** Tenth floor, typical heating/air conditioning unit below historic window; looking southwest.





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**Photo 29:** Sixteenth floor penthouse; looking southwest.



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