

(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Republic National Bank

OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: Republic Bank, First RepublicBank Corp.

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 300 North Ervay / 325 North St. Paul Street

CITY OR TOWN: Dallas

STATE: Texas

CODE: TX

COUNTY: Dallas

CODE: 113

NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A

VICINITY: N/A

ZIP CODE: 75201

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this (nomination) (request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (meets) (does not meet) the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant (nationally) (statewide) (locally). (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Feb. 10, 2005

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

3-31-05

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Architectural Description

The Republic National Bank complex is located on an entire city block bounded by Ervay (west), St. Paul (east), Pacific (south) and Bryan (north) streets in Dallas' Central Business District. Completed in three phases, the first a 36-story tower and its adjoining eight-story banking pavilion was the first major downtown postwar office building, completed in 1955. The two additions date from 1965 and 1980. The 1955 building ushered modernism into downtown Dallas with its technologically advanced aluminum-clad curtain wall construction, central pivot blue-green windows with rounded corners, and a 150-foot stylized rocket gracing the top, which ensured the building's claim as the tallest in Dallas. The New York firm Harrison and Abramovitz designed the building with Gill and Harrell (Dallas) as associate architects. Harrison and Abramovitz had extensive experience in the design of high-rise office buildings and had recently completed the design of the United National (UN) headquarters in New York and the 1953 Alcoa Tower in Pittsburgh, both of which utilized the same exterior aluminum panel system. The original banking lobby and tower was located on the western side of the block. In 1965 a 52-story tower (called Republic Tower) was added on the northeast corner, and in 1980 an eight-story addition filled in the remaining city block.

Downtown Dallas¹

The Dallas Central Business District (CBD) lies just east of the Trinity River and is encircled by a web of state and federal highways roughly delineated by the Woodall Rodgers Freeway on the north, Central Expressway (U.S. Highway 75) and the Julius Schepps Freeway (Interstate 45) on the east, the R. L. Thornton Freeway (Interstate 30) on the south, and the Stemmons Freeway (Interstate 35E) on the west. Three intersecting street grids meet within this network of freeways. Using the Trinity River as the western boundary, the initial streets were laid out at right angles to the river by John Neely Bryan in 1841 within a grid of eight north-to-south streets and twelve east-to-west streets. A competing survey for John Grigsby was laid out at forty-five degrees off the cardinal directions. A third survey for the Peters Colony laid out different sections, again utilizing the cardinal directions. These historical surveys resulted in an odd series of doglegged streets within the CBD. The path of the old railroad tracks, now serving light rail, enter the CBD along the western perimeter, paralleling the path of Interstate 35.

The Republic Bank site is approximately eight blocks east of the West End Historic District (NR 1978) and approximately ten blocks east and two blocks north of Dealey Plaza (NHL 1993). The National Park Service designated the Harwood Historic District, at the eastern end of the CBD, as a certified local historic district in 1994. Numerous individually-listed National Register properties in the CBD include the Adolphus Hotel (NR 1983), the Dallas County Courthouse (NR 1976) and, and Union Terminal (NR 1975).

General characteristics Republic Bank complex (Tower One (1955); Tower Two (1965); Tower Three (1980)).

The building complex occupies the entire city block. Although it appears seamless, the three construction phases are apparent with close observation. The structure is steel and concrete frame with some masonry infill and an exterior curtain wall and concrete floor slabs. There are several different roofs corresponding the various building phases and each is flat surrounded with a parapet. The roofing material is built-up tar. The original black granite, aluminum and glass storefronts have been replaced with a polished red granite base and aluminum-framed glass storefront systems on the entire building

¹ Adapted from *Dallas Downtown Historic District* draft National Register nomination, Lila Knight and Marcel Quimby, p. 7-5.

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complex. Historically there were aluminum and glass revolving doors at the primary entries on all facades with standard glass and aluminum single or paired swing doors adjacent or flanking. All of the original revolving doors have been removed except those at the primary bank bobby entrance (Pacific near North Ervay) and at the Tower Two entrance on St. Paul Street. The bank lobby (1955, pavilion) door openings have been retained but with swinging glass doors replacing the revolving doors. Floor patterns indicate the other locations of revolving doors since removed. The original windows remain on floors nine through 36 on Tower One (1955) and are single-light pivot type with a slight green tint. Also, the original eight-story banking pavilion has its original windows on the Pacific (south) façade framed by the projecting marble grid. On Tower Two (1965) the original fixed-glass, floor-to-ceiling windows exist on the upper two floors. Floors two through eight of Tower One (1955) and the eight-story pavilion (base) and all remaining floors of Tower Two (1965) have replacement windows that are aluminum framed, double-glazed, fixed-glass with a dark brown tint and a reflective appearance. The building complex once contained a variety of escalators, many were removed during a recent (early 21st-century) abatement process. Escalators are extant in four places: one set connecting the lobby of Tower Two to the basement valet area; one set connecting the first floor of Tower One to the public area of the first basement; one connecting the lobby of Tower Two to the public area of the first basement and one connecting the seventh and eighth levels of the eight-story pavilion of Tower One. Towers One and Two each have three sets of three elevators. One set services the low-rise floor, one the mid-rise floors and the other the high rise floors. The high-rise elevators include a night cab and a service elevator. Tower Three (1980) has its own set of three elevators. Elevator cab doors at the first floor and basement lobbies are stainless steel, all others are painted steel in a variety of colors.

1954-55 Republic National Bank

The original Republic National Bank building is comprised of two masses: an eight-story banking pavilion (the low mass or base) on the southwest corner and 36-story office tower set on top of the pavilion just to the north. There are two levels of parking below the building. This original phase of the building occupied the western half of the block and has been described by Dallas architectural critic David Dillon as a "prototypical fifties building."² The upper two floors of the pavilion are set back slightly from the street face. The tower is also set back slightly along its west and north façades but is flush with the base on the North Ervay (west) facade. At the time the building opened, it was the tallest building in the southwestern United States. Historically, the original rocket-shaped projection at the rooftop had rows of neon bands that broadcast the local weather and changed colors as conditions changed. The neon has been removed, but colored lights illuminate the rocket and change with the seasons or holidays.

The structure is steel and concrete frame with some masonry infill, an exterior curtain wall and concrete floor slabs. The exterior cladding of the base and tower is embossed aluminum panels punctuated with aluminum clad fixed and pivot-type windows. Historically the windows on the 1954-55 phase of the building were aluminum-framed pivot type with a green colored glass. These original windows are extant on floors 9-36 of the 1955 tower. All other windows on this phase of the building have been replaced with aluminum-framed fixed windows with a brownish tint and a more reflective appearance.

The south façade of the 1955 phase of the complex faces Pacific Avenue and historically was the main public entrance to the banking lobby. The exterior is articulated with a projecting white marble grid attached to the curtain wall. The marble pattern is vertical and composed of three sections that mimic the rhythm and diminishing proportions of a column: base, shaft and cornice. The window openings are fixed, aluminum-framed, single-light green tinted glass panes that are

² Dillon, David, Dallas Architecture 1936-1986.

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original to the building. There are three large flagpoles at above the street level on the western-most portion of the marble façade and further to the west the building corner is clipped as it meets North Ervay. Below the marble façade at the ground floor level are large storefront windows. The sidewalk has granite 1 x 1 square tiles that are not original to the period of construction. There are two large aluminum clad columns on this façade and two, aluminum-framed single glass entry doors.

The west façade faces North Ervay Street and is clad in the star-embossed aluminum panels that form a continuous street face above the ground floor glass storefront windows. This façade is unique in that there are no windows above the storefront openings on the pavilion or the 36-story tower above. A large entry "eyebrow" dramatically swoops upwards and defines the inset entry. The sidewalk is 1' x 1' honed pink granite square tiles – a later alteration. The storefront design of the south façade continues along this facade and is setback a continuous three feet from the curtain wall of the structure above and provides a narrow covering for pedestrians. The aluminum framed doors access the ground floor tenant retail spaces as well as the tower lobby beneath the "eyebrow." This main entry is inset approximately six feet from the street face and has two sets of aluminum-framed, paired glass doors. In the ceiling of the inset there are three exposed and pronounced aluminum clad support beams that support the "eyebrow."

The north façade of the original tower and base faces Bryan Street and the storefront continues in a similar manner. The fenestration of this façade is a regular spacing of rows of aluminum framed, fixed single light windows that alternate between the aluminum panels. The window rows punctuate the panels between the upper and lower part of the embossed star pattern. At the top of the tower, the window rows stop short just below the "cornice" that is defined by five to six rows of the embossed panels.

The embossed star on the aluminum panels was designed to reduce panel deflection that affects flat aluminum panels. The company liked the star design so much they later adopted it as their corporate logo. The rocket spire at the roof of Tower One is original to the building although it was completed in the last phase of construction. The rocket spire historically featured lighting that changed to indicate the weather forecast and a large spotlight beacon. These features were phased out at the request of the FAA. The rocket spire is now spotlighted.

Interior 1954-55 phase

The main public space of this first construction phase is the spacious banking lobby in the eight-story pavilion or base. Critical historic finishes remain intact including the terrazzo flooring, travertine and marble stone finishes, a beautiful gilded serpentine balcony and the main curving staircase. All ceiling and plaster wall finishes have been removed as part of the hazardous materials abatement.

Floors four through six in the tower were converted to a parking garage in the late 20th-century yet fortunately no character defining areas were affected and the building exterior was not altered by this change in use. Floors seven and eight contain the tenant shell space and have concrete floors with exposed structure and no remaining finishes. Floor seven contains massive concrete trusses and was historically a mechanical area. Historically the character defining features of the upper floors included the elevator lobbies with their travertine wall panels, black marble base and plaster walls and ceiling surfaces. The base molding, flooring and plaster finishes were removed during the hazardous materials abatement. The travertine wall panels are extant. In the tenant spaces, the walls and ceilings are exposed to reveal the structure of the building. The central core of the tower contained the fire stairs, elevators, mechanical rooms, service areas and restrooms—yet only the stairs and elevators remain intact. The upper tenant lease spaces have no finishes – they have

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exposed concrete ceilings and floors. The original plans indicate that the floors were to be left unfinished or covered with a simple rubber tile and the rest left for flexible tenant build-out. On floors seven and above all the internal walls were removed as part of the hazardous materials abatement. The corridors were removed on floors nine and above as part of this same abatement.

1964-65 Addition (Harrell and Hamilton, Architects)

The Dallas firm Harrell and Hamilton designed the 52-story Republic Tower addition, built in 1964-65, and opened in January 1965. Republic Tower also sits on an eight-story base that aligns seamlessly with the 1955 pavilion on Bryan Street. The Republic Tower is clad in matching aluminum panels forming a cohesive office complex. The lower levels were intertwined with interior lobby and corridors. With the completion of this second tower, the Republic complex occupied three-fourths of the city block, and contained 1,700,000 square feet of banking and office space.

The north façade of this addition faces Bryan Street and continues the fenestration pattern of the 1955 base alternating fixed window opening rows and embossed aluminum panels. This façade has a typical paired door entry and a rolling garage entry gate. The seventh floor of this addition has intake grilles on the Bryan and St. Paul facades.

The east façade faces St. Paul Street and has a monumental entry to the 1965 tower lobby. There are five monumental gray granite clad square columns in front of the three-part glass storefront that encloses the two-story ground floor lobby. Original features of the interior include the terrazzo flooring and the travertine cladding of the elevator bays. The basement of this tower consists of parking ramps, a valet area and mechanical and service areas. The wall of the primary parking ramps contain ceramic tile. The valet area features a public lobby with tile wall finishes, and an escalator lobby with travertine wall finishes. The flooring in the lobby areas is terrazzo. There is a small secondary lobby that once served the bank's safely deposit area. This lobby is intact and features travertine wall finished and the same terrazzo flooring.

Interior 1965 addition

The ground floor public space is spatially intact and retains travertine wall panels, however, the flooring has been covered with new stone materials and the walls and ceiling are modern, finished drywall. Levels 9-47 were designed as leasable shell space and all interior finish-out was removed and the spaces consist of exposed structure and concrete floors. The space has a central core containing restrooms, elevator shafts and stairs. The core area was abated similarly as Tower One with the restrooms and service areas removed yet in this tower the new restrooms and service areas were built in a similar configuration to the original. The floors have been rehabilitated and the travertine wall cladding in the elevator lobbies restored on the occupied floors. Floors 48-49 are spatially similar to the lower floors but feature larger, floor-to-ceiling windows. The 49th floor was originally planned to be a restaurant and the floor above as lease space. At some point an interior stair was introduced and connected the two levels to create a larger club/restaurant. The only remaining historic finishes on these levels are the travertine wall cladding in the elevator lobby. As in Tower One, the historic corridors were removed yet on the leased levels new corridors were installed in the same location.

1980 Addition, (Omniplan, formerly Harrell and Hamilton, Architects)

In 1978, the last remaining non-Republic building on the block – the early-twentieth century Medical Arts Building – was demolished, to make way for an 8-story addition to the Republic complex. This addition added additional lobby and office space for the complex, and is seamlessly integrated to the earlier Republic properties. With this addition, the Republic

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complex now occupied the entire block. This addition faces east onto St. Paul street and sharply turns the corner to Pacific where it meets the original eight-story pavilion.

The 1980 addition, also called Tower Three, is set back further from the street than the other two building phases. The set back creates a small plaza with street and granite flower boxes. There is a step down from the sidewalk level and there is no public access on the St. Paul Street (west) façade. The sidewalk is concrete. There is an inset entry on the Pacific façade with paired aluminum framed glass doors. This lobby connects on the interior to the Tower Two (1965) lobby.

Building closure and subsequent rehabilitation

The Republic complex closed in the mid 1990s. Recently (2004) the interior public spaces have been rehabilitated and the hazardous materials abatement has been completed. The abatement resulted in the removal of most interior partition walls and ceilings. Fortunately the original flooring (terrazzo) and decorative travertine and marble finishes remain intact and can be restored. The original office tower and banking building are in a similar condition as that indicated on the original 1950s construction drawings that show blank floorplates on the upper floors ready for tenant build out. With this first phase completed, the building is now leasing and is occupied again.

The Republic National Bank complex retains a large degree of its architectural integrity. Exterior changes have been limited to storefront and entry door changes, and the loss of the drive-in teller areas. Although the 1980 addition is outside the period of significance for this nomination, its design is complementary to the historic buildings and does not detract from their integrity in setting, feeling and association.

Summary and building integrity

Built in three phases, the Republic Bank complex is testament to the timelessness of good design. The first phase, constructed in 1955, pioneered the use of aluminum embossed panels for skyscraper construction in Texas and the completed building was the tallest in the southwest. Second only to the Alcoa building in Pittsburgh, the building boldly translated mid-century modernism onto the skyscraper. Despite the alterations of the storefront and the replacement windows, all three phases of the building maintain a high degree of architectural integrity. The location of the building is important and intact as evidenced by the continuing expansion of the complex over four decades to finally usurp the entire city block. The complex retains a high degree of design integrity despite the replacement of some of the windows and the storefront alterations. The character defining features of the design include the embossed aluminum panels, the pavilion (or base) with tower forms, the roof rocket and the large spacious public lobbies. These elements also retain significant integrity of materials and workmanship. The setting is urban in downtown Dallas' Central Business District with other notable commercial skyscrapers and mid-rise buildings in close proximity. The complex's feeling and association with bold mid-century modernism design, its association with banking in Texas, the association of Fred Florence are evidenced by the three building campaigns, as the bank became one of the most important financial institutions in the state.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- A** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.
- B** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.
- C** PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUES, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.
- D** PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: G

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Economics; Architecture

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1954-1965

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1954, 1965

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: Fred Farrel Florence

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT / BUILDER: Harrison and Abramovitz, Gill and Harrell, Harrell and Hamilton

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: (See continuation sheets 8-10 through 8-19)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY: See continuation sheet 9-20

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- 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
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other – Specify Repository: *ArchiTexas, Dallas; City of Dallas Landmark files*

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Statement of Significance

The Republic Bank Building (1955, additions in 1965 and 1980) was the first major downtown post-war office building in Dallas and is one of the most visible, architecturally important, and recognizable buildings in the city. The original building and its two compatible additions represent the growth of banking in Dallas. It is also significant for its association with Fred F. Florence, a long-time president of Republic Bank and distinguished civic leader. Harrison and Abramovitz of New York designed the original building and tower with Gill and Harrell of Dallas. Harrell also designed the 1965 and 1980 additions. A formidable influence on the post-war skyline of Dallas, the building is distinguished for the large decorative rocket-shaped mast atop the original tower and its exterior skin of embossed aluminum panels. The building's banking lobby boasts marble and terrazzo finishes with 1950s-modern detailing including a massive serpentine balcony decorated in gold leaf. The building is nominated under Criteria C in the Area of Architecture at the state level of significance as the second skyscraper in the nation and first west of the Mississippi to use the aluminum panel curtain wall system and as an outstanding example of the work of architects Harrison and Abramovitz. The property is nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, in the Area of Economics at the local level of significance for its association with the history of mid-to-late-20th century banking in Dallas and Republic Bank, once the largest bank in Texas. It is also nominated under Criterion B in the Area of Economics, at the local level of significance for its strong association with long-time company president, Fred F. Florence. The building meets Criteria Consideration G (*Properties that Have Achieved Significance within the Last Fifty Years*) because it is an outstanding example of a mid-century modern skyscraper designed by the nationally recognized architectural firm Harrison and Abramovitz, and together with its compatible 1964-65 Republic Tower addition serves as a testament to the status of Republic Bank as a principal financial institution in Texas.

Banking in Dallas

Dallas gained prominence and influence as a banking center during the first half of the twentieth century as a result of the location of the Federal Reserve Branch in the city in 1914, as well as the East and West Texas oil booms during the 1920s and 1930s. Banking industry leaders became some of the most powerful and influential among the city's social, political and economic elite. University of Texas Law School graduate, Eugene DeBogory, founded the Republic Bank in 1920. Fred F. Florence, however, guided it to eventually become the state's largest banking institution.

During the 19th century, Dallas had a perpetual currency problem. The succession of political changes (government under the Republic of Texas, the United States, the Confederacy, and Reconstruction) contributed to the lack of circulating money in the somewhat isolated north Texas community. Republic of Texas paper currency had no standard value after statehood, and Louisiana and Mississippi banknotes were usually accepted only if they were endorsed by Texas businesses. Mexican silver dollars were also accepted in trade in Dallas before the Civil War, and all agreed that the most acceptable rate of exchange was in "hard money."

The self-sufficient early residents and business owners on the north Texas prairie formed significant political opposition to the chartering of banks. Early Dallas resident John Beeman was perhaps the only local businessman to operate a small money-lending business, loaning cash at 5 per cent in 1850, which rose to 12 per cent during the panic of 1857.³ As the Confederacy unraveled in 1864 and 1865, both U.S. and Confederate currency deflated, so cash was scarce and fairly

³ Writers Project, WPA Dallas Guide and History, 1942, p. 161.

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worthless, resulting in much hardship.⁴

The first private banking house in Dallas was opened by T.C. Jordan and E.G. Mayes sometime before 1868 with capital of \$20,000 in gold (it was Mayes' cash but the bank carried Jordan's name). Located on the west side of the courthouse square, Jordan charged 5 per cent interest, or 2 per cent on collateral of gilt edged securities. Meanwhile, Col. William H. Gaston and A. C. Camp established a second private banking concern in 1868 with a dry goods box as a teller counter and the founders' pockets as safe deposit vaults.

In 1873, Col. Christopher Columbus Slaughter and partner W.E. Hughes took control of the first private bank, Jordan & Co., and reorganized the business as the City Bank of Dallas. The City Bank re-opened with \$50,000 in capital at the corner of Commerce and Market Streets. Reorganized again under Hughes in 1880 as the City National Bank, it absorbed the private banking house of the Gannon Brothers (1881), the Dallas National Bank (1886), the State National Bank (1894), Trinity National Bank (1909), Tenison National Bank (1920), and in 1929 merged with the American Exchange National Bank to become the powerful 1st National Bank of Dallas.

Gaston and Camp also pursued various mergers and acquisitions in the latter part of the century. Merged with the Exchange Bank in 1881 and becoming the National Exchange Bank in 1887, the financial institution continued to expand and was renamed American National Bank in 1905, eventually acquiring the City National Bank to become 1st National Bank. Thus, the first two Dallas banks, through a complicated but directly traceable line of descent, became a single powerful institution: the 1st National Bank of Dallas.⁵

The arrival of the railroads in Dallas in 1872 and 1873 brought swift economic expansion, as the city's opportunities as a trade center were significantly augmented. Four more private banks were established during the 1870s, including the first chartered as a state bank: the Dallas County Bank, opened in 1873.

By 1885 six banks operated in the city, and in 1889 the National Bank of Commerce opened, which would eventually be the only bank in Dallas to retain its original identity well into the next century, operating under the same name from its founding until 1940. The State of Texas finally established a bank charter system that guaranteed deposits in 1905, causing additional expansion and realignment of institutions. Dallas, having been designated by the state as a reserve location in 1902, by 1905 had six national banks, two state banks, twenty private banks and one trust bank.⁶

The opening of the 11th District Federal Reserve branch in Dallas in 1914, the result of a strenuous campaign by Dallas bankers and other financial leaders to have the bank located in their city, centralized many banking functions, including the clearance and collection of checks and provision of currency, for hundreds of member banks in Texas and parts of Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arizona and New Mexico. Perhaps more than any other influence, the location of the Federal Reserve branch in Dallas finally and firmly established the city as a major banking center for the entire southwest, a role it would play until the 1980s.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid p. 162.

⁶ Ibid p. 164.

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Banking in Dallas During the Depression⁷

The advent of the Depression temporarily halted many of the plans for expansion in Dallas. By the end of 1931, 18,500 unemployed people applied for relief. Retail sales in the city fell from \$189 million in 1929 to \$130 million by 1935, and building permits plummeted \$3.5 million between just 1930 and 1931.⁸ But the effects of the Depression would halt the city's growth only temporarily. The businessmen of Dallas formed a collective leadership that, while they competed fiercely with one another for profits, they realized that civic welfare and urban progress were shared responsibilities that all would profit from eventually. Originally founded to secure the council-manager form of government, the Citizens Charter Association became a political organization of businessmen who worked to get the right men elected to office. But they eventually also evolved into an organization that promoted good citizenship as well as good government as they worked diligently to promote the City of Dallas worldwide.

The restrictive credit policy of the Dallas branch of the Federal Reserve Bank, which controlled discount and interest rates and loans to member banks, as well as setting credit policies, is credited with preventing any more bank failures than occurred in the Dallas area during the onslaught of the Depression.⁹ In 1930 the American Exchange National Bank merged with City National Bank to form First National Bank of Dallas with Nathan Adams as its president.¹⁰ The merger made First National Bank the largest bank in the South, insuring its survival during the Depression years. Always interested in diversifying its economy, local bankers branched into the oil business. Dallas became a financial and legal center for oil with distribution companies and manufacturing plants for oil well equipment. Nathan Adams, president of First National Bank of Dallas, and Fred Florence, president of Republic National Bank and Trust Company, played pivotal roles in accepting underground oil and natural gas reserves as collateral for the financing of large-scale production.¹¹ As a result, Dallas became the financial center for the oil and gas industry, not only for Texas, but the surrounding states of Louisiana and Oklahoma as well. Although considered gamblers at the time, it was perhaps the best banking decision ever made.

The City of Dallas received a phenomenal economic boost during the Depression years from the influx of federal dollars for relief and civic improvement projects. But even more importantly, in 1934 Dallas was selected by the Texas Centennial Commission as the site of the central exposition for the state's centennial celebration. Robert L. Thornton, president of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, led a group of Dallas businessmen intent on obtaining the state's approval of Dallas as the site for the exposition. Local businessmen formed the Texas Centennial Central Exposition Corporation with the intent of securing Dallas as the site for this important event. The presidents of the three most important banks in town composed the executive committee of this organization: R. L. Thornton of Mercantile National Bank, Nathan Adams of First National Bank of Dallas, and Fred Florence of Republic National Bank.¹² The City of Dallas offered the state fairgrounds and its buildings, valued at \$4 million, while the business community provided \$2 million and a bond

⁷ This section copied directly from *Dallas Downtown Historic District* draft National Register nomination prepared by Lila Knight and Marcel Quimby, pages 47-49.

⁸ Roger Biles, "The New Deal in Dallas" *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* (July 1991) 7-8.

⁹ Graff, Harvey. *The Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, Application for Local Landmark Designation*, City of Dallas (1976).

¹⁰ Perez, Joan. "Adams, Nathan," in *The New Handbook of Texas* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1996), vol. 1, p. 24.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, and Joan Perez, "Florence, Fred," in *The New Handbook of Texas* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1996) vol. 2, p. 1035.

¹² Ragsdale, Kenneth. *The Year America Discovered Texas: Centennial '36* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1987) 83.

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package overwhelmingly passed, even in the midst of the Depression, authorizing another \$3 million.¹³ Although Dallas lacked the historical charisma of its competing cities of Houston and San Antonio, Thornton and the others sold the city on their image of "progress" rather than history. Moreover, the city possessed the necessary infrastructure to support an endeavor such as a world's fair. In particular, the city had an incredibly diverse network of transportation that included eleven railroads, four electric interurbans, fifteen bus lines, forty-one freight lines, ten airlines, eleven state highways, and five federal highways.¹⁴

With the discovery of oil in East Texas and the city's capture of the state's Centennial Exposition, Dallas weathered the Depression years better than most Texas cities. Although no oilfields were discovered within the Dallas area, the Dallas bankers were the first to lend oil operators money on oil reserves still in the ground. Dallas emerged from the Depression as an important southern metropolis with a regional dominance in wholesaling, retailing, banking and insurance. By 1940, in fact, it had the third highest average per capita income in the nation.¹⁵

Following on the heels of the Depression, shortages of construction materials during World War II continued the slowdown in the construction industry with virtually no buildings constructed in the Central Business District during the war years, except for the Mercantile Bank Building (phase one design by Walter Ahlschlager and Donald Nelson). Completed in 1942, it may have been one of the few skyscrapers built during the war years as bank president R. L. Thornton managed to continue to receive steel shipments, earning it the name of "Dallas' Battleship." The Mercantile Bank Building ushered in a new era - and a new image - for the banks of Dallas. Rising thirty-one floors and crowned by a modernistic clock spire, Mercantile became not only the tallest building on the Dallas skyline, it also became the most modern building on the Dallas skyline. In the future, Dallas bankers would compete to build the tallest and the most modern buildings within the Central Business District.

The Rise of Fred F. Florence and Republic Bank

Fred Farrel Florence (1891-1960) was born Fred Fromowitz to Lithuanian immigrants in New York City in 1891. His family moved to New Birmingham, Texas, a year later where Florence attended public school through the tenth grade. At age fifteen he began work as a janitor at the First National Bank in Rusk. He advanced to assistant cashier by 1911 and moved on to positions as bookkeeper at the American Exchange Bank in Dallas (1911), cashier at the First State Bank in Ratcliff (1912), and vice president (1912), then president (1915) of the Alto State Bank. He served as bank president in Alto until 1920 and served as the town's mayor from 1919-20. In 1920 he moved to Dallas to become first vice president of the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company, which became Republic National Bank and Trust Company in 1922 and was renamed Republic National Bank of Dallas in 1937.¹⁶

Republic completed and occupied the city's tallest building in 1926 (1309 Main Street, now known as the Davis Building, a City of Dallas Landmark). Shortly thereafter the company established a separate bank to service farm and ranch loans. Toward that end, Fred Florence arranged for the acquisition of North Texas National Bank in 1929. Under his leadership,

¹³ The bond package passed by a vote of 5,520 to 1,088. When investors could only sell \$1.8 million in bonds, 28 Dallas businessmen underwrote the additional necessary expenses of the fair. Fairbanks, 93.

¹⁴ Ragsdale, Kenneth. *The Year America Discovered Texas: Centennial '36* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1987) 82.

¹⁵ Fairbanks, Robert. "Dallas in the 1940s: The Challenges and Opportunities of Defense Mobilization," in *Urban Texas: Politics and Development*, Char Miller and Heywood Sanders, editors (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1990) 141.

¹⁶ "FLORENCE, FRED FARREL." *The Handbook of Texas Online*.

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

both banks managed to survive and grow through the Great Depression. He is also credited with helping other regional banks by investing in them during the banking crisis of 1933. In 1937 the Republic National Bank and Trust Company was renamed Republic National Bank of Dallas. Under Florence's administration, Republic took the lead in cotton financing and investment in the relatively new Texas oil market.¹⁷

Also under Florence's management, Republic National Bank took a leading role in establishing new investment strategies and relationships. For example, he organized a wholly owned subsidiary, the Howard Corporation, in 1946 to receive the petroleum properties of Republic National in exchange for its authorized capital stock. The Howard subsidiary was invested heavily in foreign stocks, banks, shopping centers and undeveloped property and by 1948 Republic had grown to be largest bank in Texas. Howard's stock was transferred to a separate trust in 1955, but in 1973 the Federal Reserve Bank required Republic to divest itself of the Howard Corporation's non-banking assets in order to form a holding company known as the Republic of Texas Corporation.¹⁸

By the early 1950s, Republic had grown to a 60 million-dollar company and had outgrown its Main Street office tower. The Republic National Bank, designed in 1954 by Harrison and Abramovitz of New York, rose 34-stories along the northern edge of the city's old east-west grid. The anodized aluminum panels with an embossed star design became the bank's own logo. Fred Florence, chairman of the bank, exceeded the height of his competitor's Robert Thornton's Mercantile Bank. Florence, however, included portraits of his competitors, Robert Thornton and Nathan Adams, in his new boardroom.¹⁹

By the 1980s Republic had invested itself in significant loans to the real estate industry in Texas. With the crash of the Texas real estate market, Republic bank found itself in deep financial trouble. In an effort to offset losses, Republic merged with rival Interfirst Corporation to become First RepublicBank Corporation. Unfortunately, Interfirst was in no better condition than Republic. The new corporation failed within twelve months resulting in the biggest bank failure in US history.²⁰

Fred Florence was president of Republic National Bank from 1929 until 1957, when he became chairman of the executive committee with the duties of chief executive officer. Under his direction deposits at his bank increased from \$1 million to almost \$900 million. Florence's influence was broad both locally and nationally. His credits include the following:²¹

Business Directorships

- Lone Star Steel, chairman
- Bond Stores
- Wyatt Industries
- MKT Railroad Company
- Dallas Power and Light
- Austin Bridge Company

¹⁷ "REPUBLIC BANK." The Handbook of Texas Online. <<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/RR/cor1.html>> [Accessed Mon Aug 19 9:41:51 US/Central 2002].

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "FLORENCE, FRED FARREL." The Handbook of Texas Online.

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

- Hotel Baker
- Sanger Brothers
- Neiman Marcus

Business Association Memberships, Committees and Commissions

- Dallas Joint Stock Land Bank, executive committee (and vice president)
- American Bankers Association (1934)
- National Defense and War Loan Committee (1941-44)
- Credit Policy Commission of the American Bankers Association (1951-54)
- American Bankers Association, vice president (1954), president (1955)
- Texas Bankers Association, president (1956)
- Texas Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association, director

Other Activities and Memberships

- Texas Centennial Central Exposition, president (1936)
- Greater Texas Pan-American Exposition, president (1937)
- State Fair of Texas, board member
- Dallas Civic Federation, member
- Dallas Citizens Council, member
- Dallas Clearing House, member
- Dallas Chamber of Commerce, member
- Southern Methodist University Executive Council, member
- Southwestern Medical Foundation, member and trustee
- National Merit Scholarship Corporation, director
- Southwest Research Institute, director
- Research and Educational Foundation, director
- Hebrew Union College, trustee
- St. Mark's School of Texas, trustee
- Texas Research Foundation Executive and Endowment Committees, vice president, treasurer, and member
- Dallas United Charities, board member
- National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, Dallas County chapter, life chairman
- American Cancer Society, Texas division, treasurer
- March of Dimes, campaign chairman
- Temple Emanu-El, director
- Jewish Federation for Social Service, president
- United Palestine Fund for Dallas and Texas, chairman (1924)
- Combined Campaign for American Reform Judaism, national chairman (1960-61)
- Camp Fire Girls, national director
- Boy Scouts of America, director.
- St Paul Hospital, board chairman and trustee

In addition to these activities, he was appointed by Governors Ross S. Sterling and Miriam A. Ferguson, and President Franklin Roosevelt to serve on various recovery and relief boards during the Great Depression. Florence established the

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Florence Foundation in December 1956 to support charitable, religious, educational, scientific, and recreational projects "for the benefit of humanity."²²

*Honors and Awards*²³

- Linz Award (1944) for civic contributions to Dallas
- Dallas Distinguished Salesman Award (1954)
- Kudos College award of the Dallas Advertising League (1955)
- Dallas Press Club Headliner of the Year for 1956
- Greater Dallas Planning Council Distinguished Civic Service Award (1960)
- Westminster College at Fulton, Missouri, honorary doctorate (1955)
- Oklahoma City University, honorary doctorate (1956)
- Texas Technological College, honorary doctorate (1960)
- Catholic Benemerenti Medal as general chairman of the building campaign for St. Paul Hospital (1959)

Florence was a thirty-second-degree Mason, a Shriner, and a Democrat. On February 21, 1928, he married Helen Lefkowitz; they adopted two children. He died in a Dallas hospital of hepatitis on December 25, 1960.²⁴

Architects of Republic National Bank

Harrison and Abramovitz (Wallace Harrison and Max Abramovitz) were prolific designers of mid-twentieth-century high-rise buildings with most of their commissions being constructed in New York and surrounding areas. Republic Bank is their only building constructed west of the Mississippi. Their impressive list of accomplishments includes:²⁵

- Erastus Corning Tower, Albany (1973)
- Socony-Mobil Building, New York (1956)
- Continental Can Building, New York (1961)
- Three Mellon Center, Pittsburgh (1951)
- New York Hilton Hotel, New York (1963)
- Tour GAN, Courbevoie, France (1974)
- AXA Financial Center, NYC (1963)
- Tower at Erieview, Cleveland (1964)
- National City Tower, Louisville (1972)
- Fifth Third Center, Cincinnati (1969)
- Regional Enterprise Tower, Pittsburgh (1953)
- Westinghouse Tower, Pittsburgh (1970)
- 1, 2 and 4 Empire State Plaza, Albany (1973)
- Bank One Plaza, Milwaukee (1961)
- Hytower, Toledo (1970)
- Erie County Savings Bank, Buffalo (1969)

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ www.skyscrapers.com

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

- Four Gateway Center, Pittsburgh (1960)
- Springs Building, New York (1962)
- 300 Saint Paul Place Building, Baltimore (1957)
- Laguardia Airport ATC Tower, New York (1963)
- Morningside Gardens I – VI, New York (1957)
- Phoenix Mutual Life Building, Hartford (1964)
- 601 Grant Street, Pittsburgh (1958)
- Sloan House Nurses' Residence, New York (1962)

Max Abramovitz (1908–2004) was born in Chicago to working-class Romanian immigrants (Benjamin and Sophia (Maimon) Abramovitz) and studied architecture at the University of Illinois, Columbia University, and Paris' Ecole des Beaux Arts. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Illinois at Champagne-Urbana in 1929.²⁶ He joined Wallace Harrison's firm in 1935 and quickly became a partner. The two men collaborated for 40 years on numerous modern buildings the majority in New York City. Their best-known works in New York include The Corning Glass Building, Mobil Building, Exxon Building, the Time and Life Building, the Secretariat tower of the United Nations complex and Avery Fisher Hall at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and the McGraw-Hill Building. Designed several years before Dallas' Republic Bank, The Alcoa Tower in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (1951-1953) utilizes the same exterior aluminum panel system. The Alcoa Tower is a thirty-story, 125m tall skyscraper designed as a showpiece of the use of aluminum in building construction for Alcoa, the world's leading alumina supplier. Aluminum was used wherever possible, from the skin of the building to its utilities, reducing the weight of the building so those substantial savings could be made in the structure's steel frame. The building, now called The Regional Enterprise Tower, was the first aluminum-faced skyscraper and Dallas' Republic Bank the second and only structure for the firm west of the Mississippi.

Abramovitz was the deputy director of planning for the United Nations complex and the master planner for Brandeis University. He also designed U. S. embassies in Havana and Rio de Janeiro. Max Abramovitz died on September 12, 2004 in his home in Pound Ridge, New York at age 96. A major retrospective of his work, "The Troubled Search: the Work of Max Abramovitz" opened at the Wallach Gallery at Columbia University in New York just three days after his death.²⁷

Wallace Kirkman Harrison (1895-1981), one of the great American architects of the twentieth century, was born in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1895. He moved to New York in 1916 and apprenticed with McKim, Mead & White. Harrison attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris and returned to New York in 1923. He worked for Bertram Goodhue before joining Corbet's firm, Helme & Corbett in 1927. The firm, later known as Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray was one of three firms known as The Associated Architects that worked on Rockefeller Center in New York, one of the most important mixed-use urban developments of the twentieth century. Later commissions for Harrison included the Trylon and Perisphere at the 1939 World's Fair in New York, LaGuardia Airport, the United Nations, Lincoln Center and the Nelson Rockefeller Empire State Plaza in Albany.²⁸

Harrison appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine on September 22, 1952. In an article inside he was referred to "equal to

²⁶ www.bookrags.com/biography/max-abramovitz/

²⁷ AIArchitect, obituary of Max Abramovitz, 10/2004

²⁸ Huntington Historical Society, "Wallace K. Harrison."

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier and other modern masters."²⁹ In 1967 Harrison was awarded the Gold Medal by the American Institute of Architects. Wallace Kirkman Harrison died in New York City on Dec 2, 1981. The Harrison Estate in West Hills, New York, built as his weekend retreat, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

George Harrell (1906-1980) was a Virginia native and grew up in Rocky Mount. He received his bachelor's degree in architecture from the Georgia Institute of Technology, and his master's of architecture from the University of Pennsylvania, graduating in 1931. After beginning his practice in New York City, Harrell moved to Dallas where he continued his work. In 1950, he became a partner in Gill and Harrell, Architects, and with the more prestigious Harrell and Hamilton in 1956. Harrell's designs include the U. S. Steel Building at the 1939 New York World's Fair, the Ouachita National Bank and Parking Structure in Monroe, Louisiana (1958), The Republic National Bank complex (1960), and the Fairmont Hotel, both in Dallas. With Gill and Harrell, he partnered with Harrison and Abramovitz of New York in the design and construction of Republic Center. His firm designed subsequent additions to the building in the 1960s and 80s.

Harrell was president of the Dallas chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the Texas Society of Architects, director of the Texas Research League and the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, and chairman of the City of Dallas Urban Task Force. He died on March 17, 1980.³⁰

Design of the Republic Bank complex

At the time of its completion, the 1955 banking pavilion and tower was the tallest building in the southwest. The history of its construction and materials is related to the economics and availability of materials. Its aluminum curtain wall weighed considerable less than steel cladding and thus less steel was required for the interior structural system of the building. This innovative solution was important due to the shortage of materials during the Korean War and a prolonged steel strike – both of which delayed construction of the building.³¹ The rocket on the top of the 1955 tower is an original design element and is shown on the original plans and early renderings. It was installed within a year of completion of the building – a delay possibly due again to materials shortages. Early schematic renderings of the building show the rocket on the roof with a stylized straight contrail zooming down the side of the building. The identifying corporate signage was placed on this contrail "spine" zipping down the North Ervay Street façade.

Summary

The Republic Bank building (1955) and additions (1964 and 1980) are significant to the downtown Dallas skyline and maintain a high degree of integrity in their location, setting, workmanship, materials, design, feeling and association. Exterior changes to the building are limited to storefront and entry door changes, the loss of the drive-in teller areas and the selective replacement of some of the original windows. The 1980 addition is compatible and does not detract from the

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "HARRELL, GEORGE FOSTER." The Handbook of Texas Online.

³¹ Annual Report, Republic National Bank of Dallas, 1952, page 41.

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

integrity of the 1955 and 1964 building campaigns. The complex is a reminder of Dallas' role as a banking center of North Texas and the role of Fred Florence, a respected banker, civic leader and businessman. The building is also significant as the work of Harrison and Abramovitz and their design response to the materials shortages of the 1950s.

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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www.bookrags.com/biography/max-abramovitz/

www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/wt/html/regional_enterprise_tower.html

www.skyscrapers.com

Writers Project, *WPA Dallas Guide and History*, 1942, p. 161.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: approximately 1.4 acres

UTM REFERENCES:

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Northing</u>	<u>Easting</u>
14	706275	3629398

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The occupies Block 477 in downtown Dallas, bounded by Bryan Street (north); N. Ervay (west); Pacific (south), and N. St. Paul Street (east). Legal description: Lots 1, PT Lot 2, Lots 3-5, 10, PT Lot 9, TR 6 & 11, Lots 7, 8 & PT Lot 9.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes all improvements historically associated with the building.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: Jay Firshing, with preservation consultant Anna Mod

ORGANIZATION ArchiTexas

DATE November 2004

STREET & NUMBER 1907 Marilla

TELEPHONE 214-748-4561

CITY OR TOWN Dallas

STATE Texas

ZIP CODE 75201

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (See pages Plan-21 and Plan-22)

PHOTOGRAPHS (See pages Photo 23 through Photo-31)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Four Point Star LP (ATTN: Sina Mahfar)

STREET & NUMBER: 175 Great Neck Road, # 404

TELEPHONE: 516-487-5690, ext. 225

CITY OR TOWN: Great Neck

STATE: NY

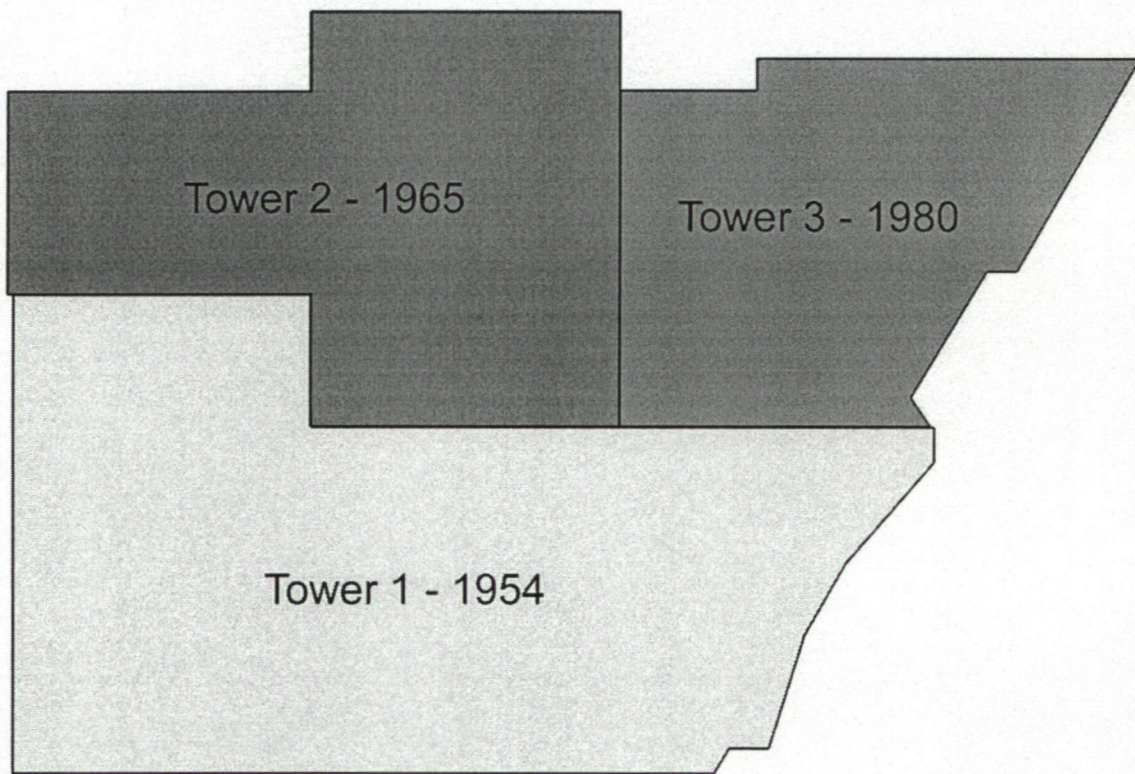
ZIP CODE: 11021-3313

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas



Republic Center Dates of Construction

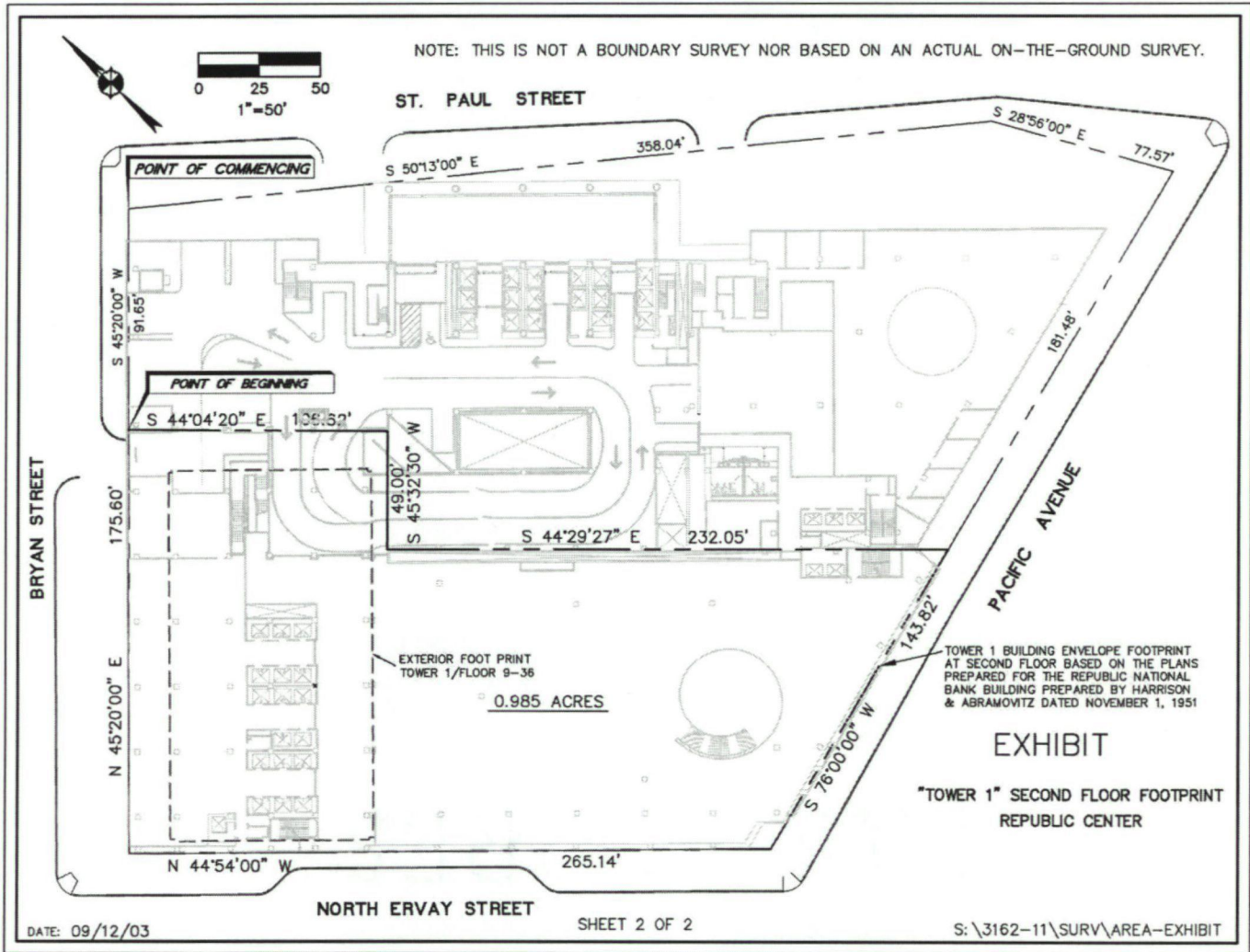
RN
NO SCALE

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

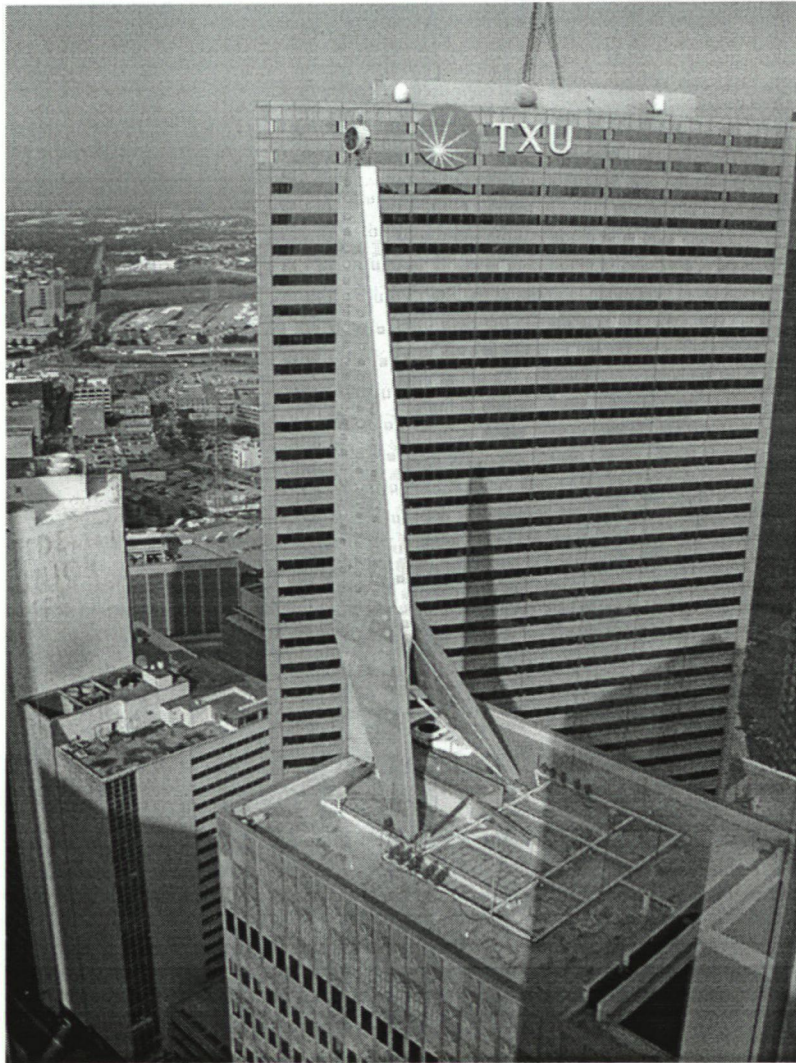


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Republic National Bank
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"Rocket" (facing west)

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Republic National Bank
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(facing southeast)

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas



Tower II (facing west)

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National Park Service

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas



Bank entrance (facing north)



Ground floor at Bryan & Ervay (facing southeast)

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas



Ground floor, along Bryan Street (facing southeast)



Ground floor, Ervay at Bryan (facing southeast)

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas



Ervay Street entrance (northwest elevation)



Ervay Street façade (northwest elevation)

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Section ___ Photo ___ Page 29

Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas



Typical upper floor



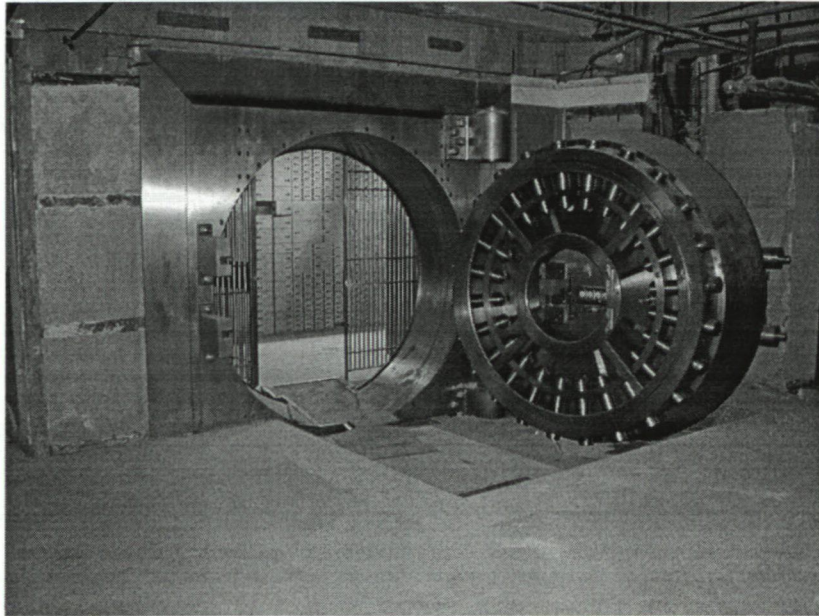
Lobby

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National Park Service

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas



Vault

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National Park Service

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Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Republic National Bank
300 North Ervay / 325 North St. Paul Street
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas
Photographs by Anna Mod, October 2004 (except as noted)
Negatives on file with the Texas Historical Commission

Supplemental Historic Photos

Photo 1
Republic National Bank, 1955
West elevation, camera facing east
Negative on file with the Texas/Dallas History and Archives Division, Dallas Public Library

Photo 2
Lobby interior, 1955
Camera facing north
Negative on file with the Texas/Dallas History and Archives Division, Dallas Public Library

Photo 3
Fred Farrel Florence at Republic Bank construction site, 1954
Negative on file with the Texas/Dallas History and Archives Division, Dallas Public Library

Photo 4
Northeast oblique, 1965
Camera facing southwest
Negative on file with the Texas/Dallas History and Archives Division, Dallas Public Library

2005 Photographs

Photo 5
West elevation, towers 1 and 2
Camera facing east

Photo 6
West elevation Tower 1 (lower floors)
Camera facing southeast

Photo 7
South entrance detail (1954 tower on left; 1980 addition on right)
Camera facing east

Photo 8
West "eyebrow" entrance, Tower 1
Camera facing east

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Republic National Bank

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Atascosa

DATE RECEIVED: 2/15/05 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/10/05
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/25/05 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/31/05
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 05000243

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: **N**
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT _____ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

See attachment

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER R McCulland DISCIPLINE History

TELEPHONE 202-354-2258 DATE 3/31/05

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

**Republic National Bank
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas**

Well-documented nomination for the city's "first major downtown post-office building," and one of the city's "most visible, architecturally important, and recognizable buildings." Filling an entire block of the downtown district, the building's current configuration reflects the physical evolution and growth of one of Dallas's most prominent banks. It consists of three parts: 1) the original 8-story pavilion and 36-story tower (1955) designed by the nationally prominent firm of Harrison and Abramovitz of New York (also known for the United Nations Building in New York and the Alcoa Building in Pittsburgh) and Dallas architects Gill and Harrell; 2) a 1964-65 addition that includes an interconnecting pavilion and a 52-story tower designed by Harrell, of Harrell and Hamilton, to echo the materials (glass and aluminum panels) and design of the earlier tower; and 3) a final 8-story addition that completed the block in 1980. All three components are seamlessly integrated through a continuous lobby. The period of significance for the block is 1954-1965, dates which encompass the 1955 and 1965 construction as contributing to the property's historic significance and are supported by the importance of the Republic National Bank in the development of Dallas as an important center of banking and finance in the mid-20th century. Block is also significant for its association with bank chairman Fred Farrel Florence, who made important contributions to local economics as one of the city's leading bankers and guided the Republic National Bank's financing of cotton interests and investments in the Texas oil market, which brought it considerable prosperity and prominence by the 1960s.

The exceptional significance of the block is based on its being "an outstanding example of a mid-20th century modern skyscraper designed by the nationally recognized architectural firm of Harrison and Abramovitz," and, with its "compatible 1964-65 Republic Tower addition," serving as "a testament to the status of the Republic Bank as a principal financial institution in Texas." Nomination provides a well-developed context on banking in Dallas and city's emergence as the primary financial center in the mid-20th century. It also includes biographical information and a list of major commissions for Wallace Harrison and Max Abramovitz and Dallas architect, George Harrell.

The aluminum panel curtain wall is a distinctive and characteristic feature of the work of Harrison and Abramovitz, having been introduced on the Alcoa Building in Pittsburgh several years earlier. The anodized aluminum panel and embossed star design at Dallas became a symbol of the Republic National Bank's success and the source of the bank's corporate logo. A stylized rocket spire was constructed atop the 1955 tower shortly after its construction. At the time of its construction in 1955, the building became the tallest building in Dallas, exceeding the height of the Mercantile Building, built by his primary competitor, Robert Thornton.

The subject of hazardous material abatement in 2004, much of the interior finishes have been removed, mostly interior partitions and ceilings. The spacious lobby still retains its circular staircase, terrazzo flooring, and travertine and marble finishes, and a distinctive

serpentine balcony. The travertine walls of the elevator lobby on each floor have been retained. The exterior has a high degree of integrity. The only alterations have been to the street level storefronts, the removal of revolving doors, and the replacement windows on the lower 9 floors. Characteristic features of the building remain intact, including the windowless curtain wall along Ervay St., the grid of alternating aluminum panels and window rows marking the fenestration of both towers, and the "eyebrow" entrance on N. Ervay Street, and the monumental entrance to the 1965 addition on St. Paul Street which incorporates granite-clad square columns and window bands that rise from the entrance level and mark the two-story lobby inside.

Recommendations: Accept A, B, and C, Criteria Consideration G

Linda McClelland



CREDIT LINE:
FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE
TEXAS/DALLAS HISTORY AND ARCHIVES
DIVISION, DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY

RA 2000-3/1195
ACCESSION # _____

Republic National Bank
300 N. ERVAY, Dallas, TX DALLAS COUNTY
photo 1 of 8



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TEXAS/DALLAS HISTORY AND ARCHIVES
DIVISION, DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY

R332.1 R426A 1956
ACCESSION # _____

300 N. ERVAY, Republic National Bank
Dallas, TX Dallas County
photo 2 of 8



CREDIT LINE:
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TEXAS/DALLAS HISTORY AND ARCHIVES
DIVISION, DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY

PA76-1/215.3
ACCESSION # _____

300 N. ERVAY
Fred Farrel Florence
Dallas, TX, Dallas county
photo 309



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ACCESSION # _____

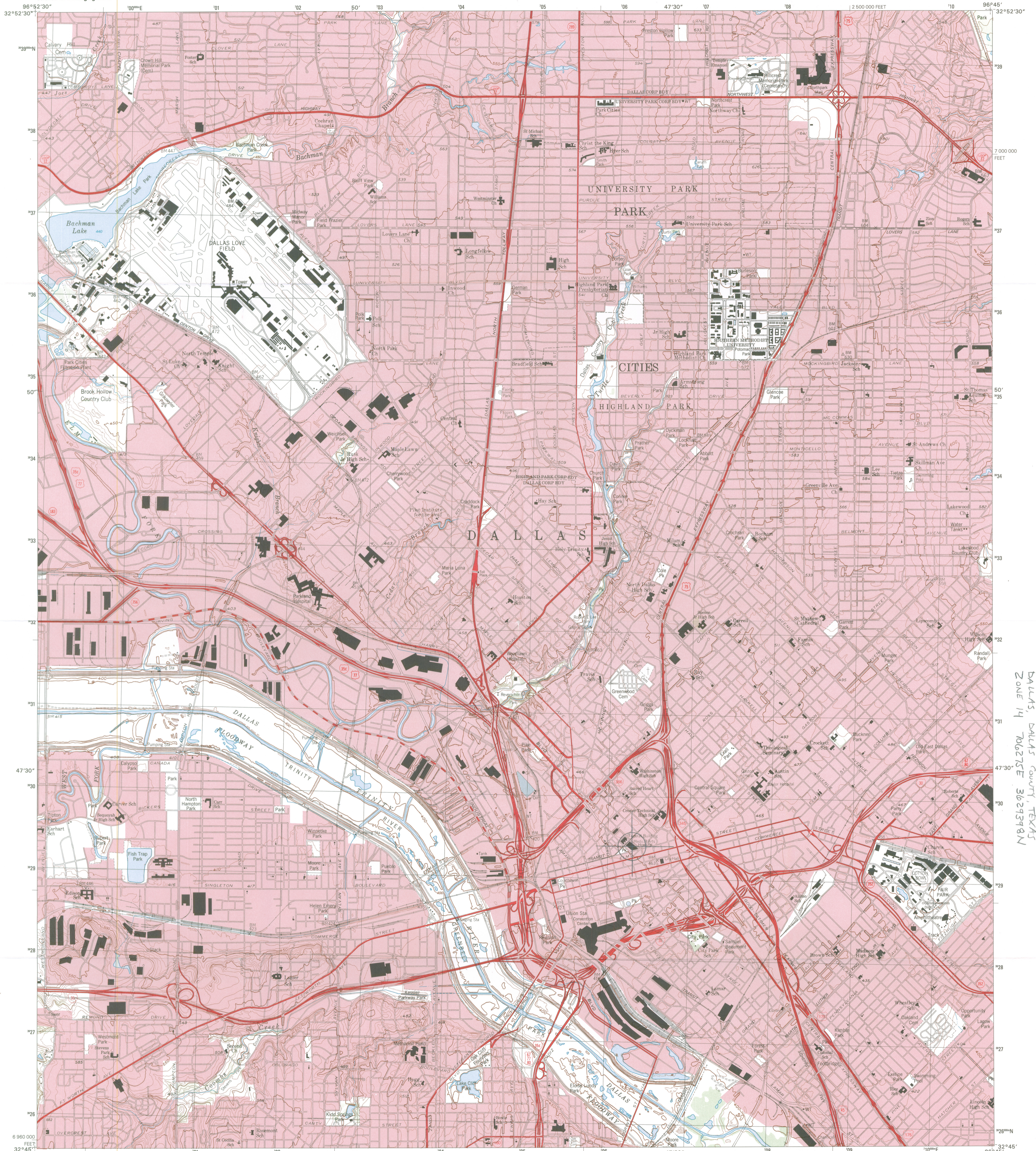
Republic National Bank
300 N. ERVAY Dallas, TX Dallas county
photo 4 26 8





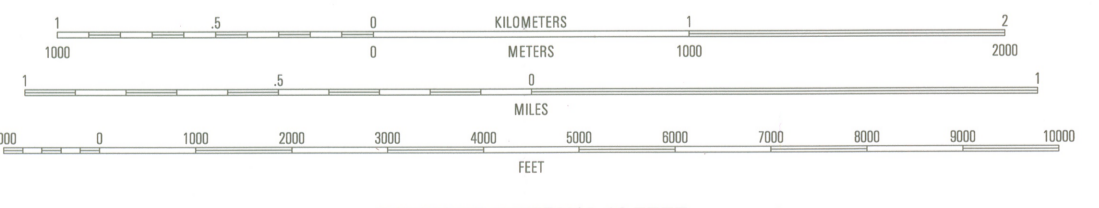
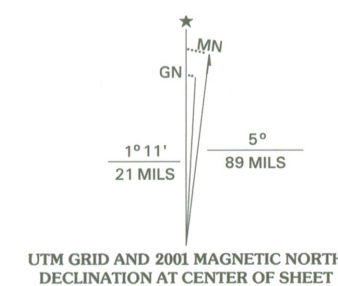






REPUBLIC NATIONAL BANK
300 N. ERVAY / 325 N. ST. PAUL
DALLAS, DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS
ZONE 14 706275E 3029398N

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Topography compiled 1954. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1995 and other sources. Survey control current as of 1958. Boundaries current as of 2000.
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 14. 10 000-foot ticks: Texas Coordinate System of 1983 (north central zone).
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software.
Houses of worship, schools, and other labeled buildings verified 1958.



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES
1 Carrollton
2 Addison
3 Garland
4 Irving
5 White Rock Lake
6 Duncanville
7 Oak Cliff
8 Hutchins

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

DALLAS, TX
1995

NIMA 6649 IV SE-SERIES V882





**TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

Rick Perry • *Governor*

John L. Nau, III • *Chairman*

F. Lawrence Oaks • *Executive Director*

The State Agency for Historic Preservation



TO: Linda McClelland
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Gregory W. Smith, National Register Coordinator
Texas Historical Commission

RE: Republic National Bank, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

DATE: February 10, 2005

The following materials are submitted regarding: Republic National Bank

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Original National Register of Historic Places form
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resubmitted nomination
	Multiple Property nomination form
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Photographs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	USGS map
	Correspondence
	Other:

COMMENTS:

SHPO requests substantive review

The enclosed owner objections (do) (do not) constitute a majority of property owners

Other: _____