UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

VENTORY NOMINATION FORM		DATE ENTERED	JUN 1 3 1978		
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HISTORIC					
First Mortgage Com	pany Building				
AND/OR COMMON		The sale of the sa	Capable Telland new		
First National Bui	laing		installation in the inter-		
LOCATION					
STREET & NUMBER					
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El Paso	VICINITY OF	16	DISTRICT		
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE 141		
Texas	048	El Paso	141		
CLASSIFICATION					
CATEGORY OWNERSHIP	STATUS		PRESENT USE		
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_SITE PUBLIC ACQUISI	TION ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAIN	MENTRELIGIOUS		
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BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICT	TEDINDUSTRIA  MILITARY	TRANSPORTATIONOTHER:		
OWNER OF PROPERTY	pin of the out				
NAME	To the Line of the Table of the				
First National Ass	sociates				
c/o Mr. Aaron Gura	al 7501 Broad	lway			
CITY, TOWN	Held a control of the less	STATE			
New York	VICINITY OF	Nev	York 10036		
LOCATION OF LEGAL DE	SCRIPTION				
COURTHOUSE. REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. El Paso Co	ounty Court Hous	se			
STREET & NUMBER 500 East S	San Antonio Stre	eet			
CITY, TOWN		STATE			
El Paso		Те	exas		

TITLE

El Paso's Historic Past - Historic Preservation

DATE

\_\_FEDERAL \_\_STATE \_\_COUNTY XLOCAL 1977

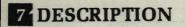
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

El Paso

Dept. of Planning, Research and Development

CITY, TOWN STATE

Texas



\_\_FAIR

#### CONDITION

X EXCELLENT \_\_DETERIORATED \_GOOD \_RUINS \_UNEXPOSED

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BMACHER ARE

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The First National Building, located in the heart of the downtown business district, was built in 1920-21 in the developing commercial skyscraper style. The fifteen story building is rectangular in plan. The underlying structure is of reinforced concrete, with three 18 foot bays on the Oregon Street side and five 24 foot bays on the Sheldon Street side. The exterior skin is of buff brick manufactured in Chicago with tan terra-cotta trim. The mass of the building is organized in a tripartate scheme with the base, a shaft, and a capital. Access to the interior is through entrances on the north and east facades. The ground floor plan consists of a small elevator lobby and retail space; the upper floors hold office space.

The design of the exterior was in response to the commercial style employed by the architects and to the desire to carefully blend the new building with the elements of the earlier building it was connected to, built in 1905 in the second renaissance revival style.

At the base of the building, the ornamentation is a continuation of that on the earlier building--two story pilasters and capital ornaments supporting a continuous architrave, with spandrels slightly recessed at the second floor. The double hung windows on the east facade are grouped in sets of three as they were on the earlier building. Windows paired in sets of two are found in each bay of the north facade.

The shaft, composed of the third through the thirteenth stories, is accentuated with ornamental banding of brick and terra-cotta. The windows in each bay have continuous terra-cotta sills and are set above slightly recessed spandrels.

The capital -- the fourteenth and fifteenth stories -- is defined by continuous terra-cotta ornamental banding and pilasters. The building is capped with a dentiled and fluted cornice supported by elaborate terra-cotta ornaments.

The west and south facades are more simply articulated. The windows are mounted flush with the wall surface. Window placement is determined by a fire escape on the west and a service core of bathrooms, stairs, and elevators on the south. Definition of the tripartate scheme employed on the principal facades is accomplished with simple banding of terra-cotta and brickwork.

The basic design and ornamentation of the First National Building remains unmodified. In the late 1950s the building was remodeled; an air conditioning system was installed and the exterior of the first two floors was "modernized" with aluminum panels on the principal facades. The elevators were semi-automated, but retain the original cabs. The current owners plan to restore the principal facades to their original appearance.

#### PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW MAY 5 PREHISTORIC \_ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC : \_\_COMMUNITY PLANNING \_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE \_\_RELIGION \_1400-1499 \_ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC \_\_CONSERVATION \_LAW SCIENCE \_1500-1599 AGRICULTURE \_ECONOMICS \_LITERATURE \_SCULPTURE \_1600-1699 XARCHITECTURE \_EDUCATION \_MILITARY \_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN \_1700-1799 ART \_ENGINEERING \_MUSIC \_\_THEATER \_1800-1899 XCOMMERCE EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT \_\_PHILOSOPHY \_TRANSPORTATION -X1900-\_\_COMMUNICATIONS \_INDUSTRY \_\_POLITICS/GOVERNMENT \_OTHER (SPECIFY) \_INVENTION

1921

SPECIFIC DATES Begun May, 1920 Completed March, BUILDER/ARCHITECT Barglebaugh & Whitson

Architects, Dallas, Texas

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The First National Building in downtown El Paso is a large commercial structure reflecting the rapidly expanding economy of the city during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The fifteen story building, a commercial style skyscraper, was built to accomodate the growing financial institutions and professional interests in the 1920s. Through the years, the First National Building has retained its architectural and functional integrity, unlike many of the buildings surrounding it.

The design of the First National Building was influenced by the spatial needs of the First National Bank of El Paso and the First Mortgage Company, and by the desire to integrate this new building with the existing American Bank Building to which it was to be connected. The First National Building was built, as influenced by these needs and desires, to provide office space for the growing city of El Paso, to provide additional space for the First National Bank, and to house the First Mortgage Company.

The First National Bank was chartered May 26, 1881--the first national bank in El Paso--and saw steady growth until its doors were closed to depositors on September 4, 1931. By 1914 the bank had increased its capital sixteen-fold, was one of the five organizing banks of the Federal Reserve Bank of the eleventh district, and had taken over the control of two local banks. One of these consolidations was with the American National Bank. The American National Bank Building, a seven story second renaissance revival style structure built in 1905, was enlarged and occupied by the First National Bank in 1914. In 1920 the First National Bank consolidated with a third bank and additional space was needed.

Property adjoining the existing bank building on the Oregon Street side was purchased in conjunction with the First Mortgage Company. Barglebaugh & Whitson, an architectural firm based in Dallas, Tx., was commissioned to design the new building. Whitson (1889-1973) was educated at the University of Minnesota with an engineering mechanics degree. The design of the building was influenced by the desire to relate the new building to the existing bank building built ca. 1905.

Construction was begun on the new building--which was originally named the First Mortgage Building but was later known as the First National Building -- on Monday, May 3, 1920, by J. C. Buchanan, an El Paso contractor. A fifteen story, reinforced concrete skyscraper -- the second skyscraper in El Paso and the tallest for many years -- was built, connected by corridors to the existing, newly remodeled bank building. The construction cost including the site was \$1,029,064.57. The new building had 54 feet of frontage on Oregon Street and 120 feet of frontage on Sheldon Street. The west half of the ground floor of the new building was specially equipped with large vaults for the bank. The First Mortgage Company occupied the second floor of the new building. There were 215 offices in the new building and a total of 415 offices in both buildings. These offices were "fitted up with the latest type of equipment", according to newspaper accounts at the time of construction, and finished in red qum wood. The lobby was finished in marble.

### 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

El Paso Herald Septemter 24, 1929.
El Paso Times September 28, 1921.
May 3, 1920.

Morgan, Frank, El Paso in Pictures, El Paso: The Press, 1971.

Person Interviewed: Lea R. Daniel, 109 W. Oregon, El Paso, April, 1978.

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FOR NPS USE ONLY I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY	LOUIDED .	N THE NATION	AL DECICEES	
THEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY	Mut	N INE NATION	DATE	6/13/28
ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	wich y		DATE	June 12, 1978
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION				

Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED MAY 5	1978
DATE ENTERED	JUN 1 3 1978

**CONTINUATION SHEET** 

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

Four high speed traction elevators were installed with flashlight signal systems and illuminated thresholds, "a new type for El Paso". Another innovation was the fireproof stair shaft within the building. The design of the First National Building resulted in a bank that "in point of beauty, equipment, facilities and conveniences...will not be equaled by any banking room in the southwest" and in a structure that was "one of the most desirable locations in the city" and that served as "the laying of the biggest milestone along the city development highway thus far traveled".

With further prosperity and growth in El Paso, the building remained a desirable investment. In 1929, the First Mortgage Company sold the building to Joshua S. Raynolds, then president of the First National Bank, of the Raynolds Holding Company. W. H. Bucher and C. L. Hill were given control of the building in 1933. The building was transferred in 1936 to Anne Bucher of the Bucher Corporation. The building was sold in early 1959 to Newmark & Associates of New York, after a modernization program that included air conditioning and remodeling of the lobby. Abbott & Adams, Inc. of New York purchased the building in 1962 and conveyed it to First National Associates, New York, in 1965. Since 1970, the building has been leased by the Great River Corporation of El Paso.

Through the years the First National Building has retained its architectural integrity. The old First National Bank Building next door has not shared the same fate. It was sold at auction in 1935, drastically altered, and is currently used as a furniture store. The First National Building remains the earliest building of its type in El Paso that has not been drastically altered. It is currently in use as an office building with plans for restoration of the ground floors, supporting the revitalization effort in downtown El Paso.

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National Register Write-up Send-back	Entered JUN 13 1978
Federal Register Entry 7.5.28 Re-submit	- INT:2106-74



First National Building MAY 5 1978
El Paso, El Paso Co., Texas
Photo by Darst-Ireland, 1978
Negative filed with Mr. Lea R. Daniel
109 N. Oregon, El Paso, Tx.
Detail of terra-cotta ornament at cornice

JUN 13 1978

125

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Darst-Ireland Photography



MAY 5 1978 MAY 5 1978

First National Building
El Paso, El Paso Co., Texas
Photo by Darst- Ireland, 1978
Negative filed with Mr. Lea R. Daniel
109 N. Oregon, El Paso, Tx.
West Elevation

JUN 1 3 1978

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PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Darst-Ireland Photography 1300 E. Yandell El Paso, Texas 79902

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First National Building
El Paso, El Paso Co., Texas
Photo copy by Darst-Ireland
Negative filed with Mr. Lea R. Daniel
109 N. Oregon, El Paso, Tx.
First National Building (at right) in 1922

3 85

MAY 5 1978

JUN 13 1978

### PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Darst-Ireland Photography 1300 E. Yandell El Pasu, Texas 79902



MAY 5 1978

First National Building
El Paso, El Paso Co., Texas
Photo copy by Darst-Ireland
Negative filed with Mr. Lea R. Daniel
109 N. Oregon, El Paso, Tx.
Architect's rendering, Barglebaugh & Whitson
Architects

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JUN 13 1978

### PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Darst-Ireland Photography 1300 E. Yandell El Pasu, Texas 79902



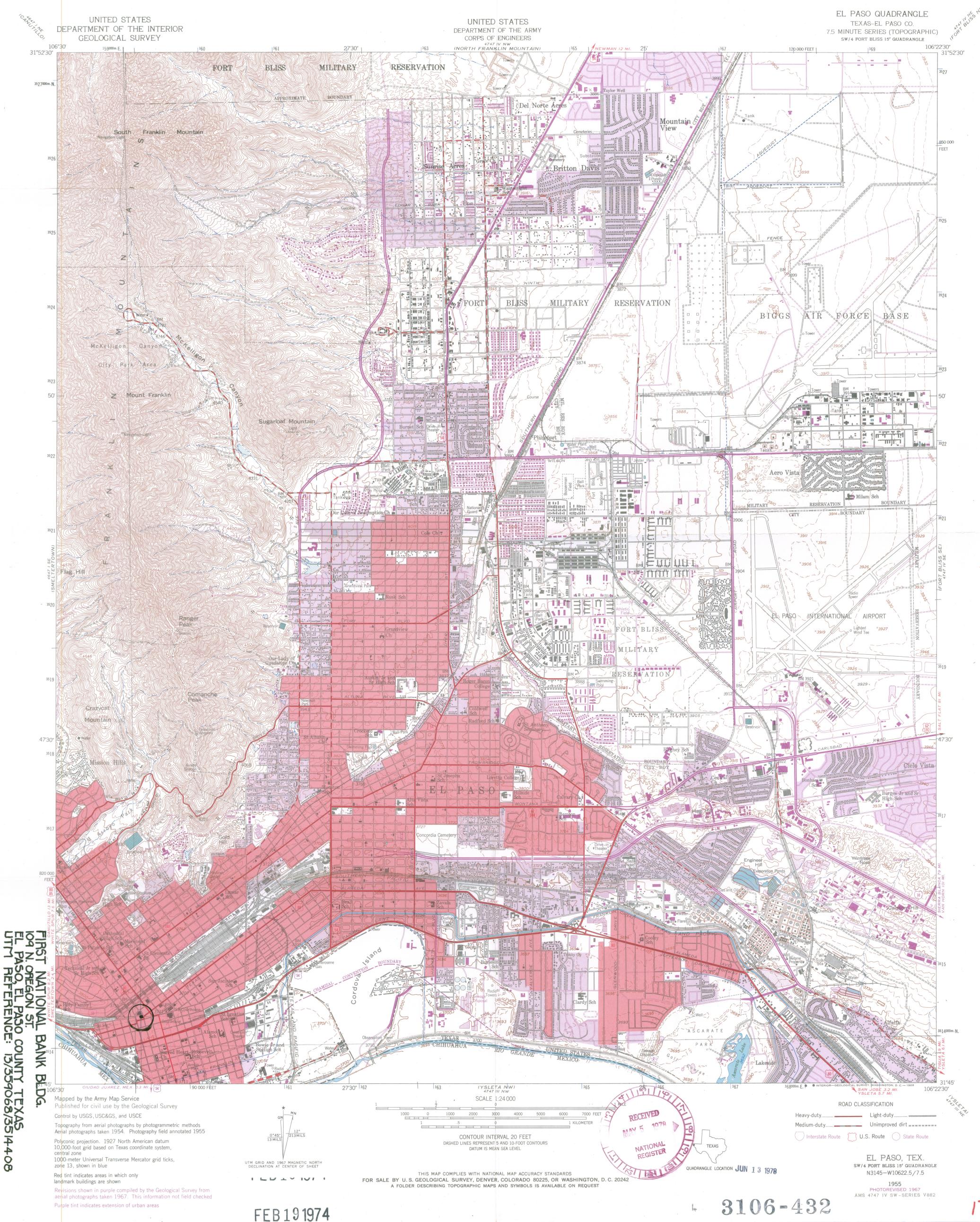
First National Building MAY 5 1978
El Paso, El Paso Co., Texas
Photo by Darst-Ireland, 1978
Negative filed with Mr. Lea R. Daniel
109 N. Oregon, El Paso, Tx.
East Elevation

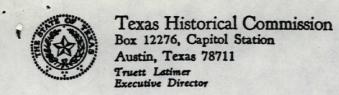
5 45

JUN 1 3 1978

## PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Darst-Ireland Photography 1300 E. Yandall El Paso, Texas 39902





### NOTICE OF ACTIVITY

RE: NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

For your information and consideration we report that pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-665) as administered by this office:
PROPERTY NAME: First national Bldg. (First Montgage Co. Bldg.) LOCATION: El Paro, Peyor
LOCATION: El Paro, Peyar
will be considered by the State Review Board for its eligibility for nomination to the National Register at a meeting on at
was, was not, judged eligible for nomination to the National Register by the State Review Board at its meeting of
has been nominated to the National Register.
was added to the National Register by the National Park Service on
Additional information and copies of nominations are available from our office.
Distribution:
State A-95 Clearinghouse
Dept. of Highways & Public Transportation (2 copies)
City Planning
County Judge
County Historical Commission Chairman
v Let R. Demiel
Afformey Al Lyw
Site 920, 12 Notanal 3149
169 N. Gregen St.
El Pase, TR Magal

#### FIRST NATIONAL ASSOCIATES

April 27, 1978

Doctor William J. Murtagh
Keeper of the National Register of
Historic Places
Office of Archeology and Historic
Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Doctor Murtagh:

We, as owner, respectfully request a determination of eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for FIRST NATIONAL BUILDING located at 109 North Oregon Street, City and County of El Paso, State of Texas, formerly the First Mortgage Company Building. Documentation necessary to make this determination is being sent to you under separate cover by Mr. Truett Lattimer, Executive Director, Texas Historical Commission.

We understand the implications of the Tax Reform Act of 1976, waive the 30-day waiting period and request that the nomination be reviewed immediately.

Yours very truly,

FIRST NATIONAL ASSOCIATES

General Partne

# GREAT RIVER CORP. 109 N. Oregon St., Suite 920 El Paso, Texas 79901

May 8, 1978

Doctor William J. Murtagh
Keeper of the National Register of
Historic Places
Office of Archeology and Historic
Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Doctor Murtagh:

Re: Application For Nomination To The National Register, First National Building El Paso, Texas

Please find enclosed for your consideration in connection with the above referenced application:

- 1. Copy of "Notice Of Activity Re: National Register Of Historic Places" issued by the Texas Historical Commission relative to First National Building.
- Original of letter dated April 27, 1978 from First National Associates (owner of First National Building) waiving the 30-day waiting period, requesting that the Nomination be reviewed immediately and confirming its understanding of the implications of the Tax Reform Act of 1976.

We would very much appreciate your advise as to when the application will be acted upon by you.

Yours very truly,

President

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES MAY 1 1 1978
DATE REO'D
INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE (ATTACHED)
INFORM THE MOTORIAL SUIT
TELEPHONE C. LL (ATTACMU)
DATE ACTION TAKEN
INITIALS

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### FIRST NATIONAL ASSOCIATES

May 16, 1978

Doctor William J. Murtagh
Keeper of the National Register of
Historic Places
Office of Archeology and Historic
Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Doctor Murtagh:

Re: Application For Nomination to The National Register, First National Building El Paso, Texas

We, as owner, respectfully request a determination of eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for FIRST NATIONAL BUILDING located at 109 North Oregon Street, City and County of El Paso, State of Texas, formerly the First Mortgage Company Building. Documentation necessary to make this determination is being sent to you under separate cover by Mr. Truett Lattimer, Executive Director, Texas Historical Commission.

First National Associates hereby:

- 1. Waives the 10 day comment period for the Federal Register.
- Waives the 30 day period relative to tax credit. We understand the tax implications set forth in the Tax Reform Act of 1976 and have no objections to First National Building being placed on the National Register.
- 3. Requests that you expedite approval of the application to place FIRST NATIONAL BUILDING on the National Register.

Yours very truly

FIRST NATIONAL ASSOCIATES

Lea R. Daniel

Agent for First National Associates

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	
DATE REO'D MAY 2 2 1978	
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### ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE TEXAS

Date Entered JUN 1 3 1978

Name

Steele House

First Mortgage Company Building

Location

Navasota Grimes County

El Paso County

### Also Notified

Honorable Lloyd M. Bentsen Honorable John G. Tower Honorable Charles Wilson Honorable Richard C. White

NR Mott/bjr

6/20/78

State Historic Preservation Office Mr. Truett Latimer Executive Director Texas Historical Commission P.O. Box 12276, Capitol Station Austin, Texas 78711

# NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

NAME as it appears on federal		2	OTHER NAMES:			3 date of entry:	(4) county code:
First Mortgage Company Building			First National Building			JUN 1 3 1978	141
5 LOCATION street & number		town	vicinity of	state	county	6NPS REGIO	V:
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