

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received DEC 6 1983
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Old Alamo National Bank Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 316 East Commerce Street

N/A not for publication

city, town San Antonio

N/A vicinity of

state Texas

code 048

county Bexar

code 027

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name David Drapela

street & number 300 East Huntland, Suite 110

city, town Austin

N/A vicinity of

state Texas 78752

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bexar County Clerk's Office

street & number Main Plaza

city, town San Antonio

state Texas 78205

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(1) San Antonio Historic Survey
 title (2) Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no
 (1) 1972
 date (2) 1973 federal state county local

depository for survey records (1)Historic Preservation Officer, City of San Antonio, Texas
(2)Texas Historical Commission

city, town (1) San Antonio
(2) Austin

state Texas

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved date 1913
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Old Alamo National Bank Building is an eight-story office building whose street elevations are faced with gray granite. The structure features Renaissance details, including giant-order Corinthian engaged columns on the fourth and fifth floors. The building takes advantage of its corner site with a semicylindrical bay at the corner.

Situated at the southwest corner of the intersection of Commerce and Presa streets in downtown San Antonio, the Old Alamo National Bank Building is an eight-story, steel-frame design with gray granite facades on the street elevations and plain, brick fronts on the two lesser elevations. Access to the interior is provided by two entrances, one at the center of the East Commerce facade, and the other, which opens into the former banking hall, sited at the corner bay of the structure. The doorframes are set within round-arch openings. The corner entrance is the more ornately detailed, with the entry arch following the curve of the semicylindrical corner bay. This entrance is protected by a pair of handsome bronze gates which feature the monogram of the bank surrounded by a laurel wreath. Unfluted Ionic columns flank the entrance, supporting a pediment whose apex is highlighted by a handsomely carved cartouche.

The East Commerce entrance follows the same rather Renaissance lines, although Ionic pilasters are used instead of columns. The East Commerce facade is five bays wide, as is the Presa facade, although the widths of the latter facade are half the size of the other facade bays. Rusticated square piers which rise through the first and second floors serve as the dividers for the bay system. The pier capitals feature a course of egg-and-dart molding on their lower segments. The spandrel panels between the first and second floors are ornamented by foliate carving on the East Commerce front, but are left unadorned on the Presa elevation. In terms of the overall design of the building, the most interesting feature is the semicylindrical corner bay that rises the full height of the structure. Divided into three parts by piers, engaged columns, and pilasters, this form features a double window bay aligned directly above the bank hall entrance, which is flanked by two single window bays where the curve of the cylinder returns into the mass of the building.

The third floor is almost devoid of any detailing, save for the cornices that separate from the floors above and below it. The fourth and fifth floors are united on the East Commerce facade by a series of giant-order, engaged Corinthian columns, and by less ornate square piers on the Presa street facade. The spandrel panels between these floors follow the pattern noted between the first and second stories, with foliate carving present along East Commerce only. The window openings of the fifth floor are round arched, the only such openings besides the entrances at street level.

The uppermost three floors were added by the Alamo National Bank in 1916, and are slightly less ornate than those of the original mass below them. The upper section is faced with gray granite and the facade-bay system is maintained, thus insuring compatibility with the earlier part of the design. Rusticated piers are used on the sixth floor, mimicking those of the structure's base. The rather flat pilasters that rise through the seventh and eighth floors feature interesting, raised, geometric ornament just beneath the building's cornice. This detailing consists of a circle from which are hung a series of

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date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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raised vertical moldings, the whole design resembling an elaborate earring. The building is capped by a copper cornice which, on the basis of early views of the structure, appears to be original work that was taken down during the expansion of the design and re-erected three stories higher. Above the cornice on the East Commerce elevation is a horizontal panel, flanked by griffins, that bore the name of the bank in raised letters, which have since been removed.

The interior of the structure has been remodeled, but the original banking hall is largely intact and is located on the ground floor at the corner of Commerce and Presa. The building is located in a district of business buildings, parking buildings, and parking lots near the Alamo Plaza Historic District.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1902/1913 **Builder/Architect** James Wahrenberger/Coughlin & Ayres

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Old Alamo National Bank, with its Renaissance-inspired exterior detailing, represents the more classic phase of the career of the prominent San Antonio architect James Wahrenberger. The building was the subject of one of the most remarkable relocations to take place in San Antonio, being shifted back on its site by 16 feet to accommodate the widening of Commerce Street.

The Alamo National Bank, which was chartered in 1891, decided to construct a new facility in 1902, and contracted with the San Antonio architect James Wahrenberger, in association with the firm of Coughlin and Ayres, for the design of a five-story main office at the corner of East Commerce and Presa streets. The design, which is predominately Renaissance Revival in character, is an important example of Wahrenberger's later work. Wahrenberger, who was born in 1855 to Swiss immigrant parents in Austin, Texas, received his formal education in Europe, and returned to Texas in 1878. He continued to practice in Austin until 1883, entering the competition for the design of the State Capitol Building, in which he placed second to the winning design of Elijah E. Myers. Establishing an office in San Antonio in 1883, he formed a partnership with Albert F. Beckmann which lasted until 1890. The firm was responsible for the design of the Edward Steves, Jr., and Carl F.A. Hummel houses in San Antonio, both located on King William Street. From 1890 until 1905, Wahrenberger practiced alone, producing some of his most noted works, including the Reuter Building on Alamo Plaza in San Antonio, and the splendid George W. Littlefield mansion in Austin. The Old Alamo National Bank Building belongs to that period of Wahrenberger's solo practice, before the creation of a joint partnership with his son Frank in 1905. Wahrenberger served several terms as the president of the Texas State Association of Architects, and was responsible for the drafting of the first building ordinance for the city of San Antonio.

In 1912, the city of San Antonio, in an effort to enhance its potential for development, decided to widen East Commerce Street by 16 feet 7 inches. Such a maneuver required the partial demolition or relocation of a number of structures, including the Alamo National Bank. What makes the relocation of the bank so remarkable is its weight of approximately 8,000 tons. The technical advisor to the city on this project was the architect Leo M.J. Dielmann, who recommended that the bank be moved back rather than suffer partial demolition and reconstruction of its Commerce facade. The work was begun in November of 1913, under the supervision of Jacob Nilsen of the Chicago firm of Rudd-Nilsen. One thousand eight hundred screw jacks were employed to raise the structure, which was then placed onto 1,600 steel rollers each 2 1/2 inches in diameter, to shift it southward on ten tracks onto its new foundation. The entire project took nearly three months, with the actual move accomplished in less than a week. Incredibly, regular office operations were maintained during the move. Relocation of the Old Alamo National Bank Building has in no way affected its integrity.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Interview of Bradford Breuer, Executive Vice President, Alamo National Bank, by A.M. Watson, San Antonio Express; Nov 8, 1913; Oct 12, 1913. 1980.
 San Antonio, Texas Through a Camera. Business Man's Club, n.d.
 Texas Architect, Jan. to Feb. 1914.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name San Antonio East, Texas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	4	5	4	9	5	9	0	3	2	5	4	8	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing							

C

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D

Zone		Easting				Northing							

E

Zone		Easting				Northing							

F

Zone		Easting				Northing							

G

Zone		Easting				Northing							

H

Zone		Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

New City Block 156, Lot A 7- bounded on the north by Commerce Street, south by NCB 900, Lot 4, on the east by Presa Street, and on the west by NCB 156, Lot 5.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ann Maria Watson

organization

date 2 April 1980

street & number 315 Adams Street

telephone 512 224-4734

city or town San Antonio

state Texas 78210

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Ardis J. Russell

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 29 Nov. 1983

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

for *Delores Byer*
Keeper of the National Register

date

1/5/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet

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The building was enlarged by the bank in 1916, with three more stories added for a total of eight. The structure's original copper cornice appears to have been disassembled and reinstalled on top of the new work. Research has not uncovered the name of the architect responsible for the additions. The bank evidently outgrew the building, finally constructing a 24-story home two blocks away on Commerce which opened in 1930. The present structure was occupied by the Morris Plan Bank from 1930 until 1942, at which time it became known as the Commerce Building, with office space occupied by a variety of tenants. During much of the 1960s the majority of the building was vacant. It was acquired by the present owner in 1982, and was recently renovated for future office use.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Alamo National Bank Building
Bexar County
TEXAS

Working No. DEC 6 1983
Fed. Reg. Date: 3-5-85
Date Due: 1/5/84 - 1/20/84
Action: ACCEPT 1/5/84
 RETURN
 REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

Entered in the
National Register

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
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4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____
Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Old Alamo National Bank Building
316 East Commerce Street
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Photo August 1983, by John C. Ferguson; neg. on
file with Texas Historical Commission

View of entrance corner, looking southwest

Photo 1 of 6



OFFICE SPACE
FOR LEASE
222-8342
CONTACT: J. J.
[unreadable]

BOOKS

ONE WAY

10
20
30

1973

11

Old Alamo National Bank Building
316 East Commerce Street
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Photo by John C. Ferguson, August 1982; neg. on
file with Texas Historical Commission

View of north elevation, looking south.

Photo 2 of 6



Old Alamo National Bank Building
316 East Commerce Street
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Photo by John C. Ferguson, August 1983; neg. on
file with Texas Historical Commission

Detail of corner bay at 4th and 5th floors,
looking southwest

Photo 3 of 6



ONE
WAY

Old Alamo National Bank Building
316 East Commerce Street
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Photo by John C. Ferguson, August 1983; neg. on file with Texas Historical Commission

Detail of corner entrance and second story,
looking southwest

Photo 4 of 6



Old Alamo National Bank Building
316 East Commerce Street
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Photo by Elicson Photography, June 1980; neg. on
file with them in San Antonio.

View of entrance at northeast corner of building,
looking southwest

Photo 5 of 6

OLD ALAMO NATIONAL BANK BUILDING
(Entrance- Northeast Corner)
316 East Commerce Street
San Antonio, Texas

Photography by: Elicson Photography
June 25, 1980



222 2282

Old Alamo National Bank Building
316 East Commerce Street
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

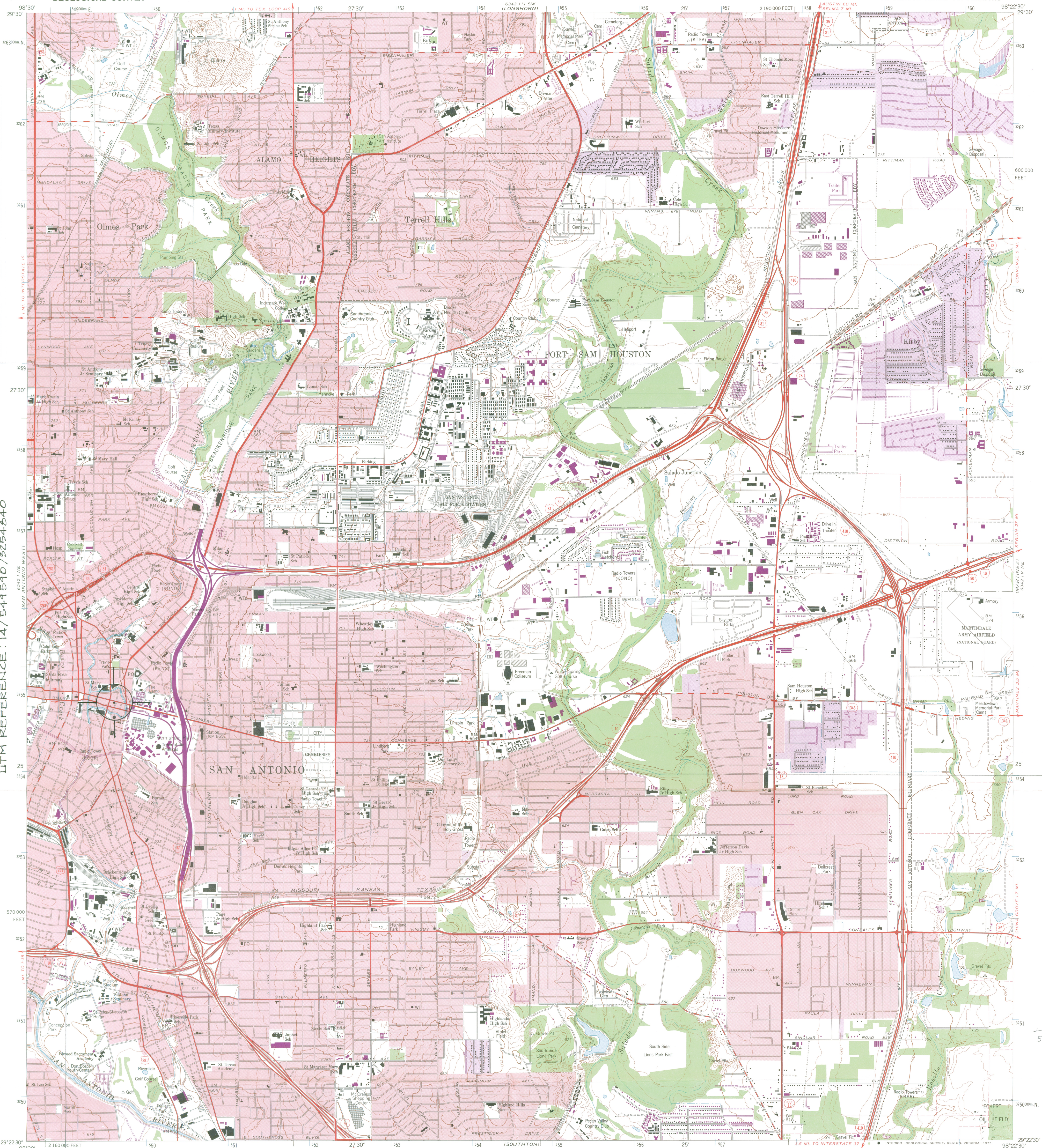
Photo June 1980 by Elicson Photography; neg. on
file with them.

View of east and south facades looking northwest

Photo 6 of 6

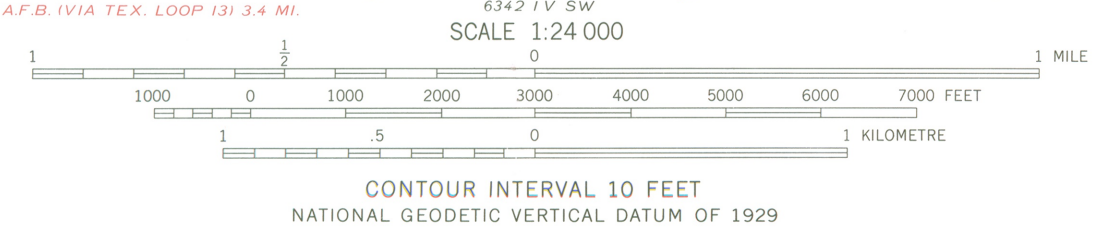
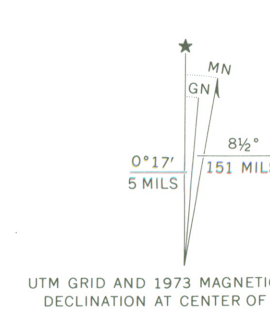
OLD ALAMO NATIONAL BANK BUILDING
(Presa Street or East facade, looking
north)

316 East Commerce Street
San Antonio, Texas
Photograph by: Elicson Photography
June 25, 1980



OLD ALAMO NATIONAL BANK BUILDING
316 EAST COMMERCIAL STREET
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 14U541590/3254540

Mapped by the Army Map Service
Edited and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and USCE
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1952. Field annotated 1953. Revised by Geological Survey from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967.
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system, south central zone
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 14, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines
Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from aerial photographs taken 1973. This information not field checked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

2998-133

SAN ANTONIO EAST, TEX.
N2922.5-W9822.5/7.5
1967
PHOTOREVISED 1973
AMS 6342 IV NW - SERIES V882