

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For NPS use only

received JUL 8 1982
date entered

1. Name

historic STATE NATIONAL BANK BUILDING

and/or common STATE NATIONAL BUILDING

2. Location

street & number 412 Main ST.

N/A not for publication

city, town Houston N/A vicinity of congressional district

state Texas code 048 county Harris code 201

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name STATE NATIONAL BUILDING, A Joint Venture

street & number Suite 2130, 11 Greenway Plaza

city, town Houston N/A vicinity of state Texas 77046

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Harris County Courthouse

street & number 1001 Preston

city, town Houston state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Houston Architectural Survey
title Southwest Center for Urban Research has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1980 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin state Texas

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The State National Bank Building is a good example of an early 20th century skyscraper with Beaux Arts detailing. Located in the heart of one of the most active central business districts in the nation, the structure is no longer a major feature on the Houston skyline but rather achieves architectural significance as one of the few surviving early Neo-Classical skyscrapers in Houston and Texas. While altered over the years, the overall configuration and much of the significant Beaux Arts detailing has survived intact, and missing elements are now being reconstructed.

The base of the State National Bank Building is a three-story rusticated granite element, comprising the first, mezzanine, and second floor of the building. The granite facing is carved, and adorned at the second floor level with a horizontal cartouche on which the motto "Frugality is the Mother of Virtues" is engraved. Ancient coin ornaments flank the motto, and a plaster carved emblem is applied at the center of the motto. The main entrance to the building was through a large, arched opening. Bronze gates were located at the granite facade. The ceiling of the recessed entry and the ceiling of the main lobby, contained ornamental frieze and cornice trim. Bronze frames, ornaments and a glass transom flanked double entry doors. Bronze lanterns and polished bronze tablets were located between the main entry arch and the windows. The street facade of the building from the third through tenth floors is typical. The windows are double-hung; a vertical stone band bisects the windows at the second and fourth bays; facing material of the building is smooth granite. At the tenth floor level, a stone string course extends across the facade, with circular ornaments placed between the window openings under a dentilled cornice at the eleventh floor. Fluted pilasters separate the windows at the eleventh and twelfth-floor windows. Located above the arched windows is a steel scrolled cornice, separated by a bronze spandrel at the eleventh and twelfth floor windows. The arches terminate at the level of the stylized Corinthian capital of the pilasters. At the penthouse, the brick coursing is in a framed diagonal pattern under the windows and an arched pattern with diagonal infill above the penthouse windows. An iron balcony and grill work is located below the windows. The facade of this and the south elevation ended at the penthouse roof in a carved terra cotta cap and coping; the tile roof of the penthouse and the copper lantern and spire are visible.

The basement of the building houses the boiler room, as well as a conference room and various deposit vaults encased in 20" concrete walls. A marble stair with marble railings connected the basement area to the first floor, at the lobby; another stair is located at the rear of the basement banking area which provided access from the basement to the main banking room on the first floor. A primary feature of the main banking area in the lobby was an oval opening in the ceiling, providing a vertically open space through the mezzanine. Floors of the lobby are marble and concrete; walls are marble wainscot, plaster and imitation stone. A separate building entrance and elevator lobby is provided for access to tenants of the upper floors. The mezzanine floor featured an oval-shaped opening protected by an ornamental iron railing and a wood handrail. Columns projecting into the opening were wrapped with a marble surround. Banking floor walls are imitation stone; floors are monolithic concrete. The directors room on this level was finished in limestone tile flooring, and oak panelled wainscot and plaster walls. The second floor was used for banking offices. A glassed opening enclosed a portion of the oval-shaped opening to the main banking lobby on the first floor. Partitions on this level were 2" thick plaster. Corridor floors are terrazzo. Walls are marble wainscot and plaster. Office floors are monolithic concrete. Typical tenant-occupied floors 3 through 12 were finished with plaster walls and ceilings. Floors are cement except in the corridors and toilets, where the floors are terrazzo. Corridor and toilet walls have a marble wainscot and plaster finish. A red terra cotta pitched tile roof covers the penthouse and an octagonal cupola rises from the penthouse upon which a bronze

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Continuation sheet Description

Item number 7

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lantern is placed. The lantern was erected of sheet metal, with copper spire and wire glass inserts. The building is provided with one interior stair extending from the third through the twelfth floors. There is one toilet placed on each of the second through twelfth floors; urinals were placed on odd-numbered floor toilets. Walls are marble wainscot and plaster. Toilet urinal partitions are 1 1/4" thick marble. A single ceramic lavatory is suspended from the wall in each toilet. The elevators are electrically operated. At the first floor, the elevator doors were bronze with polished wire glass, with a cast iron sill and interlocking rubber tile threshold. Elevator indicators are bronze dials and had movable pointers. Elevator doors are typical floors 2 through 12 were steel and wire glass. Elevator indicators are globe lights located above each elevator door. A bronze mail chute is located between the elevators, terminating at the first floor into an ornate bronze mail box. Ceiling finished at the first, mezzanine and second floors are ornately carved and painted plaster panels and trim, heavily dentilled at panel edges with ornamental friezes located at the edges of the plaster panels.

The State National Building is located in Houston's central business district in an area of medium and low rise commercial buildings, parking lots and large scale modern high rise development. It should be noted that this is one of very few structures of its size left in a mid block location in Houston.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1922-24 **Builder/Architect** Alfred C. Finn, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The State National Bank Building is historically and architecturally significant, in that it was an early commercial building by one of the Southwest's most respected early 20th century architects, Alfred C. Finn, and is one of the few surviving Neo-Classical skyscrapers in the city of Houston. Much of its rich Beaux Arts detailing has survived, and missing elements are being reconstructed as nearly as possible. The preservation of such landmarks is a difficult task in Houston, because most older buildings are summarily demolished to makeway for the new. The State National Bank Building is one of the few remaining significant buildings in Houston that can demonstrate the importance and feasibility of historic renovation.

The State National Bank was established in 1915 as the State Bank and Trust Company with under \$500,000 in resources. John A. Williams was President and Horace M. Wilkins was Vice-President. The bank operated under that name until 1946, when it was merged with the First National Bank. In 1920, the bank became a member of the Federal Reserve System, and in 1921 relinquished its state charter and became a national bank. It became the first national bank in Texas to receive a Federal Reserve Board Permit to operate a trust department. Construction of the building began in 1922, under a construction contract with American Construction Company. The building was completed in mid-1923 at a cost of \$500,000.00. The lot area is 4,723 sq. ft., and was valued in 1923 at \$270,000.00. When the building was complete, it rapidly filled with tenants, and remained fully occupied until the merger in 1946 when the bank vacated the building. The bank had installed a comparatively new feature, in locating the cash vault, coin vault, book vault, silver vault and safety deposit in the basement. In the words of the Houston Post, September 4, 1922, "...also located in the basement are the heating plant, boilers and machinery for the ventilating system, thereby all air admitted to the bank's quarters will be washed and cooled, thus freeing it from street dust and contributing to the comfort of both customers and employees." Also provided in the basement was a conference room, which was offered free of charge to customers of the bank and tenants of the building, as well as to civic and businessmen in the vicinity. The bank grew rapidly in deposits and capitalization, and in 1940, at the bank's twenty-fifth anniversary, had resources in excess of \$11,000,000. This growth and success was due to a unique policy of 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. banking hours, and to the Bank's claim of being the originator of services devoted to the financial interests of persons of moderate means. The building was erected during a boom period for Houston's downtown. From 1920 to 1923, several notable buildings were built in proximity to the State National Bank Building. The largest of these new buildings was the 16-story Cotton Exchange Building at Prairie and Caroline. Other buildings erected nearby included the Walker Furniture Building at Milam and Rusk, the 10-story Electric Building at Fannin and Walker (built as headquarters for the Houston Electric Company), the 10-story Banker's Mortgage Building at Texas and San Jacinto, and the First National Bank at Franklin and Fannin. Construction of these buildings occurred at the height of a national real estate slump. While national building permits and construction value decreased 10 per cent from May 1922 to May 1923, Houston's building values showed a 61 per cent increase. In 1947, the bank building was vacant on the first and mezzanine floors, and was sold to Huster and Wise, Inc., real estate brokers, as trustees for a corporation formed by William Zeckendorf of New York. The total price paid for the State National Bank Building and adjoining buildings either side was \$720,000.00. The original stone facade of the building was removed in

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date entered

Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 1

1948, and re-faced with smooth Indiana limestone. Other modifications made during these renovations included the removal of much of the bank equipment from the first floor, and a new store front entry for a retail tenant in the banking lobby. The mezzanine was closed, the two-story space filled in, and the skylights were removed. A new metal canopy was built over the retail space entrance, and new metal doors were added. During the past 20 years while downtown Houston was deteriorating, so did the State National Building. Fortunately in the past three or four years there has been a resurgence of spirit downtown and signs of restoration and renovation are apparent everywhere in this rejuvenating area. In 1981, the present owners had the limestone facade removed and measures were initiated to vacate the entire building so that restoration to it's original appearance and character could commence. The Architect for the State National Bank Building was Alfred C. Finn (1883-1964), a Texas-born Architect who apprenticed with Sanguinet and Staats in Fort Worth from 1904 to 1913. In 1915, Finn began an independent practice in Houston which grew into a notable and important Texas firm, best known for it's commercial buildings. He became the principal Architect for Jesse H. Jones (Houston real estate entrepreneur, philanthropist and United States Secretary of Commerce under Franklin D. Roosevelt). Finn's work primarily in Houston, Dallas and New York City. Among his most notable buildings still existing are the Ross Sterling House (1916), Fondren House (1923), St. Paul's Methodist Church (1927-30), Gulf Building (1929), and the San Jacinto Monument and Museum (1939). Finn's Jones-Hunt House (1921), located on Courtlandt Place, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Periodicals

Houston. May 1925
Houston Chronicle. 31 January 1947
Houston City Directory. Various years 1922-78
Houston Post. 4 September 1922 - 5 August 1923

Books

The New Encyclopedia of Texas. Ellis A. Davis and Edwin H. Grobe, editors. Dallas: Texas Development Bureau, c. 1925, v. I, p. 357
Other: "Alfred C. Finn Collection" Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library (21-4)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Settegast

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	5	2	7	1	6	5	0	3	2	9	4	4	8	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 4,723 square feet out of Lots 2, 3 & 12, Block 44, S.S.B.B. Subdivision in the City of Houston, Harris County, Texas.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

state		code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Herbert L. Axelrad, Managing Partner

organization First Southern Properties, Inc. date March 15, 1982

street & number 11 Greenway Plaza, Suite 2130 telephone 713- 626 9911

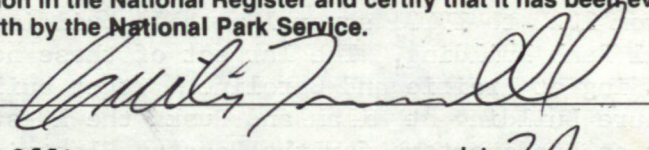
city or town Houston state Texas 77046

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 

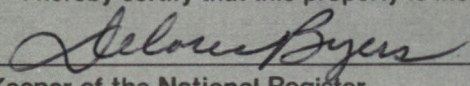
title State Historic Preservation Officer date 7 June 1982

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 8/11/82


Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

82004843

State National Bank Building, Harris County, TEXAS,

Working No. 7/8/82-1903Fed. Reg. Date: 2.1.83Date Due: 8/4/82 - 8/22/82Action: ☒ ACCEPT 8/11/82☒ Entered in the ☐ RETURN☒ National Register ☐ REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

- ☐ 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. Name2. Location3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property5. Location of Legal Description6. Representation in Existing Surveyshas this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered	☐ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ altered	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexposed		

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

Acres of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UNIT 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: 202 272 - 3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



State National Building
412 Main Street
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo by Peter Flagg Maxson of the Texas
Historical Commission March 1982
Negative filed with the Texas Historical
Commission in Austin, Texas

North elevation / Camera facing south
Photo # 1 of 11



STATE NATIONAL BUILDING
412 Main Street, Houston, Texas
Photographed by J. A. Montemayor on
3/23/82. Mr. Montemayor has the negative.

Rear (south) elevation

Photo # 2 of 11



Photography by

Monte

JOSEPH A. MONTEMAYOR
6120 Tarnet, Suite 100
Houston, Texas 77036
(713) 776-1445 — 780 7177

6

A. ALFRED BROWN JR. 1899
 B. BENJAMIN BROWN JR. 1900
 C. CHARLES BROWN JR. 1901
 D. DAVID BROWN JR. 1902
 E. EDWARD BROWN JR. 1903
 F. FRANK BROWN JR. 1904
 G. GEORGE BROWN JR. 1905
 H. HERBERT BROWN JR. 1906
 I. IRVING BROWN JR. 1907
 J. JAMES BROWN JR. 1908
 K. KENNETH BROWN JR. 1909
 L. LEONARD BROWN JR. 1910
 M. MORRIS BROWN JR. 1911
 N. NORMAN BROWN JR. 1912
 O. OSCAR BROWN JR. 1913
 P. PERCY BROWN JR. 1914
 Q. QUINCY BROWN JR. 1915
 R. ROBERT BROWN JR. 1916
 S. SAMUEL BROWN JR. 1917
 T. THOMAS BROWN JR. 1918
 U. ULYSSES BROWN JR. 1919
 V. VINCENT BROWN JR. 1920
 W. WILLIAM BROWN JR. 1921
 X. XAVIER BROWN JR. 1922
 Y. YVES BROWN JR. 1923
 Z. ZACHARY BROWN JR. 1924

STATE NATIONAL BUILDING

412 Main Street, Houston, Texas

Photographed by J. A. Montemayor on 3/23/82

Mr. Montemayor has the negative.

Same as #17 plus elevators; mail chute and
box.

Photo # 3 of 11

5
12

5
12



STATE NATIONAL BUILDING

412 Main Street, Houston, Texas

Photographed by J. A. Montemayor on
3/23/82. Mr. Montemayor has the negative.

Brass mailbox and lock, first floor
elevator lobby.

Photo # 4 of 11

50

Photography by

Monte

JOSEPH A. MONTEMAYOR
6120 Tarnef, Suite 100
Houston, Texas 77036
(713) 776-1445 — 789-7175

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STATE NATIONAL BUILDING
412 Main Street, Houston, Texas
Photographed by J. A. Montemayor on
3/23/82. Mr. Montemayor has the negative.

Elevator indicator and plaster trim around
elevator doors, first floor elevator lobby.

Photo # 5 of 11

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Photography by

Monte

JOSEPH A. MONTEMAYOR
6120 Tarnel, Suite 100
Houston, Texas 77036
(713) 776-1445 — 789-7175

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STATE NATIONAL BUILDING
412 Main Street, Houston, Texas
Photographed by J. A. Montemayor on
3/23/82. Mr. Montemayor has the negative.

Ceiling and molding, first floor elevator
lobby facing rear (north) wall.

Photo # 6 of 11

9
—

Photography by

Monte

JOSEPH A. MONTEMAYOR

6123 Tarnet, Suite 100

Houston, Texas 77036

(713) 776-1445 — 789-7175

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STATE NATIONAL BUILDING

412 Main Street, Houston, Texas

Photographed by J. A. Montemayor on

3/23/82. Mr. Montemayor has the negative.

Elevator lobby, mezzanine

Photo # 7 of 11

Handwritten signature in blue ink.

Photography by

Monte

JOSEPH A. MONTEMAYOR

6120 Tarnel, Suite 100

Houston, Texas 77036

(713) 776-1445 — 789-7175

Handwritten number 33 in blue ink.



STATE NATIONAL BUILDING
412 Main St. Houston, Texas
Photographed by J. A. Montemayor
on 3/23/82. Mr. Montemayor has the
negative.

Vault door in basement.

Photo # 8 of 11

Photography by

Monte

JOSEPH A. MONTEMAYOR

6120 Tarnel, Suite 100
Houston, Texas 77036
(713) 776-1445 — 789-7175

2A



STATE NATIONAL BUILDING

412 Main Street, Houston, Texas

Photographed by J. A. Montemayor on

3/23/82. Mr. Montemayor has the negative.

Vault door and bronze grillage under stairs
basement to first floor, east wall (also
shows marble floor in basement)

Photo # 9 of 11

9
A



STATE NATIONAL BUILDING

412 Main Street, Houston, Texas

Photographed by J. A. Montemayor on
3/23/82. Mr. Montemayor has the negative.

Egg and dart mold and plaster cornice trim,
mezzanine.

Photo # 10 of 11

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Photography by

Monte

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8120 Tarnel, Suite 100
Houston, Texas 77036
(713) 776-1445 — 789-7175

28



STATE NATIONAL BUILDING
412 Main St., Houston, Texas
Photographed by J. A. Montemayor
on 3/23/82. Mr. Montemayor has the
negative.

Column cap and ceiling mold trim at
mezzanine.

Photo # 11 of 11

W
p

Photography by

Monte

JOSEPH A. MONTEMAYOR

8120 Tamef, Suite 100

Houston, Texas 77036

(713) 776-1445 — 789-7175

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