

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

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: First Wichita National Bank
Other name/site number: Big Blue, Waggoner Building, Clint Wood Building
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 719 Scott Avenue
City or town: Wichita Falls State: Texas County: Wichita
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
(☒ 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 at the following levels of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

mark wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer 9/11/23
Signature of certifying official / Title Date
Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ____ entered in the National Register
____ determined eligible for the National Register
____ determined not eligible for the National Register.
____ removed from the National Register
____ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: COMMERCE/TRADE: Financial Institution

Current Functions: COMMERCE/TRADE: Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification: MID-CENTURY MODERN NONRESIDENTIAL: Modern, Skyscraper

Principal Exterior Materials: METAL, STONE, GLASS

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-12)

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations: NA

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

Period of Significance: 1960-1973

Significant Dates: 1960, 1961, 1966

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

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

Architect/Builder: Field, E. Stanley (Architect, 1919 original construction) and Lauck, J.F. (Associate, 1919); Dixon, Jesse G. (Architect, 1948 & 1955 remodels); Dahl, George, (Architect, 1960 remodel); Wood and Sibeck, (Architects, 1966 garage addition)

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 13-29)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets 30-34)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. *Part 1 approved on January 27, 2022.*
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approximately 1.20 acres

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 33.912451°N Longitude: -98.492073°W

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary includes all property totaling approximately 1.20 acres, specifically W 100' LTS 8-9-10 & PT LOT 11 BLK 164 ORIGINAL TOWN, WF (0.37 acres, Property ID: 159549), LOT 11 LESS S PT & LOTS 12-14 BLK 164 ORIGINAL TOWN, WF (0.65 acres, Property ID: 159555), E 50' LTS 8-9-10 BLK 164 ORIGINAL TOWN, WF (0.18 acres, Property ID 105430) as recorded in the Wichita County Appraisal District. Data accessed January 3, 2023 (Map 3).

Boundary Justification:

The boundary coincides with the historic and current legal boundary. It includes all the property associated with the 1960s renovations and expansion of First Wichita National Bank and the circa 1980 non-historic addition.

11. Form Prepared By

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Telephone: 512-766-7042
Date: January 6, 2023

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 35-40)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 41-84)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 5-6, 85-119)

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photograph Log

Name of Property: First Wichita National Bank
City or Vicinity: Wichita Falls
County: Wichita
State: Texas
Photographer: Ellis Mumford-Russell
Date: May 13, 2021

All photographs accurately depict property conditions. No changes nor significant deterioration has occurred since the photos were taken in May 2021.

Photo 1: First Wichita National Bank, primary (southwest) elevation. View northeast.

Photo 2: First Wichita National Bank, oblique showing southwest (Scott Ave.) and southeast (8th Street) elevations. View northeast.

Photo 3: First Wichita National Bank southeast (8th Street) elevation. View northwest.

Photo 4: First Wichita National Bank oblique, showing southeast (8th Street) and northeast elevations. View northwest.

Photo 5: First Wichita National Bank northeast elevation from rear roof. View southwest.

Photo 6: First Wichita National Bank northeast elevation from rear roof. View northwest.

Photo 7: First Wichita National Bank, oblique showing southwest (Scott Ave.) and northwest elevations. View southeast.

Photo 8: First Wichita National Bank southwest (Scott Ave.) elevation showing attached garage. View northeast.

Photo 9: First Wichita National Bank corner of southwest and northwest elevations (Scott Ave. and 8th St.) detail. View northwest.

Photo 10: First Wichita National Bank entrance from Scott Ave. on southwest elevation. View east.

Photo 11: First Wichita National Bank 1st floor lobby. View southwest.

Photo 12: First Wichita National Bank 1st floor lobby from mezzanine. View southwest.

Photo 13: First Wichita National Bank 1st floor lobby from mezzanine. View northeast.

Photo 14: First Wichita National Bank lobby escalator detail. View northeast.

Photo 15: First Wichita National Bank 1st floor elevator detail. View southeast.

Photo 16: First Wichita National Bank mezzanine level. View north.

Photo 17: First Wichita National Bank mezzanine level. View northwest.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 18: First Wichita National Bank 3rd floor foyer to board room. View northeast.

Photo 19: First Wichita National Bank 3rd floor board room. View southwest.

Photo 20: First Wichita National Bank 4th floor corridor. View northeast.

Photo 21: First Wichita National Bank 4th floor office. View north.

Photo 22: First Wichita National Bank 5th floor elevator lobby and corridor. View northwest.

Photo 23: First Wichita National Bank 6th floor office. View east.

Photo 24: First Wichita National Bank 7th floor office showing some original finishes. View southwest.

Photo 25: First Wichita National Bank 8th floor corridor. View northeast.

Photo 26: First Wichita National Bank 9th floor corridor. View northwest.

Photo 27: First Wichita National Bank 10th floor office. View southeast.

Photo 28: First Wichita National Bank 11th floor corridor showing original mail chute. View south.

Photo 29: First Wichita National Bank 12th floor corridor. View northwest.

Photo 30: First Wichita National Bank 13th floor office space. View southwest.

Photo 31: First Wichita National Bank basement floor. View north.

Photo 32: First Wichita National Bank basement vault. View northeast.

Photo 33: First Wichita National Bank parking garage. View west.

Photo 34: First Wichita National Bank parking garage. View northwest.

Photo 35: First Wichita National Bank roof. View northwest.

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

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

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Narrative Description

First Wichita National Bank (FWNB) is located at 719 Scott Avenue in downtown Wichita Falls, Texas. The property sits at the northeast corner of 8th Street and Scott Avenue, surrounded by several other multi-story buildings. The building was originally constructed in 1919 by architect E. Stanley Field as the seven story Clint Wood Building. It was later sold to oilman Bob Waggoner, and then purchased by Wichita National Bank in 1946. In 1948 Wichita National Bank completed their first remodel of the building designed by architect Jesse G. Dixon. In 1952, a one-story motor bank was added and in 1955, a second remodel modernized the ground floor exterior. First National Bank and Wichita National Bank merged in 1960 to form First Wichita National Bank, commissioning noted architect George Dahl to extensively remodel and expand both the exterior and interior. The exterior was completely resurfaced with the application of sleek blue porcelain enamel steel panels and five floors were added creating the current twelve story Modern corporate office building seen today. FWNB has both vertical and horizontal massing with an L-shaped tower on a rectangular base. The upper floors bays are defined by dark blue vertical pilasters that extend out from the main plane of the building. Each floor has a horizontal row of operable three-pane aluminum frame windows. Side and rear elevations of the tower also feature blue panels. The base was modified in the 1980s and new storefronts were added. A three-story non-historic addition at 712 8th Street was constructed c. 1980. While some changes have occurred, the 1960 floor plan is largely intact. Terrazzo flooring, walnut panels, and escalators are extant within the main lobby, and various finishes remain on upper floors as well. In 1961 George Dahl also expanded and remodeled the motor bank, and in 1966 architects Wood & Sibeck expanded the parking garage and motor bank. The building occupies nearly a half city block and represents a complete modern transformation to the 1960 iteration. Despite changes over the years, the property retains a high level of historic integrity.

Setting

The building is situated in downtown Wichita Falls, where the street grid is tilted about 30 degrees northwest. It is located at the northeast corner of 8th Street and Scott Avenue, one block south of the Wichita County Courthouse, four blocks west of the railroad, seven blocks north of Kell Boulevard, and six blocks east of U.S. Highway 277. The building is situated on a prominent corner in downtown. 8th Street serves as a major east/west artery, and Scott Avenue/Business U.S. 287 lines the west elevation. Multi-story commercial office buildings, surface parking lots, and a pocket park immediately surround the building (Maps 1-6).

There are several National Register properties in the vicinity. The American Trust Building/Holiday Inn (1966, NRHP 2022) is located across the street to the west, the Depot Square Historic District (NRHP 2004) is located one and half blocks to the northeast, and the Bailey-Moline-Filgo Building (1929, NRHP 2020) two blocks southwest is now included within the Indiana Avenue Historic District (NRHP 2023).

Site

The building occupies approximately one half of the block bounded by Scott Avenue on the southwest, 7th Street on the northwest, 8th Street on the southeast, and Indiana Avenue on the northeast. The block is dissected by an alley which abuts the northeast elevation. Sidewalks surround the building on the northwest, southeast, and southwest sides (Maps 2-6).

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

EXTERIOR

Brief Overview of Historic Alterations

FWNB was originally constructed in 1919 as the Clint Wood Building with E. Stanley Field serving as the original architect. It was constructed as a seven story L-shaped reinforced concrete high-rise with a one-story rectangular base at the rear within the L. The building was clad in brick and cast stone (Figures 1-7). Detached one story parking garages were historically located to the northeast and northwest of the building (Figure 1). Purchased by Wichita National Bank in 1946, the building was remodeled in 1948 by architect Jesse G. Dixon.¹ Dixon modernized the ground floor exterior and reconfigured interior spaces to provide a large bank lobby and additional office space for bank staff. In 1952, a one-story motor bank was added. In 1955, the bank yet again remodeled their facility, completely altering the ground floor exterior with new windows, entrances, signage, and installation of square red granite paneling (Figures 6-9).²

First National Bank and Wichita National Bank merged in 1960 to form First Wichita National Bank. Well-known Texas architect George Dahl was hired to remodel the exterior and interior (Figures 10-18). The exterior of the building was faced with various shades of blue porcelain enamel steel panels, and five floors were added to the original frame. The one-story portion within the L was also increased to accommodate the double height lobby. The air conditioning venting was placed between the original masonry exterior and the steel panels. The square red granite was replaced with cream-colored granite at the first floor along the southwest and southeast elevations. Large recessed storefront windows were added. In 1961 and 1966 the parking garage and motor bank were modified (Figures 21-22).

Current 1960 Exterior

Primary Southwest (Scott Avenue) and Southeast (8th Street) Elevations (Figures 13-16, 22; Photos 1-7, 9)

The current granite storefronts spanning floors 1-2 were installed in the 1980s. The southwest elevation (Scott Avenue) is divided into seven bays. Five of the bays contain four aluminum framed windows and slanted transom-type windows above. Two entrances are centrally located along this elevation. The side-by-side entrances have a flat metal faced canopy with small skylights above. The entrances are double aluminum and glass doors with glass surrounds and fixed transoms. At the corner of 8th Street and Scott Avenue, the inset window is angled with a small space in front of it (Photo 9). The southeast (8th Street) elevation has a similar configuration and is divided into eight bays. Six of the bays have display windows. The central entrance along this elevation is similar to the Scott Avenue elevation. A slightly smaller entrance is also visible in the c. 1980 addition.

The southwest and southeast elevations are clad in blue porcelain enamel steel panels above the second floor. The upper floors feature bays defined by vertical pilasters that extend out from the main plane of the building. The pilasters are faced with dark blue enamel steel panels. The southwest elevation has eight upper floor bays, while the southeast elevation has five. Each recessed bay contains wide vertical columns of lighter blue panels which conceal a vertical band of original window openings (Figure 10). Each floor has a horizontal row of regularly spaced operable three-pane aluminum frame windows. Spandrels panels are positioned between each window. The cornice has a thin band of steel panels (Photos 1-3). The corner of the building at Scott Avenue and 8th Street has a large enamel steel panel blade sign that extends from the second floor to above the roof.

¹ "Ads," *Wichita Daily Times*, December 11, 1948, 3.

² Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, *Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas*, October 1919, 4. Accessed February 13, 2023. https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn08817_009/; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, *Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas*, 1925, corrected to 1954; "Faith in the Future," *Wichita Falls Times*, May 27, 1959, 2; "Surprise Awaits Visitors," *Wichita Falls Record*, May 24, 1955, 16.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Side and Rear Elevations

The narrow northwest and northeast (side) elevations of the tower are faced with light blue porcelain enamel panels and do not feature any windows (Photos 4, 7). The northwest and northeast (rear) elevations of the tower within the L are also faced with light blue panels. These elevations are punctuated by an irregular window pattern and recessed bay configuration. Both the elevator shaft and the penthouse which extends above the parapet on the roof are faced with dark blue panels (Photo 5). Vents can be seen on both the elevator shaft and penthouse. The flat roof of the tower features HVAC units and the flat roof of the penthouse has a “time and temperature” digital sign (Photo 35).

Above Ground Parking Garage and Motor Bank (1961 and 1966) (Figures 12, 22-23, 42-45; Photos 7-8)

Like the building, the parking garage and motor bank were modified several times over the years. The 1925, revised to 1954, Sanborn map shows two drive-in teller stations within the new drive-in bank structure but it’s unclear how long it was retained (Figures 1 and 2).³ The current motor bank and parking garage extend to the north/northwest of and are internally connected to FWNB (Photos 7 and 8). In 1961 George Dahl expanded and remodeled the motor bank and parking garage. In 1966 architects Wood & Sibeck added two additional floors, and extended the garage to the northeast, and added retail spaces.⁴ The decorative concrete brise visible at the upper floors extends along Scott Avenue and 7th Street. The brise soleil also conceals the lower level of the northeast elevation facing the alley. A porcelain enamel metal cap or cornice is visible at the roof line. Three vehicle entrances are located on the southwest elevation providing access to Scott Avenue. The southernmost entrance is the location of the motor bank. Retail spaces with large aluminum framed display windows and aluminum and glass doors are located closer to 7th Street. The northwest (7th Street) elevation is clad in cream-colored granite and brick. This elevation has one vehicle entrance at northeast corner and the retail spaces are centrally positioned. Two elevated concrete walkways connect the parking garage/motor bank to an adjacent parking garage.

Three-story Non-Historic Addition (C. 1980)

Around 1980 the bank announced plans to construct an addition at the northeast of the existing building (Figure 22, Photos 2 and 4). The addition was initially intended to add 90,000 square feet to the complex and expand the first-floor bank lobby.⁵ Original renderings show a twelve-story addition but the economic downturn of the 1980s and subsequent acquisition curtailed the original plans, and only three stories were constructed. The storefront along the primary southeast (8th Street) elevation is identical to that of the tower, and the upper floors feature a reflective glass curtain wall. The other elevations feature light blue porcelain enamel steel panels. The addition has access to the adjacent parking garage on all three levels. Since it was completed outside the period of significance it is treated as non-historic.

INTERIOR (Figures 34-41; Photos 11-32)

After the 1960 renovation, the ground floor, mezzanine, and third floor of the building were occupied by the bank with the upper floors leased to other companies such as attorneys, oil companies, and land title firms for offices. The first floor of the building consists of entrance vestibules at the southeast and southwest elevations, and a double-height central bank lobby surrounded by an overlooking mezzanine (Photos 11-14). The lobby has terrazzo floors, grey marble walls, and wood paneling with aluminum seams. Adjacent to the southwest entrance is a concession area. Three elevators are located on the southwest side of the lobby. The escalator is located to the east of the elevators and the

³ The 1919 garage seen in Figure 1 was likely demolished to make room for the 1952 motor bank seen in Figure 2.

⁴ “Drive-in Bank Facility Slated,” *Wichita Falls Times*, February 25, 1966, 1.

⁵ The Buzz, “Wichita Falls’ Iconic Big Blue Was Almost Even Bigger Back in the Day?” accessed February 13, 2023, <https://1063thebuzz.com/big-blue-expansion/>.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

stairway to the basement is located to the west (Photos 14 and 15). A row of teller counters was historically located at the northeast side of the lobby but have since been removed. The remaining concrete flooring provides a visual distinction of their former location. In the southeast corner is the stairway to the second floor and another elevator. At the northeast corner of the first floor, near the former teller counters, are restrooms. At the northwest corner of the building were offices and teller windows for the loan department. The offices had glass walls and glass and aluminum frame doors or wood hollow core doors. The ceiling is coffered with a light cove that also provides lighting for the lobby area of the second/mezzanine floor.

The second floor is a mezzanine and is partially open to the lobby below (Photos 16 and 17). The curved escalator from the first floor rises up behind the elevator bank. Adjacent to the elevators is the stairway. Across from the elevators along the southwest elevation was the office for the chairman of the board which has wood paneling and coffered ceiling. Restrooms are located next door. A large conference room is located at the southwest corner of this floor. Moving east along the southeast elevation are office spaces originally used for the trust department, a file vault, and storage. Currently the office partitions have glazing with aluminum frames; some historic and some non-historic. The commercial loan department, an open area lined with offices was positioned at the northwest corner of this floor. These offices were simpler with wall coverings as opposed to wood paneling. This floor also historically had planters spaced in the common or public areas but are no longer extant. Intact finishes include grey marble on the walls around the elevators, on the columns, and used as detailing, as well as carpeting, glass and aluminum partitions, and wood paneling in some of the offices. The floors were originally carpet or terrazzo but have been covered with simulated wood planks. The ceilings are dropped acoustical tile.

The upper stories (Floors 3-12) have a variety of finishes dating from 1919 when the building was first constructed, the 1960 renovation, and the later 1980 renovation. The corridor configuration has been maintained on these floors, while the office configuration has changed in many places.

At the north end of the third floor is a boardroom, a vestibule and waiting area, and an officers' lounge (Photos 18 and 19). The elevator lobby has replacement tile floors which were originally marble. Some of the offices were decorated with marble and wood paneling and the ceiling in the boardroom was coffered with a light cove that extends around the perimeter of the room. Much of this configuration and original materials have been removed. A book vault positioned to the right of the boardroom and is still evident. Adjacent to the vestibule is a large bank of restrooms, and across and along the corridor were offices for the credit department, secretaries, and general ledger, as well as storage. The offices have been reconfigured over time and interior materials have been changed. The ceiling is dropped acoustical tile which was partially updated in August 2023. This floor also had the telephone panel, bookkeeping, mailroom, and customer service offices.

The fourth and fifth floors of the building are divided into office spaces (Photos 20-22). An L-shaped corridor connects all the office spaces in the tower. The ceilings have acoustical tile, in some places glued on, and fluorescent lights. The wainscoting along the corridor walls is marble as are the floors at the elevator lobby. There are several door types: wood with vents and metal frame surrounds, hollow core, and glass with aluminum frames. The doors historically had transom windows and sidelights, but these were taken out and plastered over. The walls are plaster in both the halls and the offices. The elevators, stairway, and restrooms are concentrated at the corner within the L. Offices vary in size along the corridor and some retain original configuration. The offices have wood paneling (painted and unpainted) or wood storage units. Some of the floors have carpeting and some are wood, ceilings are acoustical tile with fluorescent lighting.

The sixth floor has the same corridor configuration as the fourth and fifth. The corridor also has marble wainscoting and floors. Most of the office doors are wood. Some of the offices are suites or open into adjoining offices. The walls are plaster, some of which have a variety of wall coverings including wood paneling, wallpaper, grass cloth or other

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

coverings (Photo 23). The office floors are marble, wood, or carpet. Tile squares are a later addition, possibly from the 1980s. The ceilings have acoustical tile and fluorescent lighting. The seventh corridor materials include marble wainscoting and flooring and wood doors. The wood flooring dates to 1919 (Photo 24). The walls are covered in a variety of materials including plaster, fabric wall covering, and sheetrock.

Floors eight through twelve were constructed in 1960 (Photos 25 through 30). The configuration of these floors is similar to the lower floors with offices along the L-shaped corridor. The corridor doors are wood or aluminum framed glass or wood with sidelights. The ceilings are acoustical tile. The flooring includes carpet, vinyl squares, and carpet squares. The walls in the offices and corridor are painted sheetrock, wood paneled, or wallpapered (including grass cloth). The size of the offices varies depending on tenant needs and were changed over time. Some of the offices retain original finishes including wood paneling and shelving, raw silk wallpaper, and original hardware.

The basement houses the storage, mechanical equipment, and utility rooms for the building. Offices, an employee lunchroom, a small conference room, restrooms, the safety deposit box vault, and workrooms are also located on this level. The public spaces such as the vestibule for the safety deposit boxes have granite and marble details. The ceilings are dropped acoustical tile. The floors are square tile, vinyl squares, carpet, and small hexagonal tile (1919). A granite faced teller desk with the upper portion of glass and aluminum framing is located near the vault (Photo 31). The walls are plaster. The vault is still extant with the safety deposit boxes (Figure 19, Photo 32).

Above Ground Parking Garage and Motor Bank

The first floor of the parking garage has retail lease space at the north end along 7th Street (Figures 20, 23; Photos 33-34). There are three small offices and an area for the secretary and restrooms located adjacent to the lease spaces. Eight drive through bank stations are located on the northeast side; two of these were added in the 1966 expansion. Elevator lobbies are located at the southeast end on all levels of the garage and a concrete staircase is located at the southeast corner. On the ground level, a vestibule leads to the FWNB bank lobby. The entrance into the bank is glass and aluminum frame.

Three-story Non-Historic Addition (c. 1980)

Since the c. 1980 three-story, non-historic addition on the northeast elevation was constructed outside the period of significance, the interior was not extensively surveyed. However, the addition is internally connected to the tower on the first and third floors. It is connected to the parking garage at all levels.

Alterations Since 1960

Exterior

After the 1960 remodel to a modern corporate office building, the property was modified a few more times. In 1961 the parking garage and motor bank were expanded, and again in 1966. The building was renovated in 1980 and the storefronts were replaced. Flat roof, metal-clad canopies with recessed lighting were likely added over the main entrances during the 1980s remodel. The original lettered signage reading "1st Wichita National Bank," was affixed to the corner of the building, but was removed at an unknown date. Non-historic lettered signage for the American National Bank was installed in 1993 when they took over occupation of the building but was removed by 2018. At some point, a large rooftop sign and clock was installed. C. 1980 the bank constructed a three-story addition on the northeast elevation. The exterior of the three-story addition was designed to be compatible in style and materials, and it does not significantly impact the historic integrity.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Interior

Terrazzo floors in the lobby were concealed under a ceramic tile during the 1980s renovation of the interior, but since uncovered (Figure 27). Planters were removed from the second floor mezzanine. Additional interior alterations include removal of the teller's counters and sheetrock over the historic panels along the escalator and the mezzanine balcony railing. Office renovations by various tenants resulted in changes in flooring and the addition of paneling or wallpaper. The configuration of the offices on the upper floors, particularly the 8th floor and above, has changed over time although the corridor configuration has remained on all the floors. The ceilings are now dropped acoustical tile. Restrooms have been renovated and updated over the years, however, much of the original interior configuration remains.

Integrity

FWNB retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, and feeling. The building remains in its original location at the corner of Scott Avenue and 8th Street, a prominent intersection in downtown Wichita Falls. The historic urban setting remains intact, in particular the 1968 American Trust Building/Holiday Inn across the street to the west. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship is visible in the L-shaped tower with rectangular base, eye-catching exterior featuring various shades of sleek blue porcelain enamel steel panels, vertical and horizontal massing, flat roof, intact fenestration pattern on the upper floors, and 1950s and 1960s upper-level windows. The 1960s parking garage and motor bank, along with concrete brise soleil and first floor retail space, are intact. On the interior, many of the character-defining features associated with the 1960 renovation remain, including terrazzo floors and American walnut wall panels. Italian Lido marble wall panels, column facing, and escalators, are extant and in good condition. Additional features, including elevator button panels and mailbox chute, are still in place. The mezzanine level remains open to the lower floor allowing unobstructed views of the historic lobby. On the upper levels, some original materials, including wall coverings, flooring materials, and doors, remain—including some dating to 1919 on floor 7. The general floor plan, particularly elevator lobbies and corridors, but also many offices, is largely intact. In the basement historic flooring, the granite teller desk, and vault are also visible. Although the building is no longer associated with First Wichita National Bank, it retains integrity of feeling and is recognizable as a corporate modern bank building on the Wichita Falls skyline.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Statement of Significance

First Wichita National Bank (FWNB) was first constructed in 1919 as the seven story Clint Wood Building by architect E. Stanley Field. In 1946, Wichita National Bank purchased the building and conducted various renovations in 1948, 1952, and 1955. Following the 1960 merger of Wichita National Bank and First National Bank, the newly created First Wichita National Bank became the largest bank in Wichita Falls. The property is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Commerce at the local level of significance for its role in supporting the industrial, agricultural, and commercial development in Wichita Falls in the post-war era. The extensive renovation of the early twentieth century building signified the bank's financial security and its position as a premier lender, offering loans to businesses, rural communities, and individuals throughout Wichita Falls and the northwest Texas region.

The property is also nominated to National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance. The large-scale remodel of the building by renowned Texas architect George Dahl through the use of blue prefabricated, porcelain enamel steel panels, created a sleek corporate modern appearance which exemplified the trend of modernizing early twentieth century commercial buildings to accommodate changes in business, design, and technology after World War II. The eye-catchingly distinctive modern skyscraper locally dubbed "Big Blue," was a prominent and instantly recognizable fixture of the Wichita Falls skyline. The building is also an outstanding example of Dahl's use of the durable, adaptable, porcelain enamel steel panels that were a favored material for corporate office and bank buildings in the post-war era. The period of significance spans from the remodel in 1960 to 1973 in accordance with the NPS 50 year guideline.

Early History of Wichita Falls

In 1883 Wichita Falls became the county seat for newly formed Wichita County, and in 1889 the city was incorporated. By the turn of the century five railroads reached Wichita Falls, making it a supply and transportation center for Northwest Texas and Southern Oklahoma.⁶ In the late nineteenth century, cattle ranching and farming dominated the local economy. In 1901 J.A. Kemp led the charge to advancing the region's water resources, resulting in the creation of Lake Wichita, which provided a valuable water source to area farmers and ranchers.⁷ By 1907 Wichita Falls had substantial infrastructure including sidewalks, sewers, and a streetcar system and between 1907 and 1910 the population more than tripled to over 16,000.⁸

Oil was discovered in the region in 1903, but it was not until the Electra field in 1911 that a shift in the local and regional economy occurred. By 1913, the fields were producing 45 percent of all the oil in Texas. The Electra field was followed in 1918 by the Burkburnett fields, prompting the real boom. The Burkburnett field was one of the most prolific fields of light grade oil, producing up to 4,000 barrels per well. The next large discovery was on Burk Waggoner's ranch, the largest shallow sand pool discovered in Texas.⁹ The following year, bank deposits spiked 400 percent and industries related to oil increased significantly.¹⁰ At the same time, cattle, corn, and hay, along with a burgeoning cotton industry, continued to contribute to the area's economy.¹¹

⁶ B.B. Paddock, *History of Texas: Fort Worth and Texas Northwest Edition*, Volume 2, Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1922, p. 510; S.G. Reed, *A History of Texas Railroads*. Houston Texas: St. Clair Publishing, 1941, p.393.

⁷ "Wichita County History," accessed February 21, 2023, <http://www.wichitafallstx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/19743/City-County-History-1786-2004?bidId=>.

⁸ Paddock, 851; Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., "Wichita Falls, Tx," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed February 25, 2020, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hdw02>.

⁹ Paddock, *History of Texas*, 567.

¹⁰ Paddock, *History of Texas*, 516.

¹¹ "Wichita County History."

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

In 1920, the population mushroomed to over 40,000 and the city boasted nine refineries and forty-seven factories.¹² The oil industry was pumping \$9,000,000 into the city's treasury every month.¹³ The result was a major construction boom; one source claimed that "no city in the United States saw more new buildings erected in proportion to population than Wichita Falls during the years 1919 and 1920."¹⁴ An estimated \$20 million was spent on construction of buildings and that "skyscrapers rose as if by magic."¹⁵ New office space was needed to house all the burgeoning oil businesses. After the Clint Wood Building (1919) was completed, oil companies were housed on the upper floors.

The oil industry helped to cushion the impact of the Great Depression and although growth slowed, it did not stop. The population increased by nearly 2,000 residents between 1930 and 1940.¹⁶ At the beginning of the Great Depression, Wichita Falls had 118 industrial businesses, four railroads, twenty schools, nearly fifty churches and thirty-four parks.¹⁷ The economic downturn was detrimental to the agricultural industry—particularly cattle and cotton production.¹⁸ However, the city received a boost with the opening of Sheppard Field, the Army Air Corps training facility, in 1941. The base reached its peak in personnel, with 46,300 people in 1945, making it the largest concentration of American air corps troops in the world.¹⁹ The base became Sheppard Air Force Base (AFB) after World War II.²⁰ During World War II, the agricultural industry rebounded, particularly cattle ranching, although farming of corn, hay, and cotton never fully recovered.

The population continued to grow through the 1950s reaching 68,000 in 1950 and in 1955, it was 110,000.²¹ However, by the 1960s, with the slowdown in oil production, the population had dropped to 101,000. When oil refinery activity decreased in the early 1960s, city leaders decided to form the Industrial Development Incorporated to diversify the local economy and ensure the economic health in the future. The Industrial Development Incorporated was able to recruit several companies to the area including Gates Rubber Company, Johnson and Johnson, and a division of Dow Chemicals.²²

City Growth in the 1960s

Despite the slowdown in the petroleum sector, Wichita Falls saw continued economic growth in the 1960s because of industrial development, significant construction projects at Midwestern University, the enlargement of Sheppard Air Force Base, and expansion of the federal and state highways through the city.²³ In 1959 alone, the city reached almost \$14 million in building permits; almost half of that was new single family homes, around \$2.3 million was for commercial buildings, and the rest was for construction of garages downtown and renovations to houses and commercial buildings. Bank deposits showed a marked increase with a total of over \$177 million in 1959.²⁴ The banking industry expanded with 43 banks in nine major West Texas cities gaining 8% in deposits from September

¹² Wichita Falls, Texas Population World Population Review, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/wichita-falls-tx-population>.

¹³ Paddock, *History of Texas*, 856.

¹⁴ Louis Wortham, *A History of Texas: From Wilderness to Commonwealth* (Fort Worth: Wortham-Molyneaux Publishing, 1924), 250.

¹⁵ Wortham, *A History of Texas*, 250.

¹⁶ Wichita Falls, Texas Population World Population Review, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/wichita-falls-tx-population>.

¹⁷ Hendrickson, Jr., "Wichita Falls, Tx."

¹⁸ "Wichita County History."

¹⁹ David Minor, "Sheppard Air Force Base," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed February 25, 2020, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbs06>.

²⁰ Minor, "Sheppard Air Force Base."

²¹ Wichita Falls, Texas Population. World Population Review and Hendrickson, Jr., "Wichita Falls, Tx."

²² Hendrickson, Jr., "Wichita Falls, Tx."

²³ "Visible Signs of Growth," *Wichita Falls Times*, January 2, 1966, p. 44.

²⁴ "1959 Was a Big Year in Banking Circles," *Wichita Falls Times*, January 17, 1960, p. 45.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

1962 to September 1963. Cities with the greatest percentage gain were Midland at 19.6%; Wichita Falls with 17.25%, and San Angelo with 12.5%. First Wichita National Bank was noted as the largest bank in the city with almost \$118 million in deposits.²⁵ In 1962 the city reported \$13.5 million in building permits and a population of 101,724.²⁶

In 1967, Lake Arrowhead, located fifteen miles south of Wichita Falls, was developed as a municipal water source.²⁷ Around the same time, Wichita Falls' Industrial Development Incorporated touted the development of an 80-acre industrial park with streets, utilities, and rail and highway access. The industrial park saw construction of a building for Johnson and Johnson with 150 employees, Texcolor lab with 73 employees, and Sprague Electric with 80 employees.²⁸ Other industrial projects included an expansion of the United Electric Company's plant, Piping Engineering Company relocated to a larger structure in the industrial park, and Levi Strauss Company started construction on a new building. Sheppard AFB also saw significant investment and expansion. Over \$4.5 million was allocated to the base for construction of new facilities including a "super-barracks" to house 1,000 airmen, a gymnasium, hospital chapel, commissary storage, and auto hobby shop.²⁹ The base had 19,571 personnel and generated a payroll of almost \$60 million. In 1967, Midwestern University had \$3.2 million in new construction with several other projects that would double the size of the campus.³⁰

Like most downtowns across the country, downtown Wichita Falls experienced some decline due to post-war suburbanization and sprawl. In an effort to revitalize and reinvest in the core, new buildings were constructed, and older buildings were renovated and modernized. The re-design of the First Wichita National Bank was followed by a new 105,000 square foot Sears building opened in August of 1967, a new 30,000 square foot building for S&Q Clothiers was planned for the corner of Scott Avenue and Tenth Street, and the \$3.5 million American Trust Building with the Holiday Inn opened in May 1968.³¹ Overall, total building permits rose from \$12.6 million in 1966 to almost \$21 million in 1967.³² Throughout the 1960s and 1970s industrial development continued. However, Wichita Falls was hit by a devastating tornado in 1979, industrial development waned in the 1980s, and the unreliable petroleum market stalled the region's economy.³³ By the end of the twentieth century Wichita Falls' population was in decline.³⁴

Evolution of First Wichita National Bank

In 1919 E. Stanley Field, Fort Worth architect, and J.F. Lauck, associate, designed the original Clint Wood Building. When first constructed, it was designed as a seven story high-rise commercial building with a prominent first floor masonry base and large storefront windows (Figures 1-5). According to Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1919, it consisted of a rectangular one-story base and a six-story tower that formed an L-shape along Scott Avenue and 8th Street. The building originally cost \$750,000.³⁵ Oil companies including the Prairie Oil and Gas Company (fourth floor) and the Gulf company (sixth floor) operated offices out of the prominent new location.³⁶ Other companies housed in the building included the Robbins Company Insurance and Real Estate (fourth floor) and the Crane-Willis

²⁵ "West Texas Banks Gain in Deposits," *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, October 6, 1963, p.2.

²⁶ "Facts About Wichita Falls," *Wichita Falls Times*, January 3, 1963, p.7.

²⁷ "Wichita Falls Faces 1968 with Optimism," *Wichita Falls Times*, January 14, 1968, p. 45.

²⁸ "Wichita Falls Faces 1968 with Optimism," *Wichita Falls Times*.

²⁹ "Wichita Falls Faces 1968 with Optimism," *Wichita Falls Times*.

³⁰ "Construction Here Increases in 1967," *Wichita Falls Times*, January 14, 1968, p. 47; "\$12 Million Program Doubling MU Campus," *Wichita Falls Times*, January 14, 1968, p. 54.

³¹ "Wichita Falls Faces 1968 with Optimism," *Wichita Falls Times*, January 14, 1968, p. 45.

³² "Construction Here Increases in 1967," *Wichita Falls Times*, January 14, 1968, p. 47.

³³ Hendrickson, Jr., "Wichita Falls, Tx."

³⁴ Discover Wichita Falls, "Wichita Falls the Gateway to Texas," accessed September 23, 2022, <https://discoverwichitafalls.com/about-wf/>.

³⁵ "Building Activities Involve Several Millions of Dollars," *Wichita Falls Times*, December 31, 1919, 99.

³⁶ "Moving Offices to Clint Wood Building," *Wichita Falls Times*, February 19, 1920, 9.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Company (second floor), which was also a real estate business.³⁷ The ground floor was home to the Howell Store, a department store.³⁸ When it became the Waggoner Building (after owner Bob Waggoner) in the early 1920s, it housed a number of businesses, including the Wichita Falls Medical and Surgical Clinic (sixth floor), the Fulton & Myers Law Office (second floor), Dr. McClory's Office (third floor), Taylor and Taylor Law Office (fourth floor), Orus O. Ross Attorney (fifth floor), Myles Accounting office (second floor), and the Wichita State Bank & Trust.³⁹

In the 1940s, the Waggoner Building was used by doctors' offices, several lawyers, and real estate offices. In 1946 Wichita National Bank moved into the building, then still owned by the Waggoner Building Corporation. That year, the bank purchased the Waggoner Building Corporation and the building.⁴⁰ Wichita National Bank proceeded with a remodel in 1948 with Jesse G. Dixon serving as architect.⁴¹ Jesse G. Dixon was a Wichita Falls based architect known for his work with the firm Voelcker and Dixon.⁴² Several of the subdivided retail spaces at the southwest section of the of the building were consolidated for use by the bank. Sanborn maps indicate that the interior was reconfigured, opening some of the formerly separate retail spaces to form a large, single-story bank lobby and bank offices (Figure 2). The result was Streamlined Moderne detailing and upgraded lighting (Figure 6). Several years later, the bank purchased the garage located to the north/rear, and likely demolished it to make way for the 1952 motor bank with two drive-in teller stations.⁴³

In 1955 the Wichita National Bank embarked on a second remodel and interior expansion, also designed by Dixon. At that time original storefronts were modified (Figures 7-9). The entrance awnings were removed, and much of the ground floor façade was encased with square red granite panels. Photographs indicate that the upper-level windows were replaced with aluminum frame windows. The ground floor interior, and the bank lobby was doubled in size and Taylor Howle Construction Company completed the remodel for \$95,000. A large open house for the new bank was held on May 25 and 26th, 1955.⁴⁴ The gradual evolution reflects the bank's early efforts to modernize the building after World War II. The building continued to house real estate and law offices, and in the 1950s and 1960s was also the home of Smith Oil Agitator and oil drilling contractors R. Benton Ross, Inc. and Norwood Drilling Company.

After the merger of the Wichita National Bank and First National Bank, the newly created First Wichita National Bank hired George Dahl to design a full-scale remodel and the addition of five floors to the building in 1960. The building was encased in bright blue porcelain enamel steel panels giving it a corporate modern appearance. The building's bright colors and distinct signage, combined with the convenience of drive-in banking services, signified the bank's efforts to stand out in the rapidly transforming skyline. Having previously worked with Dahl, O'Rourke Construction Company from Dallas completed the renovation and addition of the five floors to the building and the later parking garage and motor bank expansion.⁴⁵

CRITERION A: COMMERCE

The First Wichita National Bank is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its role in supporting the industrial, agricultural, and commercial development in Wichita Falls in the post-war era. The extensive renovation of the early twentieth century building signified the bank's financial security and its position as

³⁷ *Wichita Falls Times*, March 9, 1920, 10.

³⁸ "Howell Store Ad," *Wichita Daily Times*, September 2, 1920, 8.

³⁹ *Wichita Falls Times*, February 28, 1922, 8.

⁴⁰ *Wichita Daily Times*, July 10, 1946, 11.

⁴¹ "Ads," *Wichita Daily Times*, December 11, 1948, 3.

⁴² Bob Brinkman, *Cottle County Courthouse Historic District National Register Nomination*, accessed February 13, 2023, <https://atlas.thc.texas.gov/NR/pdfs/04000948/04000948.pdf>, Section 8, Page 25.

⁴³ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, *Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas*. Sanborn Map Company, 1925, corrected to 1954.

⁴⁴ "Surprise Awaits Visitors," *Wichita Falls Record*, May 24, 1955, 16.

⁴⁵ "Drive-in Bank Facility Slated," *Wichita Falls Times*, February 25, 1966, 1.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

the largest bank in the community, offering loans to businesses, rural communities, and individuals throughout Wichita Falls and the northwest Texas region.

Banking in Wichita Falls and First Wichita National Bank

One of the earliest banks in Wichita Falls was the Panhandle National Bank, a private bank started by Colonel John James in 1884. The Panhandle National Bank's name was changed to First National Bank in 1903 and deposits were \$113,420 that year.⁴⁶ By the late 1910s and early 1920s, banks in Wichita Falls had expanded to include First National Bank, City National Bank, National Bank of Commerce, Security National Bank, and Wichita Falls State Bank and Trust.⁴⁷ In 1920 City National Bank and the National Bank of Commerce merged to form City National Bank of Commerce. In 1934, Wichita Falls State Bank changed its name to Wichita National Bank.⁴⁸ In 1943 at the direction of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, First National Bank opened a banking facility at the Sheppard Air Force Base (AFB). When the war ended, the facility was temporarily closed, along with the base, although re-opened in 1950 when Sheppard AFB was designated a permanent military facility. The banking operation at Sheppard AFB provided personnel with the ability to issue money orders and travelers checks, pay utility bills, along with typical checking and savings account services.⁴⁹

In 1959 Wichita National Bank (formerly Wichita Falls State Bank and Trust Co.) and First National Bank (formerly Panhandle National Bank) began a merger, creating First Wichita National Bank (FWNB). The local newspaper stated the merger "will form one of the largest financial institutions in the Southwest" and that "only five other Texas cities will have larger banks."⁵⁰ Aside from consolidating two of the larger local banks into one, locally it was thought that the merger would prevent regional banking business from going to Fort Worth or Dallas.⁵¹ The 1960 merger was announced as news across the state of Texas.⁵² Bank president Wolverton stated, "The expansion of the Wichita National Bank which we are about to begin is certainly evidence of our faith and confidence in the future of Wichita Falls and our feeling that the economy of this area, this state, and this nation will continue to expand and prosper."⁵³

The new company became the largest bank in the community, overtaking City National Bank which had previously been the largest. In 1960 FWNB boasted deposits of over \$91 million, a dramatic lead over City National with \$59 million, and Parker Square with \$8 million.⁵⁴ To accommodate the new bank, the building was extensively renovated with the addition of five floors, porcelain enamel steel panels on the exterior, air conditioning, and a complete interior renovation and reconfiguration in 1960.

On December 7, 1961, the *Wichita Falls Times* featured a multi-page spread heralding the renovated bank's opening. It included detailed information about the design and materials of the building. The bank had 200 full-time personnel and 14 part-time staff. This included 142 female staff (none of whom held leadership positions) and 58 male staff.⁵⁵ It was reported that the salaries of all staff at FWNB contributed over \$1 million dollars annually to the Wichita Falls

⁴⁶ "Merger of Two City Banks is Proposed," *Wichita Falls Times*, December 22, 1959, p.1.

⁴⁷ Paddock, p. 33, 163.

⁴⁸ "Merger of Two City Banks is Proposed," *Wichita Falls Times*, December 22, 1959, p.1.

⁴⁹ "SAFB Bank," *Wichita Falls Times*, June 18, 1964, 4.

⁵⁰ "Merger of Two City Banks is Proposed," *Wichita Falls Times*, December 22, 1959, p.1.; "1959 Was a Big Year in Banking Circles," *Wichita Falls Times*, January 17, 1960, p.45.

⁵¹ "Merger of Two City Banks is Proposed," *Wichita Falls Times*, December 22, 1959, p.1.; "1959 Was a Big Year in Banking Circles," *Wichita Falls Times*, January 17, 1960, p.45.

⁵² "Banks Reveal Merger Plans," *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, December 22, 1959, p.4. "Banks Announce Plan to Merge," *Corpus Christi Caller*, December 22, 1959, p. 56. "Banks Merging in Wichita Falls." December 22, 1959, p.31.

⁵³ "Faith in the Future," *Wichita Falls Times*, 2.

⁵⁴ "Bank Deposits Reveal Increase," *Wichita Falls Times*, March 18, 1960, p.1.

⁵⁵ *Wichita Falls Times*, December 7, 1961, 52.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

economy.⁵⁶ The week of December 10th, the bank held an open house for the public, offered daily prize drawings, and invited 600 prominent bankers to tour the new space.⁵⁷

Wichita National Bank and First National Bank were longstanding banking institutions that had established connections with the community since the early twentieth century, which translated into the 1960s, but FWNB also sought to further broaden its customer base and invest in the future of Wichita Falls. Following the merger, the bank set out on an aggressive marketing campaign (Figures 23-26). Their advertisements were tailored towards the growing population of middle-class families and offered home improvement loans “designed especially for families ‘on the grow’.”⁵⁸ The prominently advertised Time-Credit loan option allowed customers to get financing with no down payment and income-based repayment plans for home improvement and auto loans.⁵⁹ In 1964 FWNB was listed as a participant in the United Student Aid Funds, a non-profit that provided low-cost loans made by area banks for college students.⁶⁰

FWNB supported regional agriculture in various ways including funding youth education and agricultural awards. In 1960 they provided funding for the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce Junior Poultry Show awards.⁶¹ In 1963 the FWNB was honored for their ongoing contributions to 4-H Club Roundup and for sponsoring the Wichita County 4-H Achievement Awards banquet for 10 years running. Furthermore, their staff was recognized for providing adult leadership to district beef shows which meant the bank “aided youths in the area in finding steers to be shown as projects and in many cases loaned money to the youths to enable them to carry out a complete project program.”⁶² In 1964 the bank led fundraising efforts to secure prize money for the Wichita Falls Beef Show slated for that year.⁶³ The bank continued to sponsor events for Wichita County 4H throughout the 1960s.

FWNB was also instrumental in assisting the agricultural communities of greater Wichita County. In 1965, approximately \$14 million (20 percent) of the bank’s total \$70 million in loans were for agriculture, primarily cattle ranching operations.⁶⁴ That year, they provided a \$600,000 loan to Dean Dale Water Supply Corp., a group comprised of 507 farm and rural families in Clay and Wichita Counties. The loan was for the creation of a rural water supply system for the community of Dean, roughly 8.7 miles northeast of Wichita Falls. According to the *Wichita Falls Times*, FWNB president Joe Wolverton “told the Dean board members and the *Times* that the loan signifies his bank is as interested in the rural communities as it is in the city of Wichita Falls.”⁶⁵ The loan helped secure critically needed water supply for the rural, agricultural area, which included a water system with 56 miles of pipe, three pumping plants, five storage tanks, and eight deep water wells. At the time, it was considered one of the largest loans ever granted for a rural water supply system in Texas. Furthermore, the project was anticipated to employ more than 100 local residents. When completed, the system provided over 70,000 gallons a day to area residents and farmers, as well as several businesses, the local school district, and a couple of churches. It was noted that, “it is most unusual for the full amount of a loan of this size and for this purpose to be provided by a local bank. In addition, by using an area contractor, the entire expenditure for the construction of the water system will remain in the Wichita Falls economic area.”⁶⁶

⁵⁶ “First Wichita Open House Set this Week,” *Wichita Falls Times*, December 10, 1960, pp. 1,4.

⁵⁷ “First Wichita Open House Set this Week,” *Wichita Falls Times*, December 10, 1960, pp. 1,4.

⁵⁸ “Ad,” *Wichita Times Record*, June 5, 1963, 22.

⁵⁹ “Ad,” *Times News Record*, February 21, 1961, 2.

⁶⁰ “Two Banks Taking Part in Student Aid Funds,” *February 9, 1964*, 21.

⁶¹ “Broiler Exhibit Winners Named,” *Wichita Falls Times*, May 15, 1960, 12.

⁶² “Wichitans Honored at 4-H Roundup,” *Times Record News*, June 5, 1963, 11.

⁶³ “\$4,000 Is Promised ‘64 Show,” *Times Record News*, February 9, 1963, 1.

⁶⁴ “Farm Credit Explained,” *Wichita Falls Daily Times*, November 17, 1965, 5.

⁶⁵ “\$607,000 Loan Signed for Dean Water System,” *Wichita Falls Times*, November 10, 1965, 25.

⁶⁶ “\$607,000 Loan Signed for Dean Water System,” *Wichita Falls Times*, November 10, 1965, 25.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

To help military service members and personnel, FWNB completed a new bank facility on the Sheppard AFB in 1964, with Duane Larue serving as architect. The new brick, steel, and glass building with parking lot was financed entirely by the bank, and General Stillman stated, "The people of Sheppard Air Force Base have been well pleased with the service that has been afforded them by the banking facility operated by the First Wichita National Bank. The fact that the parent bank has seen fit to provide a permanent structure on our base encourages us to believe that this fine service will be continued."⁶⁷

FWNB firmly established itself as the leading financial institution in Wichita County in the 1960s. In October of 1964, FWNB reported deposits of \$120.5 million and total assets of \$129.5 million.⁶⁸ In December of that year, the *Texas Almanac* noted total deposits in all of Wichita County were \$262.8 million while assets were \$282.9 million.⁶⁹ Thus, FWNB was responsible for 45.8 percent of overall deposits in the county, and 45.7 percent of all assets in the county in 1964. Their competitor, City National Bank, accounted for 31.4 percent of total deposits and 31.9 percent of total assets in Wichita County.⁷⁰

The bank provided top-notch service to their community throughout the 1970s, expanding their range of services and products. In 1970 FWNB introduced their Master Charge program, a credit card program through the Southwestern States Bankcard Association, which provided its customers credit card services free of charge, instead of charging fees like many larger international credit card companies.⁷¹ Signaling the communities' faith in the institution, in 1972 FWNB reported deposits over \$156 million, \$50 million more than its nearest competitor City National. It represented an over 73 percent increase in deposits since the bank merger in 1960.⁷²

In Texas, branch banking was prohibited by the state constitution since the late nineteenth century to prevent bank failures, a policy which persisted into the 1960s and 1970s. To create larger banking institutions, Texas banks created multi-bank holding systems, particularly in larger metro areas, which created de facto branch banking.⁷³ The organizational system became dominant in the 1970s and in 1975, when stockholders at FWNB approved the formation of a multi-bank holding company named First Wichita Bancshares, Inc, which allowed the bank to purchase smaller banks or invest in other banking institutions in the region.⁷⁴ In 1979, FWNB was reportedly ranked second in Texas and Oklahoma for agribusiness lending, and twenty-third nationwide.⁷⁵

By 1980, banks across Texas were contending with rising inflation and over-extended credit.⁷⁶ In 1981, Mercantile Texas Corporation announced plans to acquire First Wichita Bancshares, then the largest banking operation in Wichita Falls. This included First Wichita National Bank and Southwest National Bank (also in Wichita Falls). These banks had total deposits of \$364 million. This acquisition was part of a larger plan by Mercantile to acquire other banks throughout north Texas.⁷⁷ The merger was approved by the Federal Reserve in 1983.⁷⁸ In 1984 the bank was renamed

⁶⁷ "SAFB Bank," *Wichita Falls Times*, June 18, 1964, 4.

⁶⁸ "Report of Condition for First Wichita National Bank," *Wichita Falls Times*, October 15, 1964, 21.

⁶⁹ *Texas Almanac, 1966-1967*, book, 1965; Dallas, Texas. (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph113808/m1/474/?q=bank>; accessed January 3, 2023), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Texas State Historical Association.

⁷⁰ "Report of Condition for City National Bank," *Wichita Falls Times*, October 15, 1964, 21.

⁷¹ "First Wichita Announces 'Master Charge' Program," *Wichita Falls Times*, December 11, 1969, 8.

⁷² "Bank Declares Big Dividend," *Times Record News*, October 14, 1972, 1.

⁷³ Lawrence L. Crum, "Banks and Banking," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed September 20, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/banks-and-banking>.

⁷⁴ "First-Wichita stockholders approve holding company," *Wichita Falls Times*, July 17, 1974, 9.

⁷⁵ "Lending firm to open Wichita Falls Office," *Times Record News*, December 27, 1979, 2.

⁷⁶ Crum, "Banks and Banking."

⁷⁷ "Mercantile Set for Acquisition," *Dallas Morning News*, June 21, 1981, p.57.

⁷⁸ "Mercantile Merger Application Approved," *Dallas Morning News*, August 18, 1983, p.11D.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Mbank Wichita Falls. However, by the late 1980s, bad investments, a fluctuating energy industry, and imprudent lending practices caused many of the state's multibank holding systems and large commercial banks to fail. In 1989 MBank failed and was subsequently acquired by Bank One Texas.⁷⁹ In 1993 the downtown branch of American National Bank moved into the building, since affectionately known as "Big Blue."⁸⁰ In 2007 the property was purchased by Wichita Falls Office Associates, and in 2014 was sold to Big Blue Properties LLC, the property owner as of 2023.⁸¹

CRITERION C: ARCHITECTURE

First Wichita National Bank is significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance. The large-scale remodel by renowned Texas architect George Dahl through the use of blue prefabricated, porcelain enamel steel panels, created a sleek corporate modern appearance exemplifying the trend of the modernizing early twentieth century commercial buildings to accommodate changes in business, design, technology after World War II.

Banks and Post-War Corporate Modernism in the U.S.

Many of the foremost European Modern architects emigrated to the U.S. during the 1930s and 1940s, bringing their unique design philosophies. American modernism was also being introduced through the designs and writings of architects Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Philip Johnson, and others. The blending of design philosophies after World War II resulted in a distinct second wave of modernism that evolved during a period of rapid economic, social, cultural, and political changes in the U.S. Modern architecture, namely International Style design, was adopted by corporate and commercial clients as a means of projecting confidence in American capitalism. New design trends paired with a rise in American consumer culture led to the emergence of architectural branding, where "corporate headquarters emerged as an important building typology."⁸² This manifested in new construction or in the modernization of existing commercial buildings.

Rapid post-war suburbanization and the growth of the Interstate Highway System resulted in the proliferation of new residential neighborhoods and shopping centers outside city centers. This expansion caused cities to become increasingly decentralized as Americans conducted their business closer to home in new satellite or bedroom communities. To combat these emerging trends, many banks resisted the urge to relocate to the suburbs, instead opting to renovate and modernize their existing downtown buildings according to the design preferences of the post-war era, modeling their facilities after retail establishments. "In a period when moving out to the suburbs (where most of the bank directors now lived) was quite tempting, many banks stayed in the city, hoping to anchor their financial districts."⁸³ Buildings were often renovated with expanded storefronts to provide transparency, metal panel systems encased former building facades, large, illuminated signage was added to the exteriors, and interiors were reconfigured.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ "US Bank Locations," <https://www.usbanklocations.com/mbank-wichita-falls-5585.shtml>, accessed September 19, 2022.

⁸⁰ "Bank has grown while others withered," *Times Record News*, June 16, 1993, 1-2.

⁸¹ Wichita County Appraisal District, "Property ID #159549," https://propaccess.wadtx.com/clientdb/Property.aspx?prop_id=159549, accessed September 19, 2022.

⁸² Grace Ong Yan, *Building Brands, Corporations and Modern Architecture* (London: Lund Humphries, 2020), 7.

⁸³ Belfoure, *Monuments to Money*, 272.

⁸⁴ Belfoure, *Monuments to Money*, 278.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

A new architectural aesthetic and a new banking philosophy happened to find each other at precisely the right time. Modern merchandising was the byword in banking after the war, and the International Style's transparent skin allowed "merchandising in appearance and opportunity for display" of all the bank's services.⁸⁵

In 1947, when wartime restrictions on materials officially ended, "all banks adopted the new style."⁸⁶ In 1950, it was reported that banks saw their deposits increase by more than 33 percent after modernizing their structures.⁸⁷ The G.I. Bill, which offered veterans higher education and low-rate mortgage and personal finance loans, gave many Americans access to purchasing power. Combined with the post-war baby boom, the availability of credit, and the rise in white collar and corporate office jobs, Americans spent money like never before, and corporations grew at an exponential rate. Corporations, including banks, needed large office buildings to house their headquarters, while also serving as symbols of their prominence and financial security, and eventually functioning as an advertisement for the company itself.

With the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) insuring their holdings, banks no longer had to sell security, but, instead, sold convenience and service. To reach the broadest pool of potential customers, banks "had to be as appealing as possible to the largest number of people."⁸⁸ Prioritizing the customer, banks adopted many elements of retail design, including open and accessible teller stations, glass storefronts, large exterior signage, the most up-to-date technology, abundant parking, and drive-in banking services. On the interiors, post-war banks were designed with wide open interiors, bright, warm lighting, art-adorned walls, and rich materials and textures.⁸⁹

The designs of post-war banks and office buildings, either new construction or remodel of older buildings, were largely influenced by the emerging architectural trends and experimentation by leading architects and innovators of the era. One of the earliest post-war, modern corporate office buildings was completed in 1948 by Italian born architect Pietro Belluschi, the Equitable Savings and Loan Association building in Portland, Oregon. With its concrete frame, aluminum wall panels, green glass window units, and slender mullions, the building set the stage for an era of prolific corporate office and bank construction.⁹⁰ Shortly after, Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill (SOM) continued the process of adapting International Style architecture for corporate clients. Completed in 1952, their design for the Lever House in New York, one of the earliest post-war, tower-on-podium office buildings, crystalized the philosophy of mid-century corporate architecture in the U.S. Lever House was credited with promulgating the use of "thin skin" curtain wall technology, a departure from the heavy masonry facades of the past. Through the decision to forgo ground-floor rental real estate space in favor of a large open plaza, the architects argued that "the path towards higher profits was advertising, not income generated from ground level real estate."⁹¹ Thus, Lever House effectively became the model of corporate headquarters as advertisement, with the building itself functioning as a large-scale billboard signaling the Lever Brother's stature as a modern, progressive, and innovative company. As architectural historian Alan Colquhoun stated, "Perhaps the single greatest achievement of American architecture after the Second World War was the establishment of the modern corporate office building as a type, imitated all over the world."⁹²

SOM's design for Manufacturer's Trust (1954) in New York was also considered a revolutionary development in modern bank design, with its exposed structural system, glass curtain walls, and delicate aluminum mullions, and

⁸⁵ Belfoure, *Monuments to Money*, 245.

⁸⁶ Belfoure, *Monuments to Money*, 245.

⁸⁷ Dyson and Rubano. "Banking on the Future: Modernism and the Local Bank," 2-45.

⁸⁸ Dyson and Rubano. "Banking on the Future: Modernism and the Local Bank," 2-45.

⁸⁹ Dyson and Rubano. "Banking on the Future: Modernism and the Local Bank," 2-46.

⁹⁰ Leland M. Roth, *American Architecture, A History*, (Colorado: Westview Press, 2001), 414.

⁹¹ Yan, *Building Brands*, 135

⁹² Colquhoun, *Modern Architecture*, 237.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

became another blueprint for other architects.⁹³ By the late 1950s, modern architecture had fully conformed to post-war trends and consumer culture, which ultimately resulted in the increased importance of corporate identity and brand recognition expressed through modern architecture and design. Even more emphasis was placed on mass-produced and prefabricated elements and designing for the automobile. Curtain walls enabled large structures to express these aesthetics and ideals, although the technology was still being perfected.⁹⁴ Curtain walls were typically defined as non-load bearing exterior walls applied to a frame structure, composed of various materials including glass, masonry tiles, and porcelain enamel steel panels. As one scholar noted, “for the headquarters as a building type, the exterior envelope carries the burden of expression. Thus, the curtain wall served as the face of the building and thus became the hallmark of corporate modernism.”⁹⁵ Modern architecture was no longer solely about program, function, or materiality, but rather adopted the aesthetic language of public relations and branding.⁹⁶

The state of downtowns and larger economic changes led to modest shifts in the design of post-war corporate architecture in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The controversial urban renewal policies aimed at revitalizing downtown commercial centers, although often detrimental to low-income and marginalized communities, were considered a boon to developers and corporations seeking to construct new headquarters in urban downtowns.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the expansion of globalized trade and multinational companies forced corporations to focus their efforts on the formation of a distinct corporate brand identity expressed through visual cues in architecture, interior design, packaging, products, uniforms, and logos.⁹⁸

By the mid-1960s, International Style or post-war corporate modern office buildings had become ubiquitous requiring innovation. This ushered in an era of “bigger is better” corporate architecture, as urban land prices and taxes skyrocketed, architects competed to design the tallest, sleekest skyscrapers. Thus, “given the general anonymity of Modernism, the only way to distinguish a new corporate headquarters was to make it taller than its neighbors.”⁹⁹ This also resulted in advancements in curtain wall technology characterized by thinner windows frames and making exterior walls even more seamless. In the late 1960s, the architectural firm DMJM even pioneered a new curtain wall technology by reversing the mullions inward, allowing the exterior to appear wrapped in a “skin” of glass. Characterized by its exterior of uninterrupted tinted or mirrored glass, the new aesthetic soon became widespread on corporate office and bank buildings throughout the U.S. in the 1960s through 1990s.¹⁰⁰

First Wichita National Bank and Post-War Corporate Modernism in Wichita Falls

Like elsewhere in the U.S., the end of wartime materials shortages and the post-war economic boom saw remodels and renovations of numerous buildings in the downtown Wichita Falls commercial core. The early modernizations were largely cosmetic, consisting of expanded exteriors, new windows, doors, storefronts, updated lighting, and the addition of air conditioning. In the 1940s and 1950s at least half a dozen commercial buildings in downtown Wichita Falls received new fronts, including City National Bank, Wichita National Bank (subject building), Sears Roebuck, Texas Electric Service Company, Southwestern Paint and Glass Company, and Lovelace Book Store.¹⁰¹

⁹³ Roth, *American Architecture, A History*, 420.

⁹⁴ Colquhoun, *Modern Architecture*, 231.

⁹⁵ Yan, *Building Brands*, 9.

⁹⁶ Yan, *Building Brands*, 141.

⁹⁷ Yan, *Building Brands*, 145-147.

⁹⁸ Yan, *Building Brands*, 184.

⁹⁹ Roth, *American Architecture, A History*, 425.

¹⁰⁰ “Slick Skin/Corporate Modern,” Washington Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation, accessed February 14, 2023, <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/historic-buildings/architectural-style-guide/slick-skin-corporate-modern>.

¹⁰¹ “New Fronts Go Up in Business District,” *Wichita Daily Times*, May 30, 1948, 74; “Those Who Make or Sell Pinched by Price Trend,” *Wichita Daily Times*, May 8, 1949, 26; “Remodeling Plans, Additions and New Firm Homes to Lift Face of Downtown District During 1948,” *Wichita Daily Times*, January 1, 1948, 1; At City National (708 8th Street), the building was expanded to add a personal and mortgage loan

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Wichita National Bank was one of numerous buildings in Wichita Falls to complete cosmetic remodels of their early-twentieth century office buildings in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1948 through 1955 the building was remodeled, storefronts modernized and interior reconfigured to add additional space for banking services. The exterior remodel completed in 1955, featured geometric red granite panels, simple lettered signage, and aluminum framed windows and doors. Within less than a decade, the remodels were outdated (Figures 6-9).

By the 1950s and 1960s, 1940s cosmetic remodels were no longer sufficient visual statements of modernity. Modern corporate design now reflected the emerging “bigger is better” philosophy, emphasizing height and verticality, and sleek curtain walls to stand out and meet the expectations of the post-war consumer. The 1926 six story Nacol commercial building was renovated in 1953 with an additional seven stories and an entirely new façade of brick and aluminum panels and spandrels, providing a refreshingly modern vertical emphasis. The interior was also completely redesigned to add additional elevators, restrooms, lounges, and air conditioning. Renamed the Oil and Gas Building, it is still extant at 813 8th Street.¹⁰² Across from the street from First Wichita National Bank the 10-story American Trust Building/Holiday Inn (1968, NRHP 2022) at 726 Scott Avenue utilized curtain wall technology and both a vertical and horizontal emphasis to express its modernity.

After the merger of Wichita National Bank and First National Bank in 1960, the new FWNB embarked on a complete remodel and encapsulation of the existing seven story 1919 building, rather than opting for new construction. Carried out by renowned architect George Dahl, the seamless addition of five stories and complete transformation gave the appearance of a newly constructed twelve story 1960 building and the change symbolized the new bank’s financial security and modernity. The prominent and distinct building allowed FWNB to convey their status as the leading bank in Wichita Falls. In an era when architecture had become synonymous with branding, the building had to make a statement amidst the growing corporate offices buildings downtown.

FWNB displayed many of the character-defining elements and aesthetics of post-war, corporate Modern design. The L-shaped tower on rectangular base and exterior elevations emphasized simplified geometric-rectilinear forms, and the use of sleek porcelain enamel steel panels reflected the use of new modern materials, mass-production techniques, and curtain wall technology. Alternating vertical bands of bright blue panels emphasized verticality with horizontality expressed in rows of operable three-pane aluminum frame upper floor windows. The large floor-to-ceiling storefront windows evoked transparency of financial services. The nearly full-height neon blade sign affixed to the southwestern corner of the building, illuminated at night, was a beacon for the city, serving as the main visual advertisement.¹⁰³ Although the bank’s official name was First Wichita National Bank, their signage and advertisements utilized the numerical spelling of “1st Wichita National Bank,” functioning as branding cue and reinforcing that the bank was number one in the area for financial services (Figures 13-16, 21-22). The bank also became a visual landmark in downtown Wichita Falls attracting the attention of auto-oriented customers.

On the interior, the building was decorated with intricate, grey, Italian Lido marble panels, American walnut wall panels, terrazzo floors, oil paintings in a western theme, and furniture by local Domore Chair Company.¹⁰⁴ Entering the building from the Scott Avenue entrance, the customer would pass through the single-height vestibule to an

department, and was upgraded to new aluminum doors, windows, and several new elevators. Texas Electric Service Company (904 Scott) moved into a new office building, which was modernized with new lighting and air conditioning. McCrory’s Store (NW corner 9th and Indiana, demolished) was rebuilt to have an all-glass front and modern equipment. Southwestern Glass & Paint Company at (905 Scott, demolished) expanded and remodeled their building to add a 100-foot retail storefront and display area. Singer Sewing Machine Company (821 Indiana, demolished) completed a major remodel and enlargement. Sears Roebuck (northeast corner 9th and Scott, demolished) expanded and remodeled, adding new floors, ceilings, front, air conditioning, and lighting.

¹⁰² “Eight-Floor Addition Starts on Nacol Building June 1,” *Wichita Daily Times*, May 11, 1952, 1.

¹⁰³ “Open House,” *Wichita Falls Times*, December 10, 1961, p.4.

¹⁰⁴ “First Wichita Open House Set this Week,” *Wichita Falls Times*, December 10, 1960, pp. 1,4.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

impressive-double height first floor with simple but high-end finishes, and a balcony on the mezzanine level overlooked the expansive lobby and customer lounge. Large square pillars encased in marble supported the mezzanine level, which encircled the first floor. The customer lounge on the first floor featured carpet imported from Hong Kong. A series of continuous grey marble teller stations, housing up to 22 tellers at a time, lined the northeast elevation, offering excellent service (Figures 17-18). Adjacent to the elevators, a set of sleek, curved escalators, historically adorned with solid yellow bronze woven panels, led to the mezzanine level. The escalators were reportedly the first to be installed in a bank building in Wichita Falls.

On the mezzanine level was the upper banking lobby. Commercial loan offices were historically encased in floor-to-ceiling glass. The board chairman's office was located across from the elevators, conference rooms and work rooms were located along the southeast elevation. The president's office was housed at the northwest corner. The mezzanine level also housed the trust department which provided estate planning services and legal expertise for commercial and personal clients.¹⁰⁵ The building featured many amenities, including employee lounges with burnt orange and brown-colored accents, guest snack rooms and lounges, small conference rooms, and private customer booths to provide privacy for banking needs.¹⁰⁶ The third floor of the building was also utilized by the bank and consisted of offices, an officer's lounge, large board room, book vault, credit department, general ledger, and large open area for the bookkeeping department. Remaining upper floors consisted of partitioned offices organized around an L-shaped corridor.

The interior was characteristic of post-war, modern banks in city centers. The design relied on the use of high-end materials to signal the bank's financial stability and use of modern banking practices. Large open lobby spaces and glass offices signaled transparency, and the adjacent drive-through bank and later parking structure offered customers convenient access.

Porcelain Enamel Steel Panels

The onset of World War II temporarily halted the use of porcelain enamel steel panels, however, the end of wartime shortages saw production resume. In the late 1940s, Carl Stradlund experimented with porcelain enamel steel on prefabricated residential construction, and his Lustron Corporation completed roughly 2,500 Lustron homes before the company went bankrupt in 1950.¹⁰⁷ In 1951 the Porcelain Enamel Institute (PEI) determined that producing enamel porcelain steel panels alone was not sufficient to making them a widely used construction material on the many office, bank, and corporate buildings proliferating in the U.S. They needed to develop a fully prefabricated curtain wall system that was watertight, insulated, and fire-resistant. PEI engaged architect William Lescaze to coordinate research into the new system.¹⁰⁸ After three years of study, in 1954 Lescaze produced a summary of his investigations and best practices for architectural porcelain enamel.

The widespread construction of large corporate office buildings and skyscrapers in the post-war era required inexpensive, durable materials that could be mass-produced.¹⁰⁹ Composed of a composite material of glass and metal, by the 1950s advances in manufacturing had produced porcelain enamel steel tile that was strong, light-weight, corrosion-resistant, and could be manufactured in any color desired, and eventually in multiple finishes including

¹⁰⁵ *Wichita Falls Times*, December 7, 1961, 56.

¹⁰⁶ "First Wichita Open House Set this Week," *Wichita Falls Times*, December 10, 1960, pp. 1,4.

¹⁰⁷ National Academy of Sciences – National Research Council, "Porcelain Enamel in the Building Industry," November 12 and 13, 1953, [https://dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Porcelain Enamel in the Building Industry 1953.pdf](https://dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Porcelain%20Enamel%20in%20the%20Building%20Industry%201953.pdf); "Porcelain Utopia: The Lustron Photography Project," Landmarks Illinois, accessed February 15, 2023, <https://www.landmarks.org/resources/preservation-news/porcelain-utopia-the-lustron-photography-project/>.

¹⁰⁸ "Porcelain Enamel Curtain Walls," *Architectural Forum*, March 1955, page 169.

¹⁰⁹ National Academy of Sciences, "Porcelain Enamel in the Building Industry," 4

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

matte, semi-matte, and glossy. They were also touted as easy to decontaminate after exposure to radioactivity, an aspect that was especially appealing amidst fear of nuclear attacks during the Cold War. Due to its protection against corrosion at elevated temperatures, it was also particularly appealing to architects engaged with corporate clients wanting to complete towering buildings and skyscrapers in the Sunbelt, as the sun would not fade the bright colors.¹¹⁰

In the 1950s, modern architects continued experimenting with the use of porcelain enamel steel panels on their buildings, including at Eero Saarinen's General Motors Technical Center in Detroit, Michigan (1953-1955, NRHP, NHL).¹¹¹ Other examples could be found at the Standard Federal Savings and Loan building in Los Angeles (1953-Welton Becket), the Orthopedic Hospital in Seattle (1953 – Young, Richardson, Carleton and Detlie), and the Mile High Center in Denver (1954 – I.M. Pei).

The use of architectural porcelain enamel tile quickly spread to Texas, which already had several manufacturers, including Texlite, available to expand production. In Dallas, numerous buildings, including the terminal at Love Field (1955 – Broad and Nelson), the Statler Hilton Hotel (1956 – William Tabler), the Dallas Federal Savings Building (1957 – George Dahl), utilized curtain wall technology and porcelain enamel steel panels.

In Wichita Falls, several other commercial buildings in downtown utilized porcelain enamel including the modest 1940s Green's Furniture Co. building at 606 Indiana (extant) and some simple enamel trim on the 1938 renovation of the Wichita Theater (extant, 921 Indiana Avenue, listed in NRHP as part of Indiana Avenue Historic District 2023). In 1953, the former Nacol building, later Oil and Gas Building, was described as "modern brick exterior in dark brown and cinnamon colors accented by Texlite vertical metal fins in a shade of terra cotta."¹¹² While the use of porcelain enamel panels on the Oil and Gas Building pre-dates their usage on the nearby FWNB, their application was much more restrained. The much more elaborately designed FWNB incorporated three different shades of blue porcelain enamel steel panels, which provide depth and interest, celebrating the material's versatility. Davidson Architectural Porcelain panels were supplied by J.E. Bourland Company of Dallas. Davidson panels were manufactured in Lima, Ohio and the company originally produced porcelain enamel tabletops and washing machine tubs when it was established in the 1920s. By the 1950s, Davidson marketed their porcelain enamel products specifically for architects looking to "modernize" their buildings.¹¹³

Design of Above Ground Parking Garage and Motor Bank

Concurrent with the building boom, increased transportation networks and suburbanization, was the proliferation of drive-through banking facilities in the post-war era. These were especially common with the new, suburban banks being constructed in residential neighborhoods outside the city center, as they offered convenience and service to their customers. Initially, downtown banks accommodated the needs of their auto-oriented customers by constructing remote drive-through facilities on lots near the main branch. Drive through banking was seen as a valuable tool to ease parking congestion that was so prevalent in downtown areas not originally designed for mass auto-ownership. Early drive-throughs constructed near existing buildings were often clunky, retrofitted facilities created by carving holes into the existing building and accessed by an adjacent alley. Wichita National Bank's first foray into drive-through banking was completed in 1952 in an adjacent lot off Scott Avenue. The lot had formerly functioned as an auto garage, and the bank likely retrofitted the space to their needs, adding two drive-in teller stations.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ National Academy of Sciences, "Porcelain Enamel in the Building Industry."

¹¹¹ Society of Architectural Historians, "General Motors Technical Center, <https://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/MI-01-MB3>. accessed September 22, 2022.

¹¹² "Oil and Gas Building Modern Structure, Filling Every Need," *Wichita Daily Times*, October 11, 1953, 76.

¹¹³ "Davidson Ad," *Architectural Forum*, March 1955, page 63, accessed February 14, 2023, <https://usmodernist.org/AF/AF-1955-03.pdf>.

¹¹⁴ "Faith in the Future," *Wichita Falls Times*, May 27, 1959, 2.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

As the design of these drive-through banks evolved, by the 1950s they had become more sophisticated, incorporating extra space for waiting cars, larger widths, angled teller windows, pneumatic tubes, and left-hand access for drivers. Nonetheless, for existing buildings in downtown cores, space was limited, and banks were encouraged to purchase additional land to construct larger parking and drive-through facilities.¹¹⁵ Drive-throughs needed to be visually appealing to the auto-oriented consumer and were also expected to be well-integrated into the main bank building and its overall aesthetic. Customers expected seamless, modern design, not just for the main bank buildings, but also for its ancillary buildings and structures.¹¹⁶

As a result, FWNB expanded again in the early 1960s, taking over the former Times Publishing Co. site at the northwest corner of the block. In 1961 George Dahl completed a one-story parking garage and new air-conditioned, drive-through motor bank, described as “one of the few in the entire nation.”¹¹⁷ Unlike many motor banks of that era, FWNB boasted that bank tellers would step out of their booths to personally assist customers (Figures 20, 22).

As the need for convenient service and parking expanded in the late 1960s, FWNB hired the firm Wood and Sibeck, both former Dahl employees, to expand the motor bank and parking garage. The design of the 1966 addition was sleek and minimalist, with a simple masonry base, and decorative brise soleil on the second and third levels which provided both shade and ventilation to the parking structure. It featured blue enamel panels along the cornice to tie in with the adjacent FWNB building. The 1966 work resulted in a 150-car garage, office space, and two additional motor banking units to the six already in place at that time.¹¹⁸ The first floor, a mix of retail, parking, and drive-through banking, also housed the Domore Office Furniture Co. (which provided furnishings for FWNB remodel), Southland Life Insurance, and Aetna Finance Co. The second floor of the parking garage was for use by bank customers, while the third floor was restricted to employees of the building’s tenants.¹¹⁹ The largest building permit in the city in early 1966 was \$450,000 for the expansion of the FWNB parking garage and motor bank.¹²⁰ The latest expansion reflected the bank’s success during that era and its effort to keep pace with the needs of the growing, auto-oriented post-war consumer.

George Dahl (1894-1987)

The 1960-61 exterior and interior renovation of First Wichita National Bank was designed by nationally prominent architect, George Dahl. Dahl was born in Minneapolis in 1894 and received a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Minnesota and a master’s from Harvard in 1922. After graduation, he was awarded the prestigious Nelson Robertson Traveling Fellowship to study for three years at the American Academy in Rome. In 1925, he returned to the United States and went to work for Myron Hunt and H.C. Chambers, an architectural firm in Los Angeles, California. Dahl came to Dallas in 1926 to work for Herbert M. Greene, a well-known local architect. The firm began as Hubbell and Greene, later named the Herbert M. Greene Company. In 1925, E.B. LaRoche came to work for the firm. In 1928, Dahl designed the handsome Italian Renaissance Titche-Goettinger department store in downtown Dallas (NRHP 1996). That same year, Dahl and LaRoche became partners in the firm and the name changed to Greene, LaRoche and Dahl.¹²¹ When Herbert Greene died in 1932 the firm was renamed LaRoche and Dahl. During 1935 and 1936, Dahl took a leave of absence to supervise the design and renovation of buildings and artwork for the Texas Centennial at Fair Park. In 1943, Dahl purchased controlling interest in the firm from E.B. La Roche and changed the name to George Dahl Architects and Engineers, Inc.

¹¹⁵ Belfoure, *Monuments to Money*, 263.

¹¹⁶ Belfoure, *Monuments to Money*, 272.

¹¹⁷ “First Wichita Open House Set this Week,” *Wichita Falls Times*, December 10, 1960, pp. 1,4.

¹¹⁸ “Drive-in Facility Slated,” *Wichita Falls Times*, February 25, 1966, 1.

¹¹⁹ “First-Wichita Bank,” *Wichita Falls Times*, February 19, 1967, 11.

¹²⁰ “Week’s Permits Jump \$573,131,” *Wichita Falls Times*, February 27, 1966, p.45.

¹²¹ Kate Singleton, “Titche-Goettinger Department Store, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas National Register Nomination Form”. NRIS 96000586, 1996.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

This firm, in its various stages, designed some of the most important banks, office buildings, churches, department stores, schools, hospitals, and shopping centers in Dallas and the state including Scottish Rite Cathedrals in Dallas, San Antonio, Austin, and El Paso; Parkland Hospital (Dallas, 1936); Dallas News Building (Dallas, 1949); the Northway Church (1952, Dallas - destroyed); the Earle Cabell Federal Building (Dallas, 1971). George Dahl is best known as supervising architect for the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition Buildings (Dallas, NRHP 1986). He is also credited with designing the nation's first drive-through bank, the Hillcrest State Bank in University Park (Dallas, 1938). His career included the 1928 renovation for Neiman-Marcus, the Volk Brothers store (1930; now demolished), buildings at the University of North Texas and East Texas State University, 32 buildings for Sears-Roebuck (many completed in the 1950s and 1960s), and 15 prisons for the Texas Department of Corrections. His firm also worked on federal projects for the U.S. Navy, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, General Services Administration, and the U.S. Air Force. Dahl's firm designed and built the huge Dallas LTV Aerospace Center in only nine months. Examples of bank design included: First National Bank of Odessa (1961), First National Bank of Big Spring, First National Bank Tower (Dallas with Thomas Stanley, 1965; NRHP 2017) and the First National Bank of Midland (1952). Other significant works include Dallas Memorial Auditorium (1957), Medical Building of Shreveport (1957), Hart Bowl in Dallas (1958), Dallas Public Library (Dallas, 1955), and Washington, D.C. Stadium (Robert F. Kennedy Stadium, 1962).¹²²

Dahl's firm, referred to as "Mr. Dahl's finishing school," turned out many of Dallas' most prominent architects including Harwood K. Smith, Harris Kemp, Donald Jarvis, David Braden, and Terrell Harper. Gordon Sibeck and Jack Wood also worked under Dahl, and later designed the 1966 parking garage and motor bank at FWNB.

Dahl served on the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners for sixteen years and was president of the Dallas Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. One of the founders of the Texas Society of Architects (TSA), he became the TSA's second president in 1940. Over the years, he received several local and national awards including the AIA National Award for the Central Elementary School, the AIA Local Award for Merit for the Employers Insurance of Texas Building, the American Concrete Institute award for the innovative use of concrete on the Dallas Memorial Auditorium, the AIA National Fellowship for his contribution to the advancement of the profession of architecture by his achievement in design, and the Martin C. Madsen Memorial Award.¹²³

The firm continued as George Dahl, Architects and Engineers until 1973 when he closed the firm having produced some 3,000 projects throughout the country worth a total volume of design of over \$3 billion.¹²⁴ After 1973, Dahl continued to make appearances at architectural events in Dallas and lived to see Fair Park (1936), fastidiously restored and named a National Historic Landmark. Dahl died in 1987, leaving an indelible mark on the Dallas skyline and in cities and towns across Texas.

George Dahl Post-War Banks – Comparative Analysis

During the peak of his career, from the 1940s to the 1960s, George Dahl was recognized as the pioneer of fast-track design and construction. A visionary architect, Dahl was also a shrewd businessman, and setting up an office that provided the full range of services to their corporate clients was a large part of his success. In the 1940s Dahl's practice hired a full-time marketing and public relationships team, along with a broad interdisciplinary staff of engineers, inspectors, superintendents, construction, and delivery managers. He was one of the only architects in Texas to establish a full-service office, and his work became renowned for its efficiency and ability to provide clients with

¹²² Alexander Archives and Singleton, "Titcher-Goettinger Department Store".

¹²³ Alexander Archives and Singleton, "Titcher-Goettinger Department Store".

¹²⁴ Singleton, "Titcher-Goettinger Department Store".

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

exactly what they needed within the time frame and budget agreed upon. "In the Dahl office, no distinction existed between design and delivery."¹²⁵

As a result of Dahl's desire for efficiency, many of Dahl's bank designs, constructed around the same time as the First Wichita National Bank, incorporated similar design elements and use of materials. Many of his banks in the late 1950s and 1960s had similar forms. They primarily utilized the tower-on-podium form, a distinct modern subtype, which consisted of a solid masonry base with a rectangular mid- or high-rise tower set back on the larger base. The towers consisted of curtain walls of porcelain enamel steel panels and fenestration on the wider elevations of the building, and solid panels of masonry on the narrow elevations. His single-story, glass and masonry First National Bank Building in Big Spring, Texas, built in 1963, was an outlier.

In 1953 George Dahl designed the First National Bank of Midland at 303 W. Wall Street (extant). The building, still the tallest in Midland, consists of a large 24-story tower with arched canopies over the W. Wall Street entrance, rectilinear pattern of windows, turquoise blue and mustard yellow porcelain enamel steel panels, pilasters, and metal seams. The narrow elevations are unfenestrated and consist of grey marble panels (Figures 28-29).

In 1960 construction was started on the El Paso National Bank (now Sunflower Bank) at 201 East Main Street in El Paso (extant). The 20-story office and bank building featured a steel frame with curtain wall of brown tinted glass and bronze colored porcelain panels, along with precast aggregate panels and brick. It boasted drive-in teller booths which were encased with gold, glass mosaics, and onyx was framed in steel to function as exterior glazing.¹²⁶ The building is monumental, but utilizes a neutral color palette of browns, creams, beiges, and black (Figure 30).

In 1961 Dahl completed work on the First National Bank of Odessa (now Bank of America) at 700 North Grant Avenue (extant). The building has a large, single-story base that encompasses the entire quarter block. The base features marble panels on the exterior, and overhanging roof structure supported by and encased with grey granite. Decorative brise soleil provides a shade to the top portion of the base. Like many of Dahl's other banks, the office tower rises above the northern section of the base and consists of porcelain enamel steel tile and window curtain walls on the broad elevations, with masonry panels and no fenestration on the narrow elevations. For the First National Bank of Odessa, Dahl chose a bright red color for the porcelain enamel steel tile, while the rest of the building featured neutral tones (Figure 31).

An additional bank was designed for Citizens National Bank of Abilene in the late 1960s, presently the Prosperity Bank (Figures 32-33). The building follows the similar form and use of materials Dahl previously employed at other bank buildings throughout the state with masonry base and tall tower with curtain walls of windows and porcelain enamel steel tile.

Although none of his bank or office building designs were identical, establishing a general template for distinct building types allowed George Dahl and his firm to provide economical buildings in the sleek, Modern-influenced design that banks and corporate clients were seeking. Adherence to similar forms and materials streamlined the design and construction, allowing his team to produce a prolific catalogue of buildings throughout Texas.

Despite similarities to his other bank buildings throughout Texas in the 1950s and 1960s, Dahl's design for FWNB was perhaps his most audacious use of porcelain enamel panels on a bank, owing to his bold use of color and contrast. The transformation of the 1919 building to align with post-war trends in modern architecture and consumer culture, inevitably shaped unique design. While most of Dahl's post-war bank buildings featured largely flush facades, with

¹²⁵ "George Dahl," *Texas Architect*, November/December 1989, 49.

¹²⁶ *Texas Architect*, December 1960, 12.

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

minimal relief provided through metal seams, vertical pilasters, and spandrels, FWNB required the architect to retrofit the existing building, and thus large projecting pilasters were installed on the south and west elevations to house new HVAC systems. Dahl selected three different shades of blue and the result was a uniquely striking and colorful building that stands out amongst his impressive catalogue of post-war bank and office buildings, as well as amongst the neighboring post-war office buildings in downtown Wichita Falls. Research did not indicate that George Dahl designed any other buildings in Wichita Falls, and FWNB appears to be his only contribution to the city's architectural legacy.

Wood and Sibeck Architects; Jack Wood (1921-2014); Leonard Gordon Sibeck (1919-2009)

In 1966, alterations and additions were made to the motor bank portion of the building, a one-story extension to the north of the multi-story building. This was designed by the Dallas firm of Wood and Sibeck. Both Jack Wood and Leonard Gordon Sibeck worked for noted Dallas architects Howard Meyer and George Dahl. Wood and Sibeck designed the Sears Roebuck at Valley View Center in Dallas.¹²⁷

Jack Wood received his degree in Architecture in 1949 from the University of Illinois and his master's degree in architecture and urban design from Cranbrook Academy under Eliel Saarinen, the world-renowned architect. Wood started his architectural career in Dallas associated with Howard Meyer (1950-1954) and later worked for George L. Dahl (1954-1961).¹²⁸ Wood's firms included: Wood and Associates from 1961 to 1963; Wood and Sibeck, 1963-1965, and Wood and Associates and Wood Development Company, 1965-retirement. He worked on projects including the First National Bank of Midland (with George Dahl – Figures 28 and 29), Preston State Bank (1969) and Lakewood Bank of Dallas. His other designs include High Plains Baptist Hospital in Amarillo (1967); Central States Investment Company (1968) and Central Lutheran Church (1969).¹²⁹

Leonard Gordon Sibeck graduated from Texas A&M University in 1941. During World War II he served in the Army and rose to the rank of Major. After the war, he received his master's in architecture from MIT. Sibeck worked for George Dahl from 1943 to 1963.¹³⁰ He eventually founded his own firm, Gordon Sibeck and Associates.¹³¹ He designed the Crossroads Community Center in 1969 for the city of Dallas. He was a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) from 1963 to 1989.¹³² Wood and Sibeck, former colleagues of George Dahl, designed the 1966 addition to the FWNB building (Photos 7 and 8).

Conclusion

First Wichita National Bank is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Commerce and Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance. The period of significance spans from 1960 to 1973.

¹²⁷ "Ground was broken..." *Carrollton Chronicle*, April 2, 1964, p.10.

¹²⁸ Membership Application, American Institute of Architects, December 10, 1962. <https://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/WoodJack.pdf>

¹²⁹ "Jack Wood," *Dallas Morning News Obituaries*, September 18, 19, 2014. <https://obits.dallasnews.com/us/obituaries/dallasmorningnews/name/jack-wood-obituary?pid=172497624>.

¹³⁰ Membership Application, American Institute of Architects, February 1, 1963, <https://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/SibeckLGordon.pdf>

¹³¹ "Leonard Gordon Sibeck," *Dallas Morning News Obituaries*, July 22, 2009, <https://obits.dallasnews.com/us/obituaries/dallasmorningnews/name/leonard-sibeck-obituary?n=leonard-sibeck&pid=130157079>.

¹³² Membership Application. AIA.

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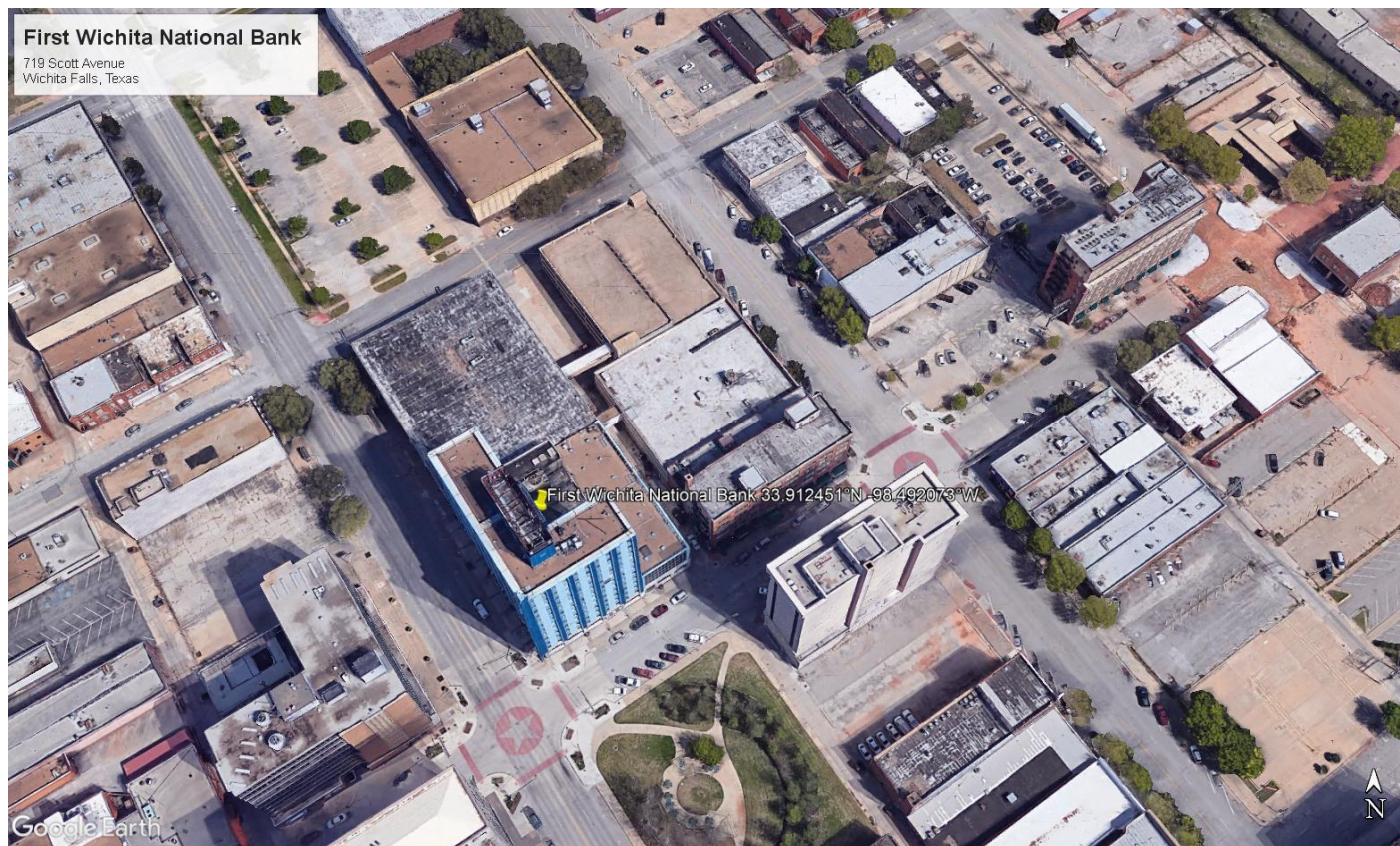
Maps

Map 1: Wichita County, Texas



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Map 2: Google Earth Map, accessed, November 23, 2022.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Map 3: The boundary includes all property totaling approximately 1.20 acres, specifically W 100' LTS 8-9-10 & PT LOT 11 BLK 164 ORIGINAL TOWN, WF (0.37 acres, Property ID: 159549), LOT 11 LESS S PT & LOTS 12-14 BLK 164 ORIGINAL TOWN, WF (0.65 acres, Property ID: 159555), E 50' LTS 8-9-10 BLK 164 ORIGINAL TOWN, WF (0.18 acres, Property ID 105430) as recorded in the Wichita County Appraisal District. Data accessed January 3, 2023. The boundary coincides with the historic and current legal boundary. It includes all the property associated with the 1960s renovation and expansion of First Wichita National Bank and the circa 1980 non-historic addition.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Map 4: First Wichita National Bank context image, subject building outlined in red, Google Earth (2021). Accessed September 21, 2022.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Map 5: Birdseye view of First Wichita National Bank building, courtesy of Bing.com (2021). Accessed September 21, 2022.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Map 6: Birdseye view of First Wichita National Bank building, courtesy of Bing.com (2021). Accessed September 21, 2022.

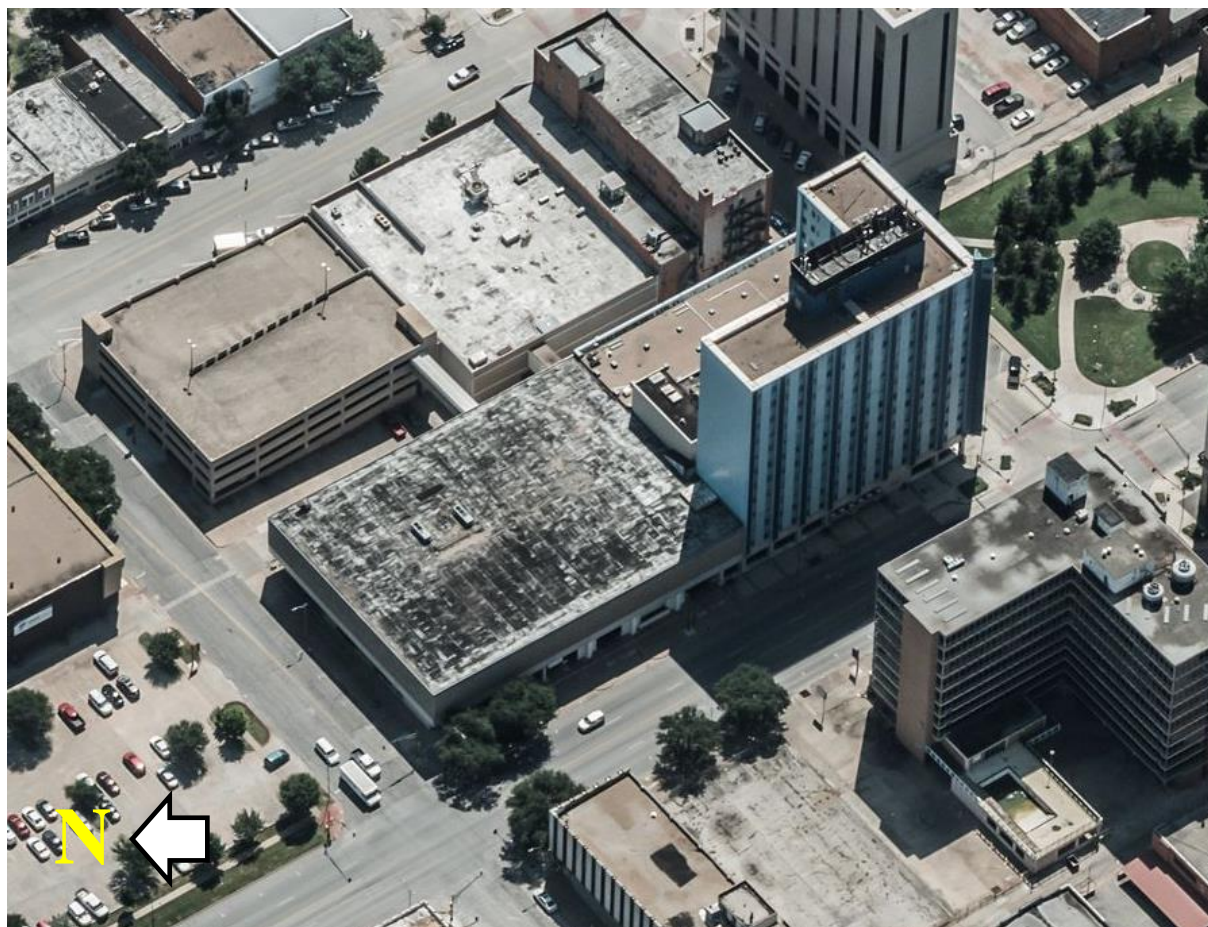
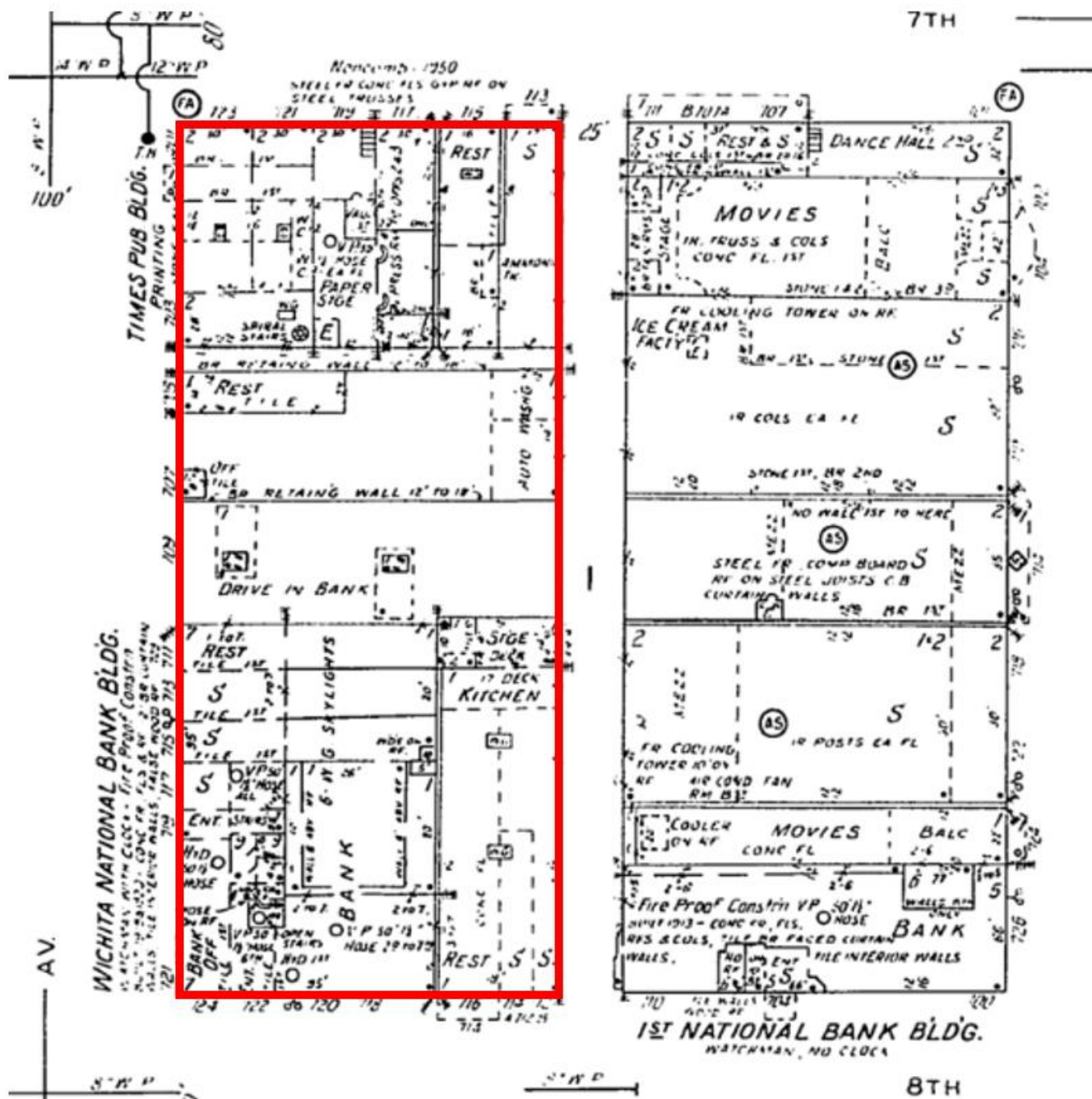


Figure 1: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1919, p.4. showing Clint Wood Building original footprint outlined in red. Note that the portion of the building along Scott Avenue and 8th Street features a “7” indicating seven stories, while the portion on the interior (northeast) part of the block indicate “1” for one story.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 2: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Wichita Falls 1925; Republished 1954 vol. 1, Sheet 2. Current footprint outlined in red. Note that the former garage and auto repair shop was likely demolished to make room for the 1952 drive-in bank. At that time, the northwest corner of the block was still occupied by the Times Publishing Building.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 3: The original Clint Wood Building (now First Wichita National Bank) under construction. Photograph courtesy of Museum of North Texas History.



Figure 4: Building owned by noted oilman Bob Waggoner, 1920s. Courtesy of Museum of North Texas History.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 5: C. 1920 photograph of Wichita National Bank showing original storefront windows and canopied entrances. [Wichita National Bank], photograph, 1920; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth1385542/m1/1/?q=wichita%20national%20bank%2C%20wichita%20falls>; accessed February 10, 2023), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Midwestern State University.



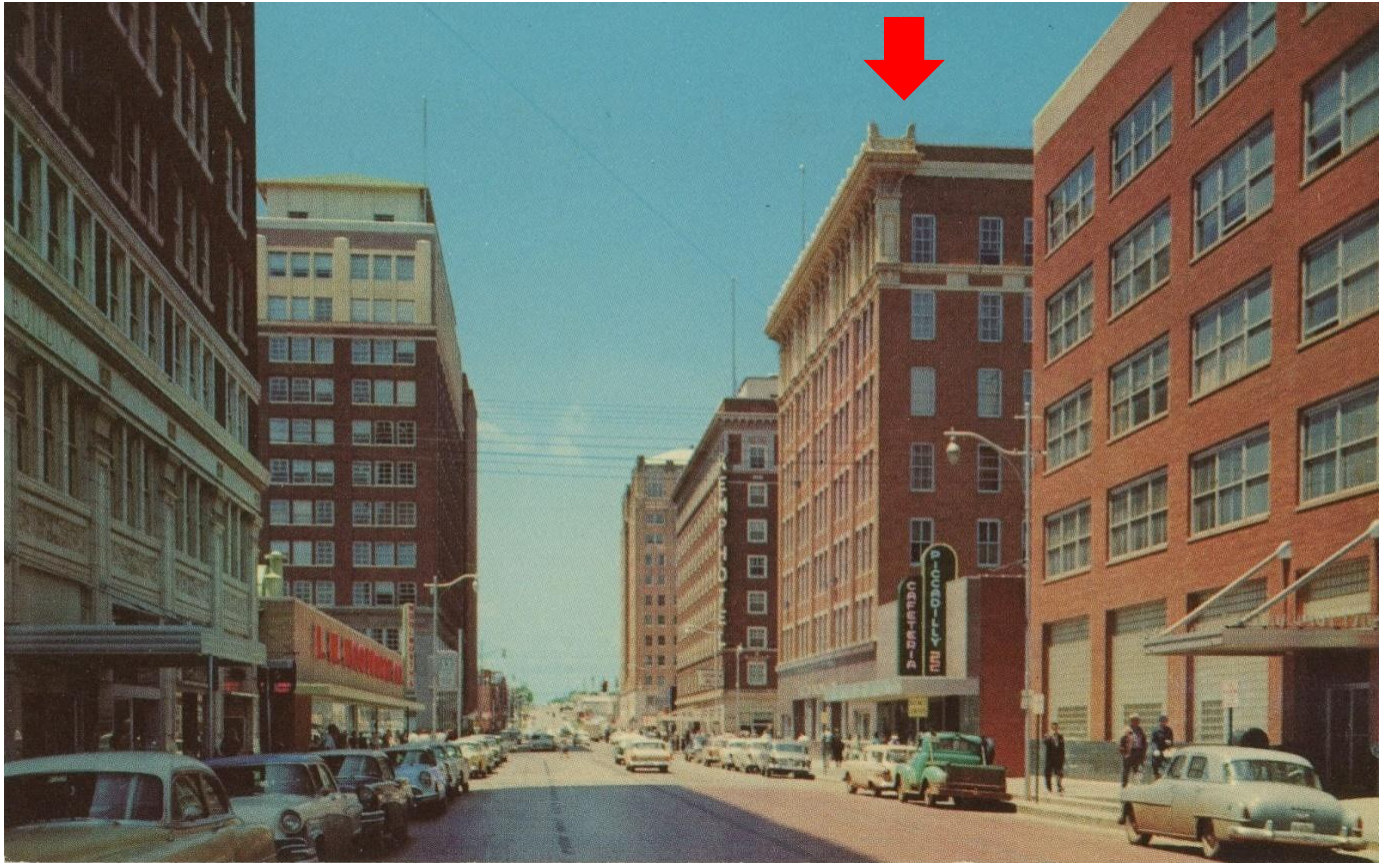
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 6: View of Wichita National Bank (subject building) 1948 interior remodel by architect James G. Dixon. Courtesy of *Wichita Daily Times*, December 12, 1948. Note the Streamlined Moderne detailing.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 7: 8th Street, looking west with the building on the right, adjacent to the Piccadilly Cafeteria, c. 1955. Note the modernized storefronts on the ground floor. Courtesy of Museum of North Texas History.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 8: Wichita Falls Bank (subject building), photograph, c. 1955. Note ground floor modernization of storefronts and entrances after 1955 remodel.

<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht1385543/m1/1/?q=wichita%20national%20bank%20wichita%20falls> accessed January 26, 2023, University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Midwestern State University.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 9: Advertisement showing the completed 1955 exterior remodel of the Wichita National Bank (subject building) exterior with Sunset red granite panels, completed by architect Jesse G. Dixon. Courtesy of *Wichita Falls Records News*, May 24, 1955, 13.

The advertisement features a large illustration of the Wichita National Bank building, a single-story structure with a flat roof and large windows. The building is covered in dark, rectangular panels. A hand in the upper right corner holds a sign that reads: "Your Invitation to OPEN HOUSE Tuesday and Wednesday May 24th and 25th 4:30 to 8:30 P.M. WICHITA NATIONAL BANK". Below the building, the text "8th Street" is visible. To the right of the building, a small text block states: "...a new expanse of Texas 'Sunset' granite covers the entire exterior lower floor of the Wichita National Bank Building...".

**An Enlarged Installment Loan Division
and a New Trust Department Have Been
Added to the Many Services Offered
To Customers of the Wichita National Bank**

The advertisement includes three small inset photographs showing the interior of the bank. The first shows two men sitting at a desk. The second shows a group of people in a meeting room. The third shows a group of people in a meeting room.

WICHITA
Member F.D.I.C.
46 Years of Dependable Banking
National Bank
OF WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS

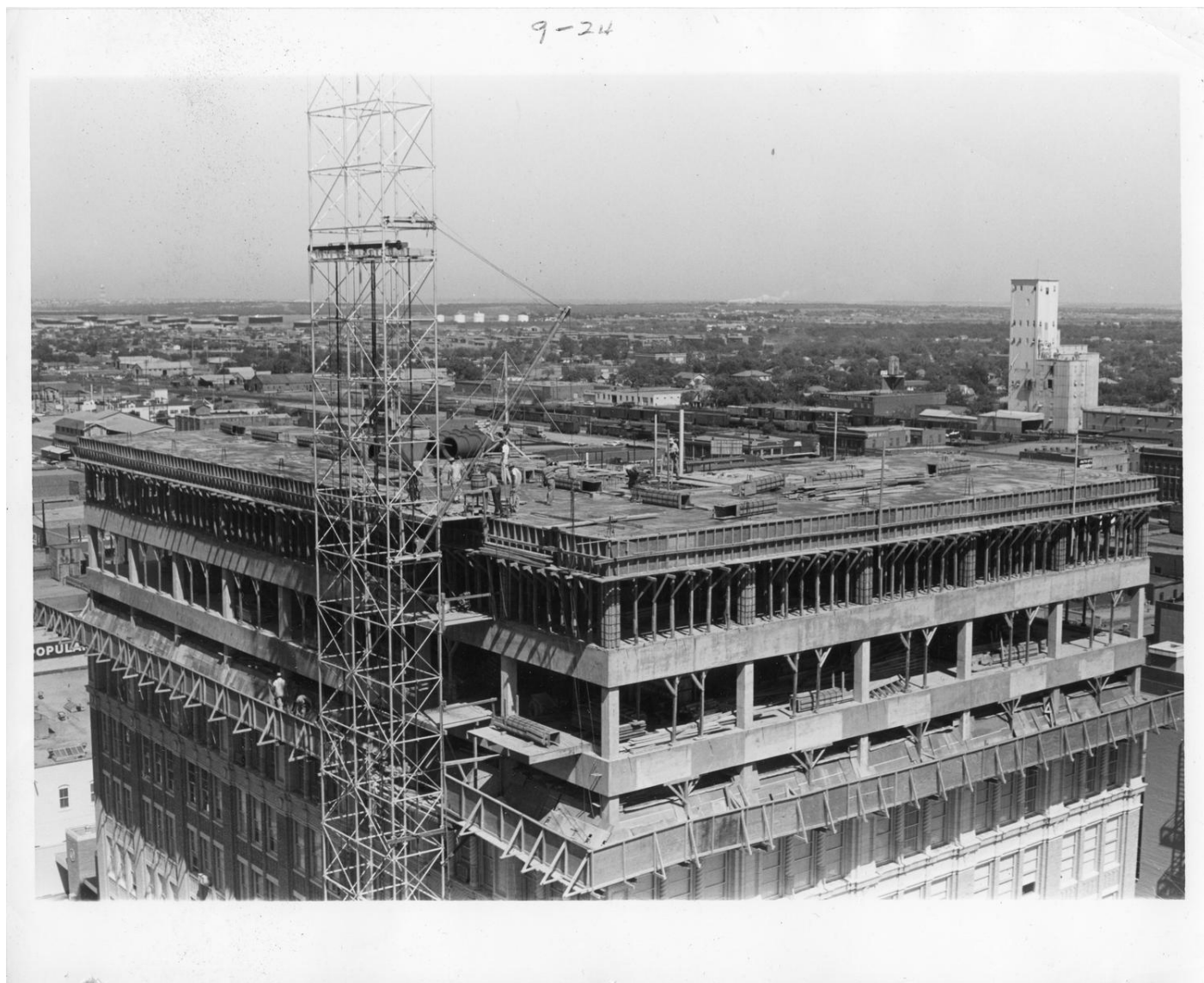
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 10: Picture of refacing the building, appeared in the *Wichita Falls Times*, April 21, 1960, p.17 courtesy of Museum of North Texas History.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 11: Addition to Wichita National Bank, photograph, 1960;
(<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1385544/m1/1/?q=wichita%20national%20bank%20wichita%20falls.>;
Accessed January 26, 2023, University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*,
<https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Midwestern State University.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 12: Aerial view of Downtown Wichita Falls looking southeast, circa late 1960s. Red arrow indicates nominated building. Cochran, Jimmy W. photograph, Date Unknown; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph802435/m1/1/>: accessed December 7, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Midwestern State University.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 13: Wichita National Bank Complete] photograph, 1969;
<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth1385545/m1/1/?q=wichita%20national%20bank%20wichita%20falls>.
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<https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Midwestern State University.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 14: 800 Block of Scott Avenue with First Wichita National Bank on the left c. 1965, shows blade sign, courtesy of Museum of North Texas History.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 15: Ad for Bourland Company that provided the Porcelain Enamel Steel Panels, *Wichita Falls Times*, December 10, 1961, p.19.

THE FACE OF MODERN TEXAS...

The First Wichita National Bank is an outstanding example of responsible Texas business. Their new remodeling program has transformed an old, but structurally sound building into an attractive modern structure that reflects the look-ahead thinking of Texas businessmen. And, the brilliant, life-time facing material will not fade . . . requires very little maintenance. Porcelain Enamel with its non-porous flint-hard surface is extremely weather resistant. Will look original "new" for years and years. Investigate today the many advantages of Davidson Architectural Porcelain Panels. For information contact:

**J. E. Bourland
Company**

P.O. Box 4203,
Dallas 8, Texas
WHitehill 6-7035



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 16: Rendering of building c. 1960, noted corner full height blade sign with “1st” extending above roofline.
Courtesy of Museum of North Texas History.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 17: Lobby area c. 1961 (possibly opening week of December 10, 1961). Courtesy of Chase Bank (previous owners).



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 18: Lobby and Second Floor c. 1961 (possibly opening week of December 10, 1961). Courtesy of Chase Bank (previous owners).



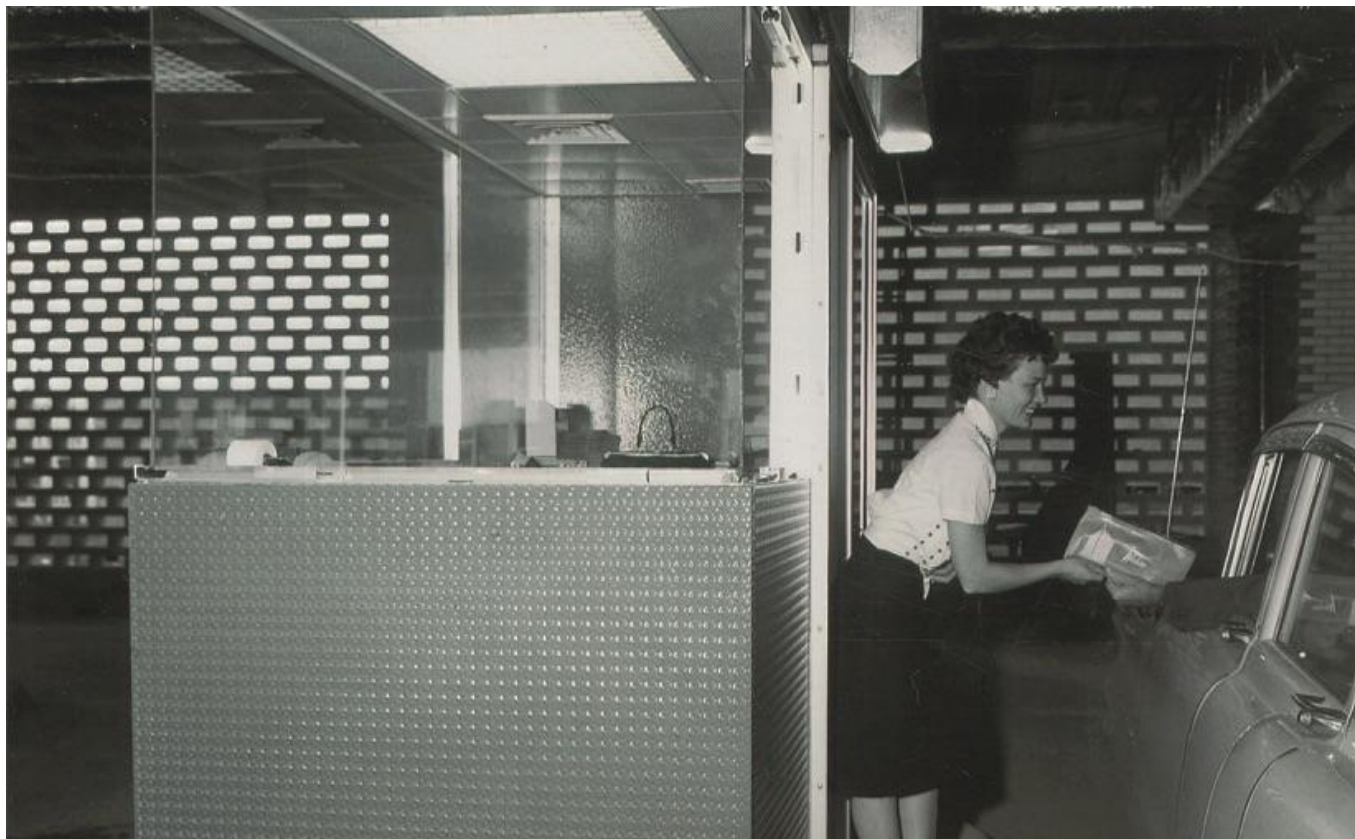
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 19: Vault area c. 1961 (possibly opening week of December 10, 1961). Courtesy of Chase Bank (previous owners).



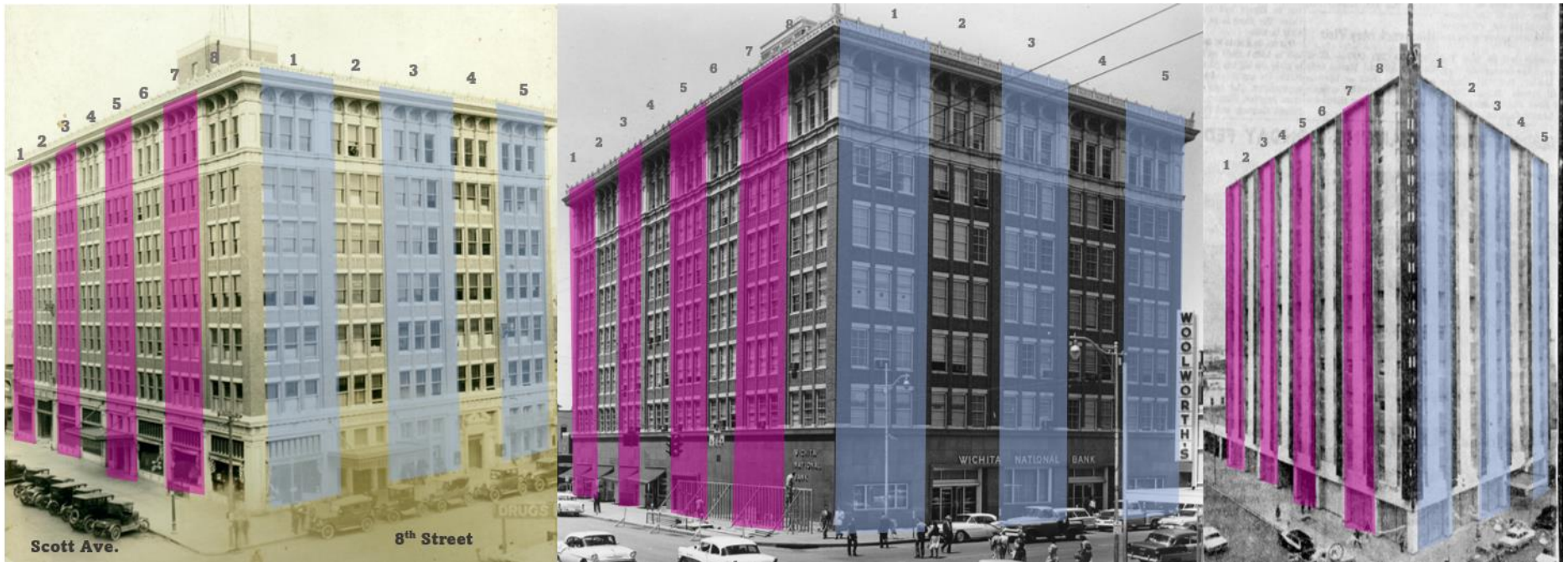
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 20: Motor Bank c. 1961 (possibly opening week of December 10, 1961). Courtesy of Chase Bank (previous owners).



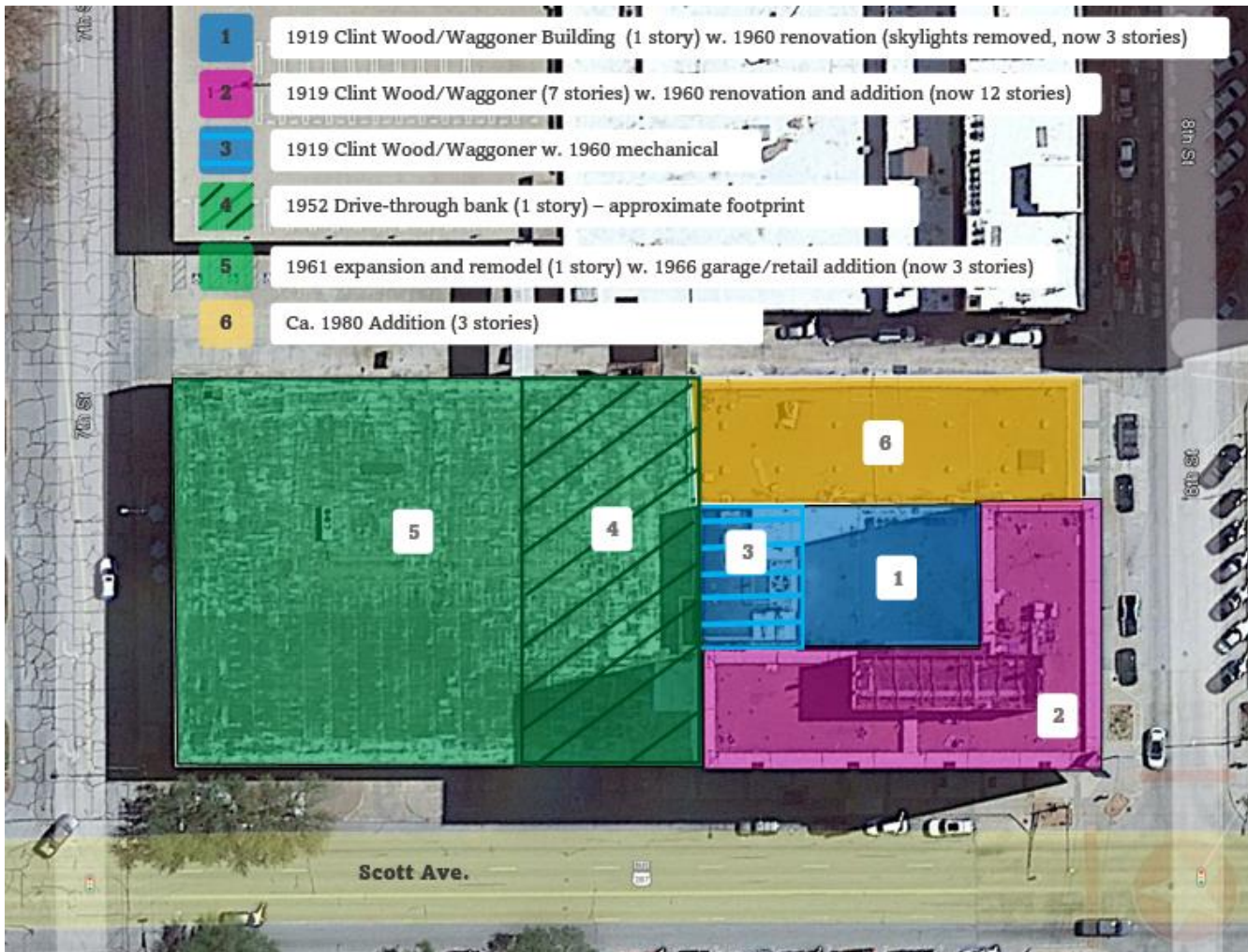
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 21: Evolution of building exterior showing (from left to right) 1920s exterior, c. 1949 exterior remodel, and 1960 renovation and addition with labeled and corresponding bays. The c. 1980 three story addition is not shown.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 22: Aerial photograph showing phases of construction and renovations on FWNB. Courtesy of Google Earth, accessed February 2023.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 23: Drawing of 1961 motor bank featured in *Wichita Falls Times*, December 7, 1961, p50.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 24: Advertisement announcing merger of First National Bank and Wichita National Bank to form First Wichita National Bank, *Wichita Falls Times*, February 21, 1960, page 7.

"Everybody benefits"

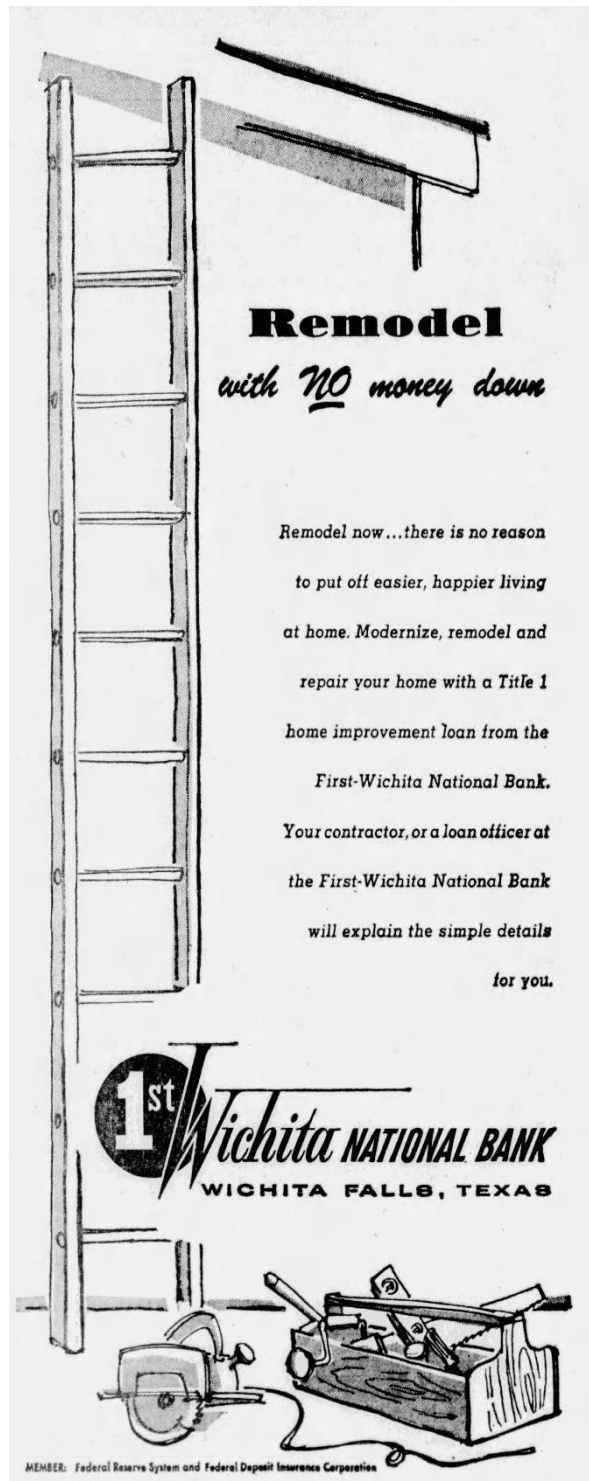
There's big news today in Wichita Falls! Everybody benefits because the First National Bank and the Wichita National Bank have officially joined to give Wichita Falls the bigger and better bank service a city of this size deserves. The consolidated FIRST-WICHITA National Bank will mean more convenience, more service and more prestige for everybody in Wichita Falls!

1st Wichita NATIONAL BANK
WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS

MEMBER Federal Reserve System and
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 25: Advertisement for home improvement loans, *Wichita Falls Times*, April 26, 1960, page 2.



Remodel
with NO money down

Remodel now...there is no reason
to put off easier, happier living
at home. Modernize, remodel and
repair your home with a Title 1
home improvement loan from the
First-Wichita National Bank.
Your contractor, or a loan officer at
the First-Wichita National Bank
will explain the simple details
for you.

1st WICHITA NATIONAL BANK
WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS

MEMBER: Federal Reserve System and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 26: Advertisement mentioning growth of Wichita Falls and offering financing “everything from fishing tackle to complete industrial installations.” *Wichita Falls Times*, February 22, 1960, page 3.



A step ahead

with growing WICHITA FALLS!

The creation of the FIRST-WICHITA National Bank is a step ahead for one of the fastest growing cities in the Southwest. Wichita Falls deserves to have a bank like FIRST-WICHITA.

EVERYBODY BENEFITS by the consolidation of the First National Bank and the Wichita National Bank.

At last, you have a bank equipped to provide the service you need and the money for all the things you want in life.

FIRST-WICHITA National Bank can now finance everything from fishing tackle to complete industrial installations.



1st Wichita NATIONAL BANK
WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS

MEMBER, Federal Reserve System and
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 27: Interior area c. 1980s showing ceramic tile (since removed) over original terrazzo floors. Courtesy of Chase Bank (previous owners).



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 28: First National Bank Midland (1953, completed 1978) at 303 W. Wall Street (extant), designed by George Dahl. Courtesy of Google Street View, 2019.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 29: First National Bank Midland (1953, completed 1978) at 303 W. Wall Street (extant), designed by George Dahl. Courtesy of Google Street View, 2019.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 30: El Paso National Bank (1960) at 201 East Main Street (extant), designed by George Dahl. Courtesy of Google Streetview.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 31: First National Bank of Odessa (now Bank of America) at 700 North Grant Avenue (extant), designed by George Dahl. Courtesy of Google Streetview.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 32: Architect's rendering of Citizens National Bank (now Prosperity Bank – c. 1969) in Abilene. Courtesy of the Portal to Texas History.



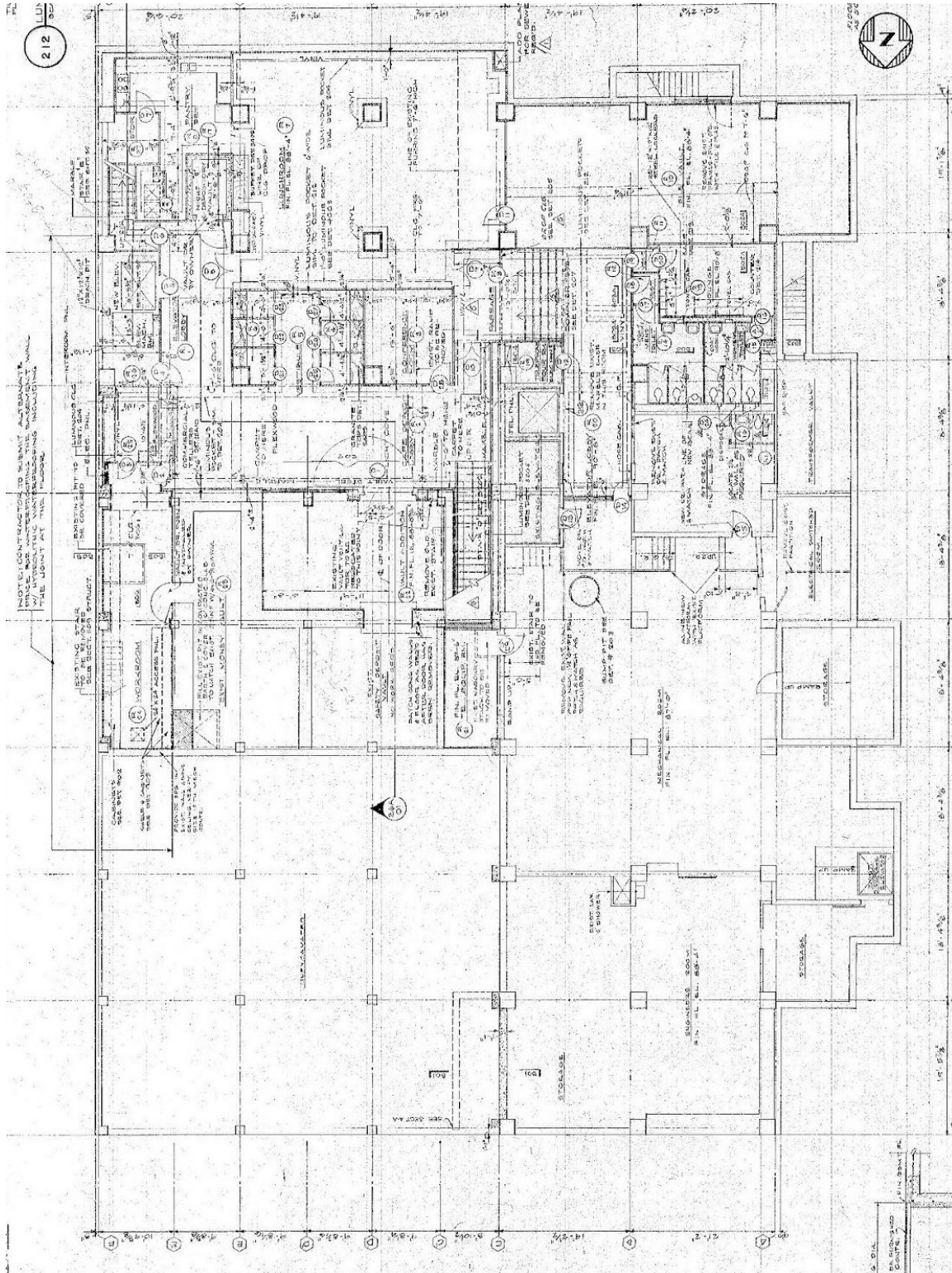
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 33: Citizens National Bank (now Prosperity Bank) at 402 Cypress Street, Abilene, designed by George Dahl.
Courtesy of Google Streetview 2022.



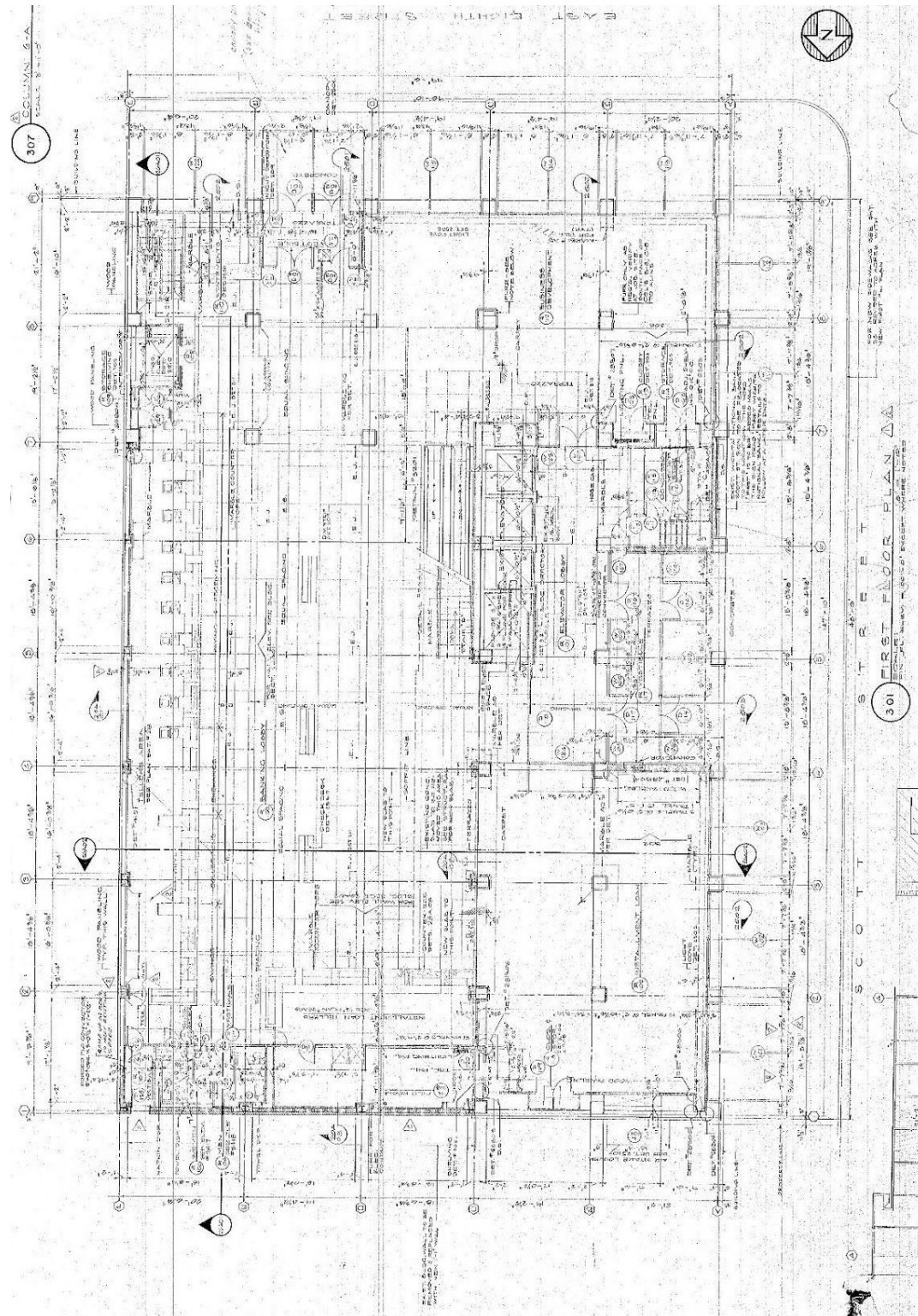
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 34: First Wichita National Bank Building Basement Floor Plan (George Dahl Architects 1960).



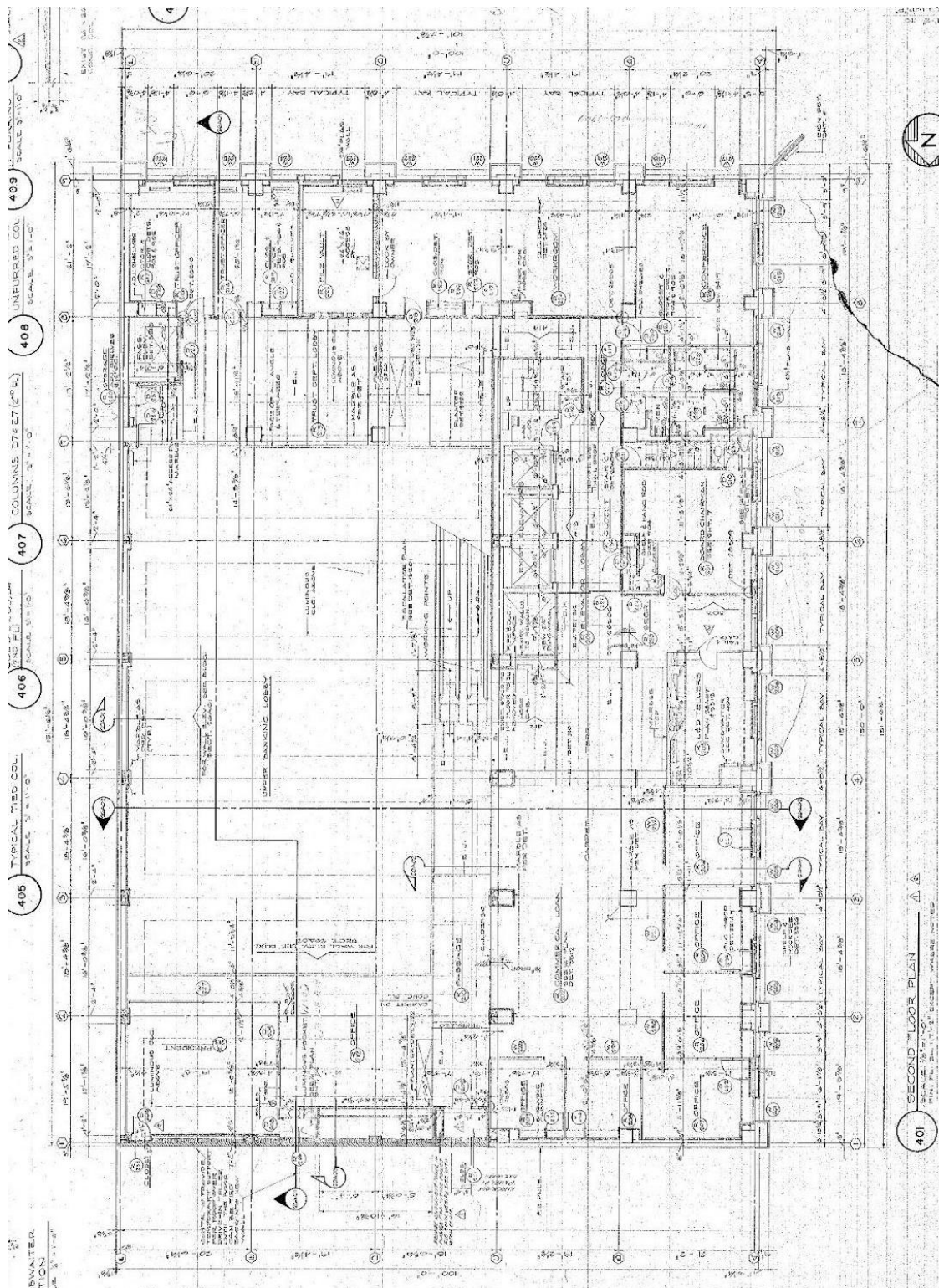
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 35: First Wichita National Bank Building First Floor Plan (George Dahl Architects 1960).



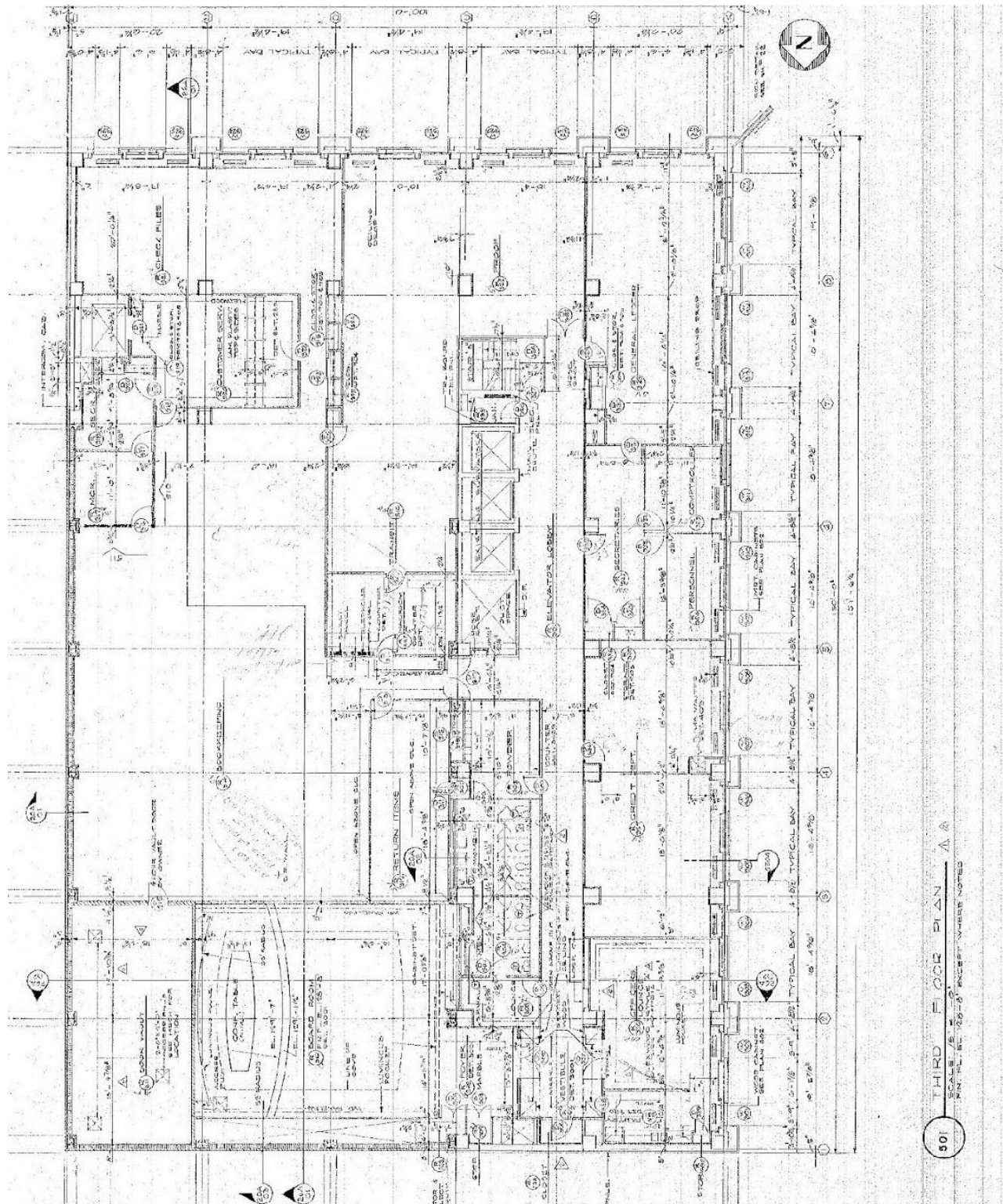
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 36: First Wichita National Bank Building Second Floor Plan (George Dahl Architects 1960).



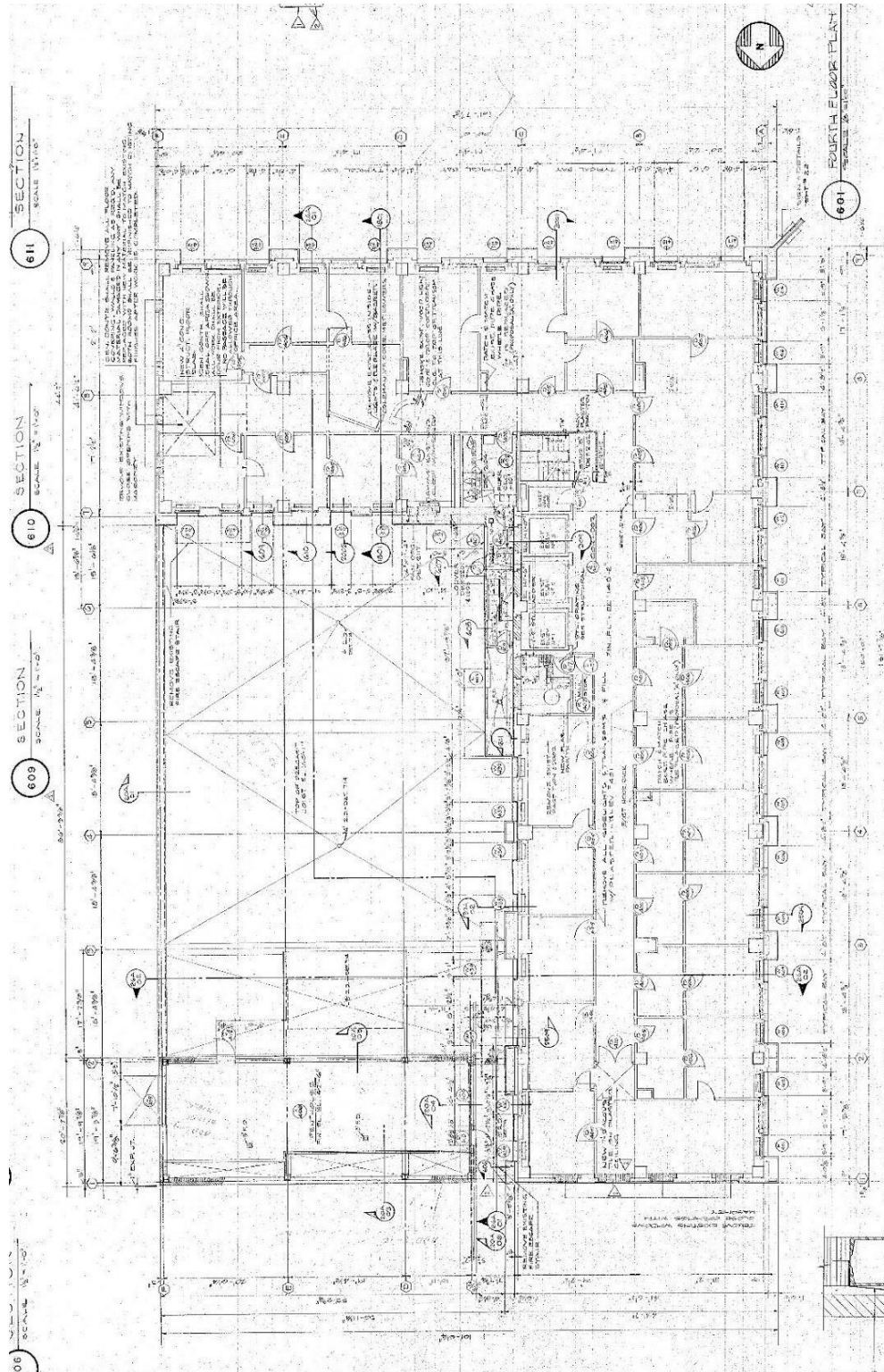
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 37: First Wichita National Bank Building Third Floor Plan (George Dahl Architects 1960).



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

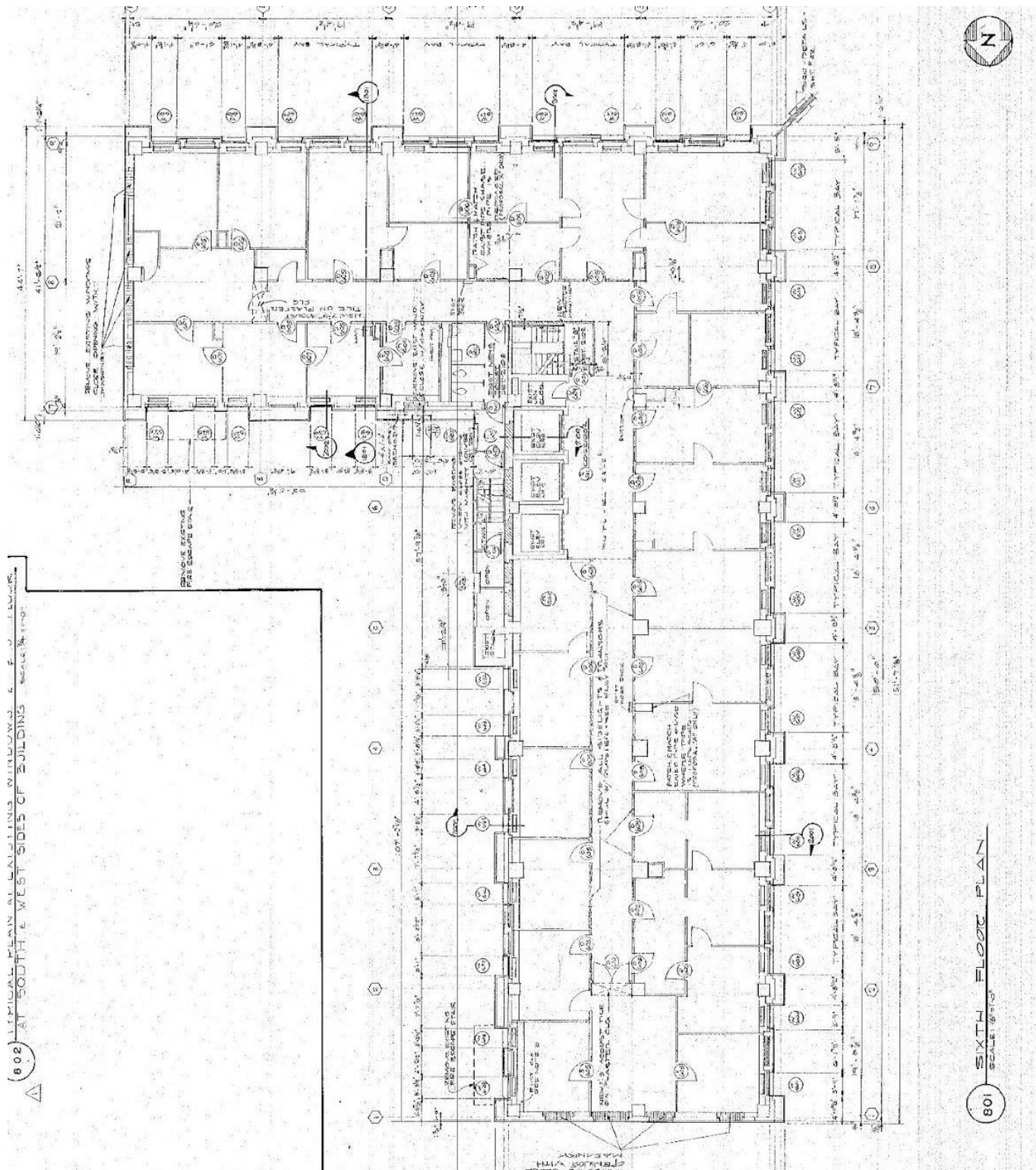
Figure 38: First Wichita National Bank Building Fourth Floor Plan (George Dahl Architects 1960).



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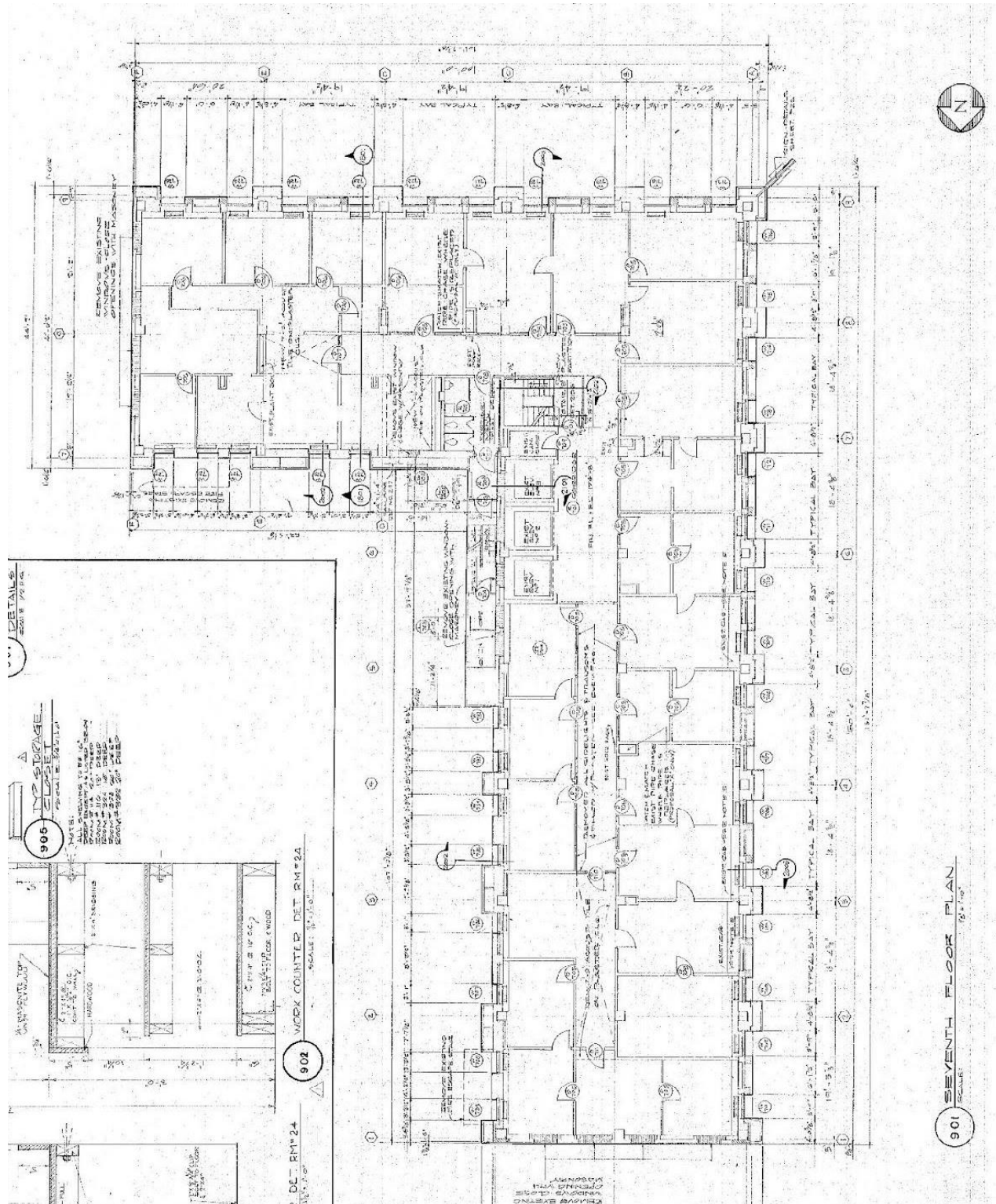
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 40: First Wichita National Bank Building Sixth Floor Plan (George Dahl Architects 1960).



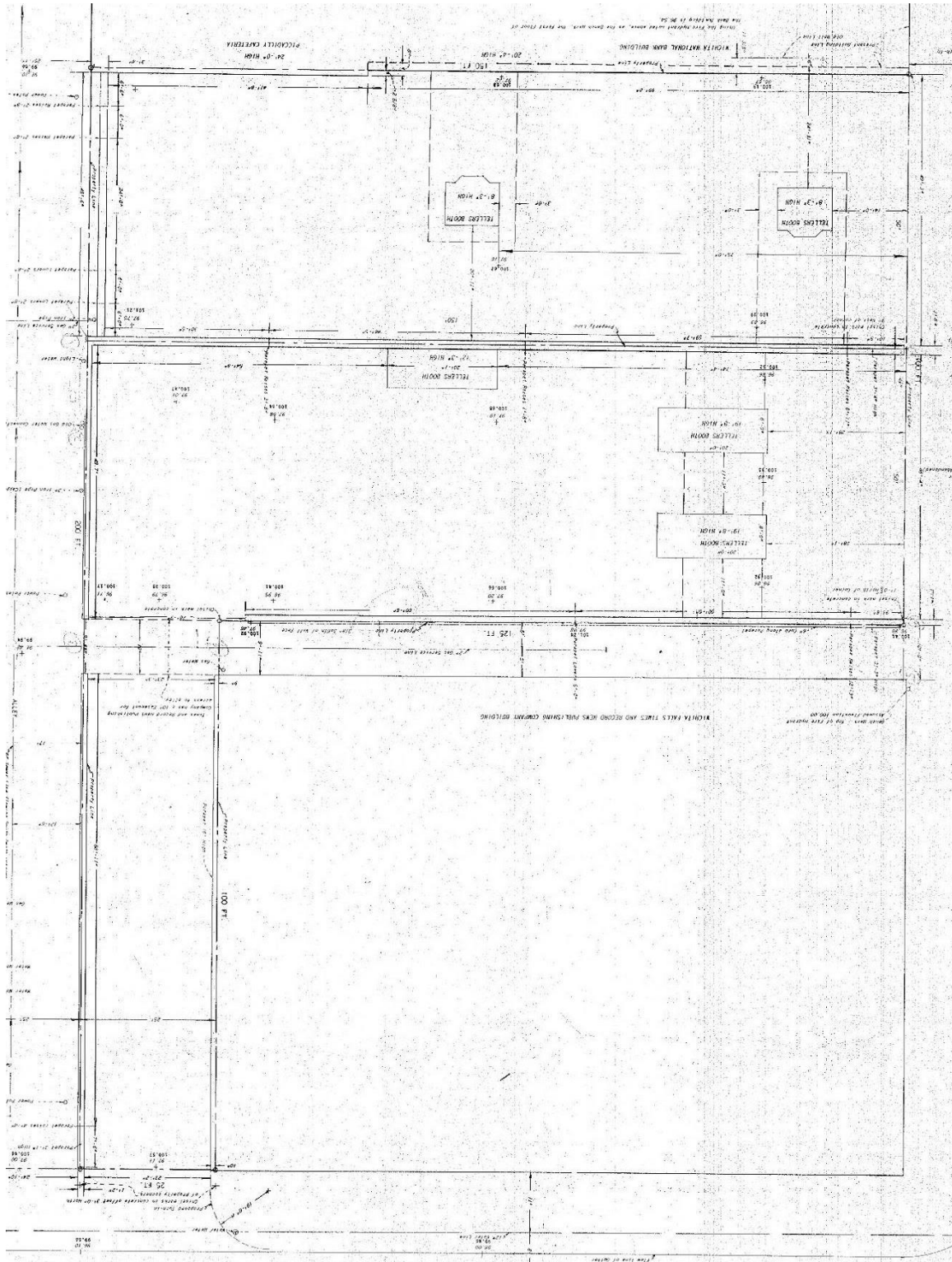
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 41: First Wichita National Bank Building Seventh Floor Plan (George Dahl Architects 1960).



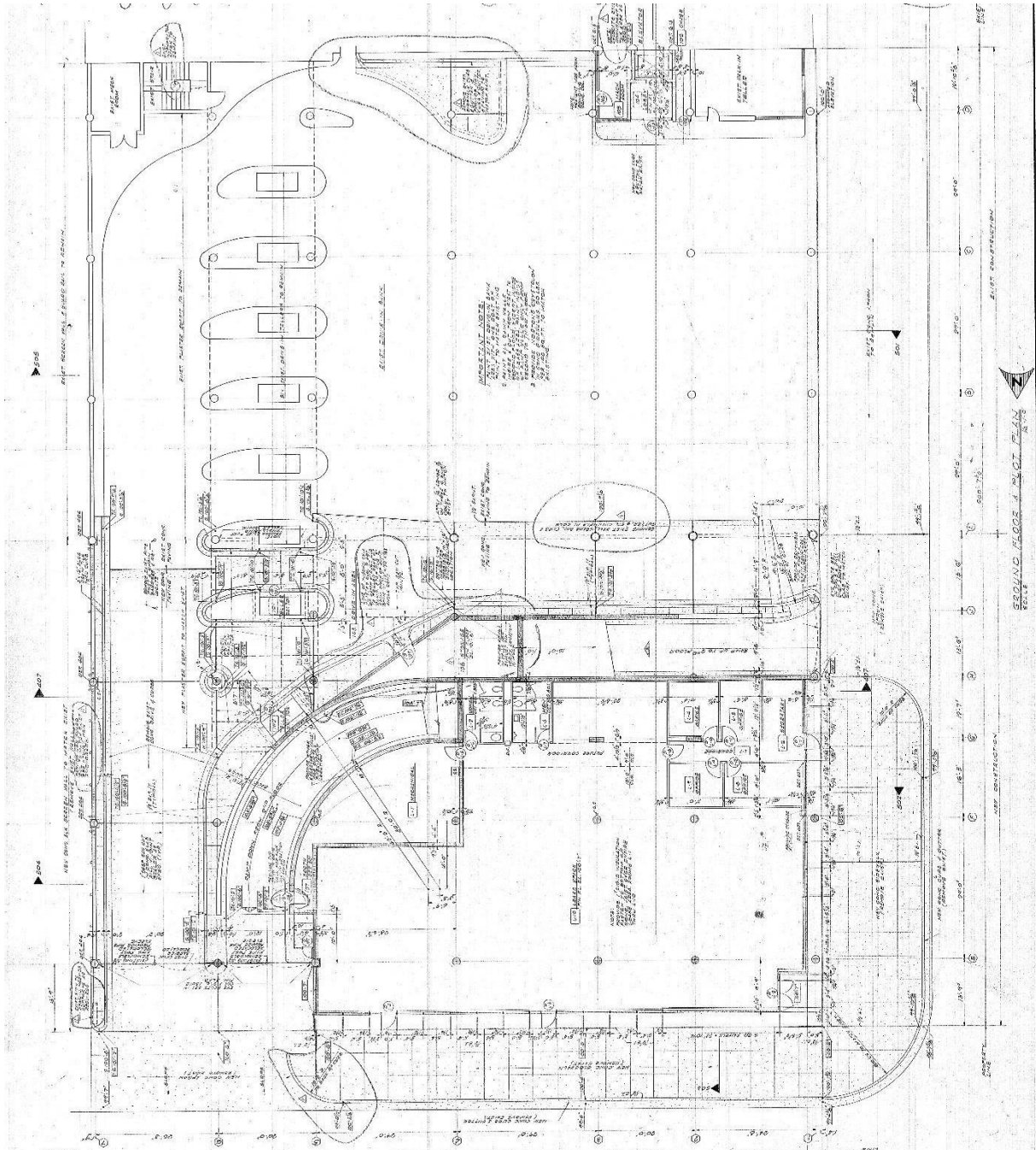
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 42: First Wichita National Bank Building 1961 Drive-in Banking (George Dahl Architects 1960).



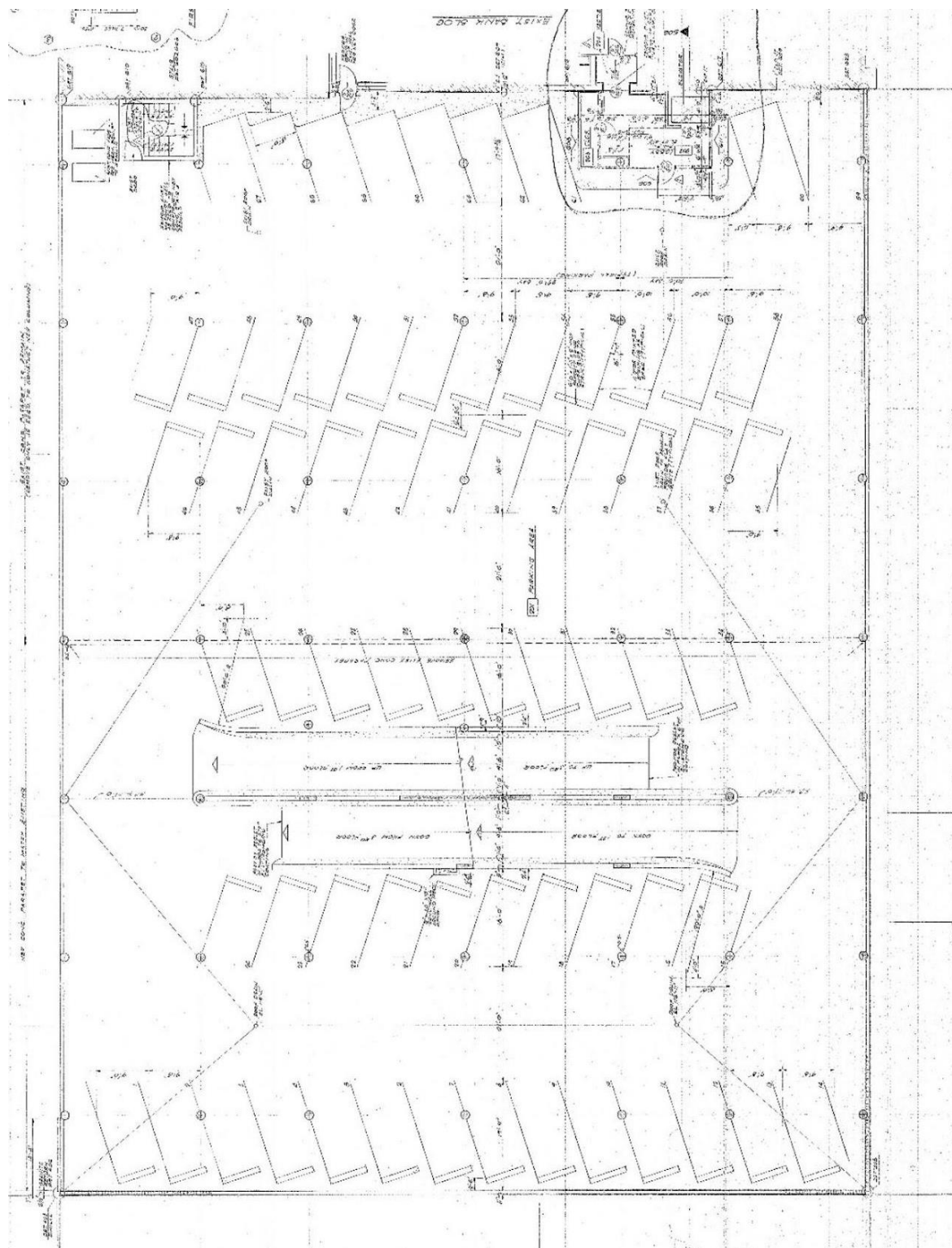
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 43: First Wichita National Bank Parking Garage/Motor Bank First Floor Plan (Wood and Sibeck, Architects 1965).



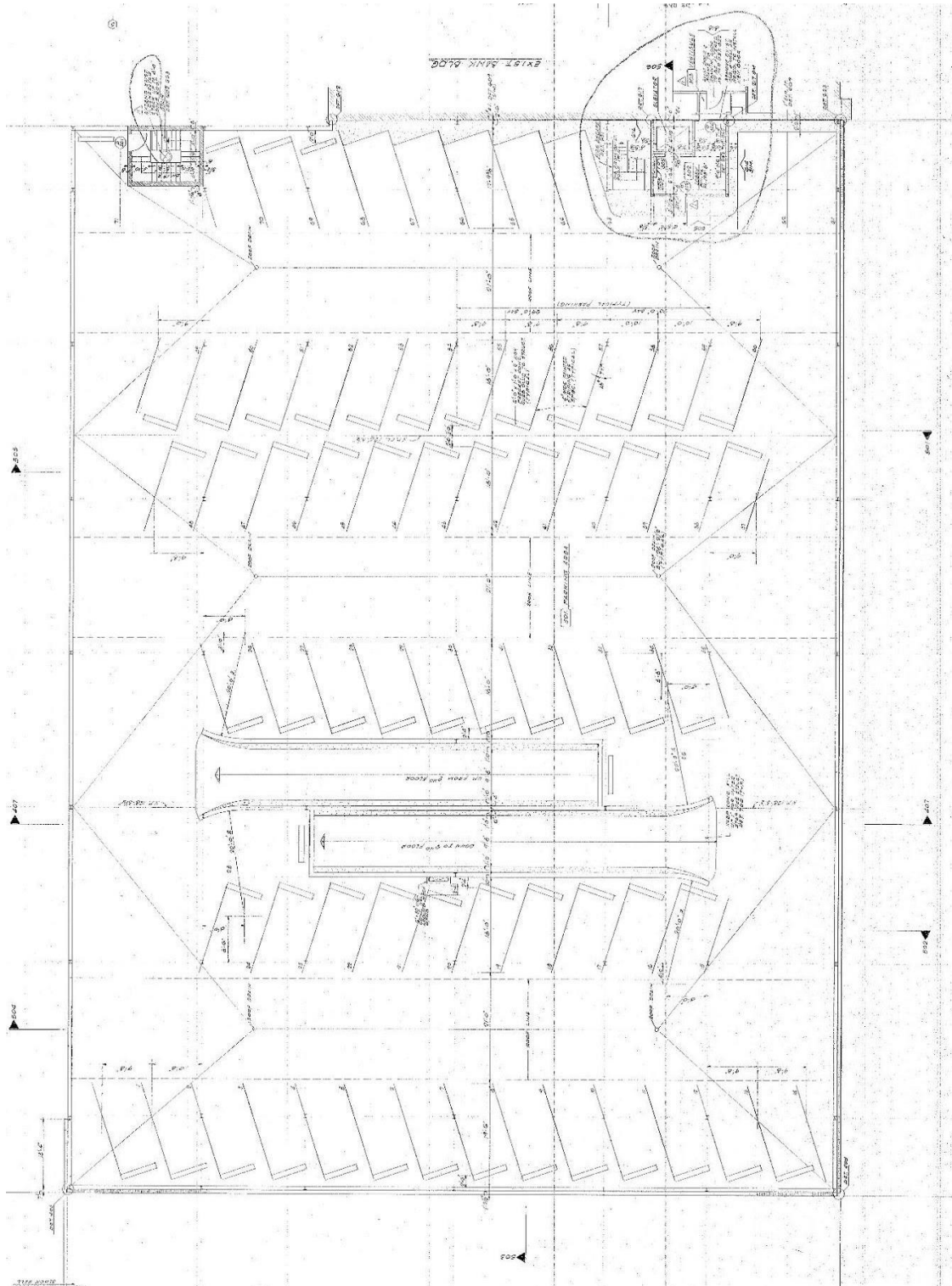
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 44: First Wichita National Bank Parking Garage/Motor Bank Second Floor Plan (Wood and Sibeck, Architects 1965).



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Figure 45: First Wichita National Bank Parking Garage/Motor Bank Third Floor Plan (Wood and Sibeck, Architects 1965).



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photos

Photo 1: First Wichita National Bank, primary (southwest) elevation. View northeast.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 2: First Wichita National Bank, oblique showing southwest (Scott Ave.) and southeast (8th Street) elevations. View northeast.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 3: First Wichita National Bank southeast (8th Street) elevation. View northwest.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 4: First Wichita National Bank oblique, showing southeast (8th Street) and northeast elevations. View northwest.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 5: First Wichita National Bank northeast elevation from rear roof. View southwest.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 6: First Wichita National Bank northeast elevation from rear roof. View northwest.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 7: First Wichita National Bank, oblique showing southwest (Scott Ave.) and northwest elevations. View southeast.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 8: First Wichita National Bank southwest (Scott Ave.) elevation showing attached garage. View northeast.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 9: First Wichita National Bank corner of southwest and northwest elevations (Scott Ave. and 8th St.) detail. View northwest.



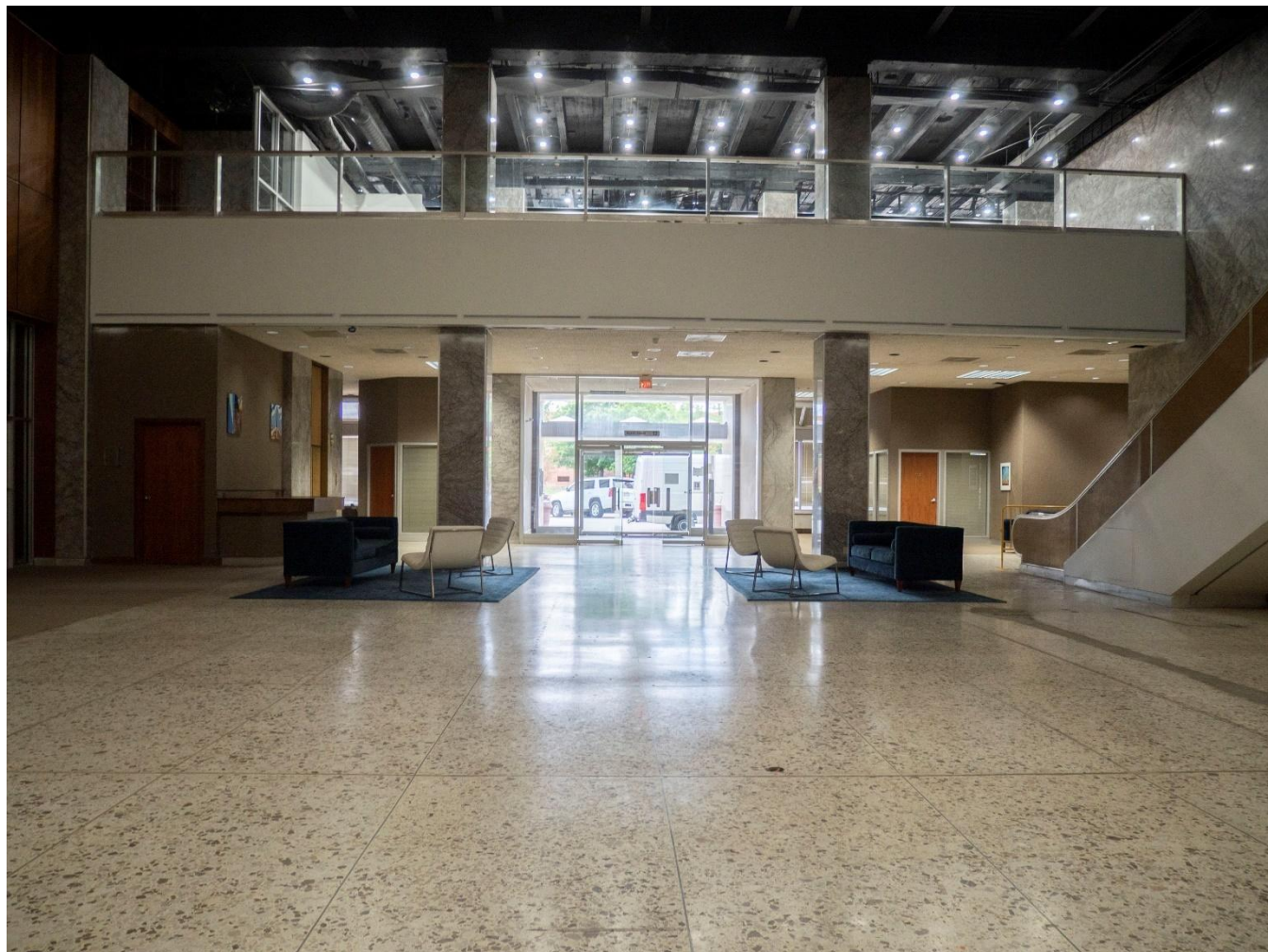
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 10: First Wichita National Bank entrance from Scott Ave. on southwest elevation. View east.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 11: First Wichita National Bank 1st floor lobby. View southwest.



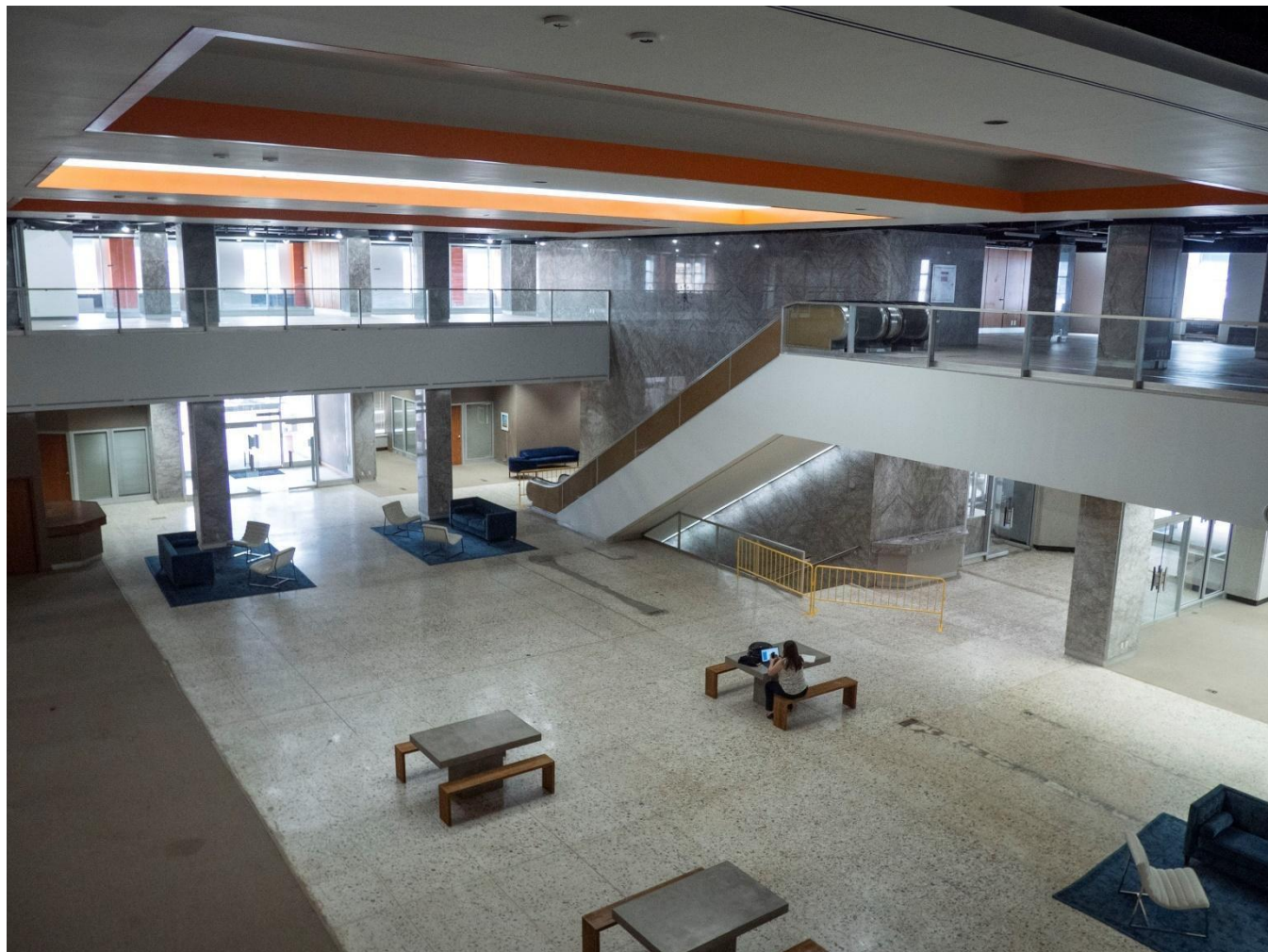
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 12: First Wichita National Bank 1st floor lobby from mezzanine. View southwest.



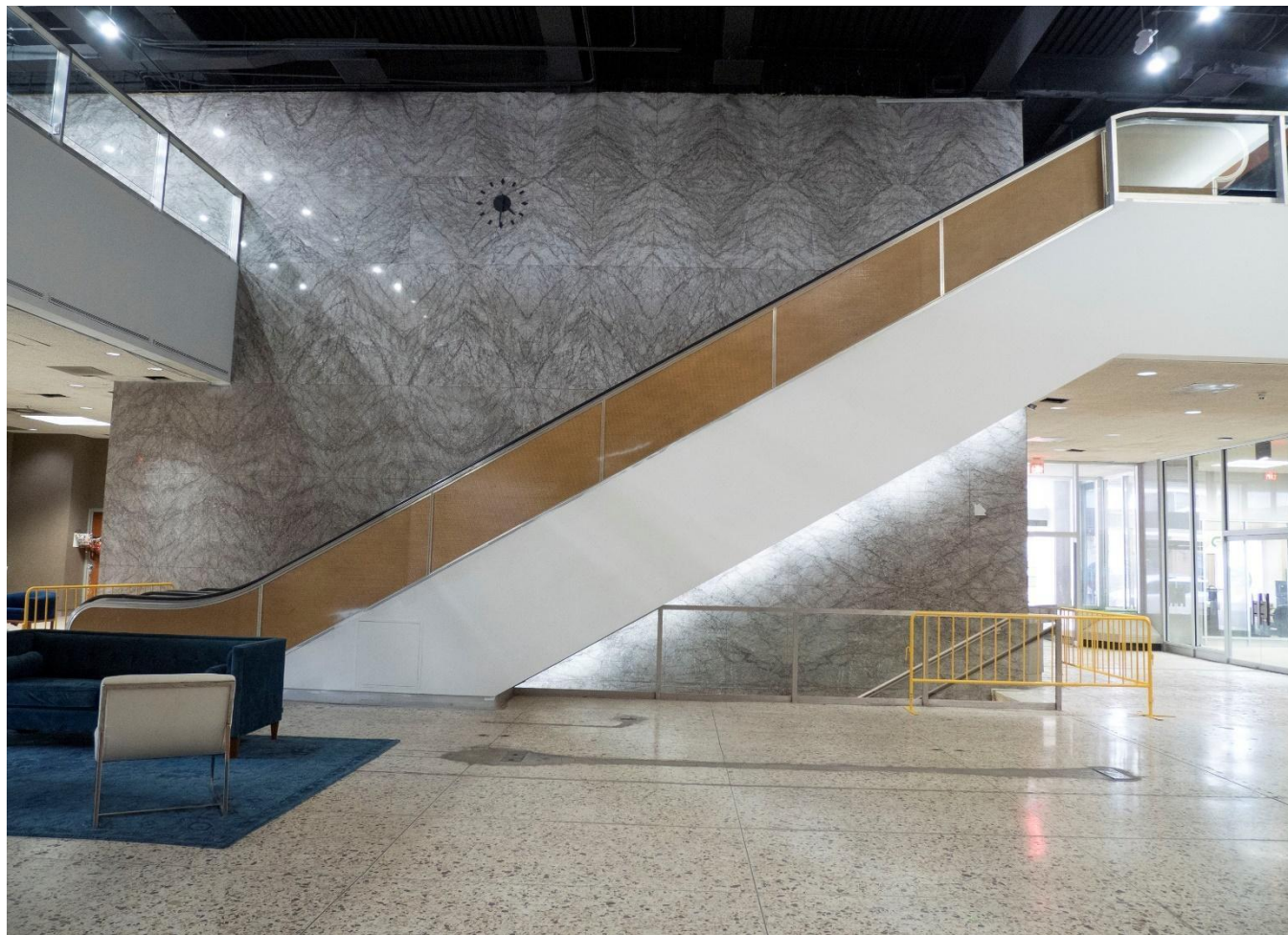
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 13: First Wichita National Bank 1st floor lobby and from mezzanine. View northeast.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 14: First Wichita National Bank lobby escalator detail. View northeast.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 15: First Wichita National Bank 1st floor elevator detail. View southeast.



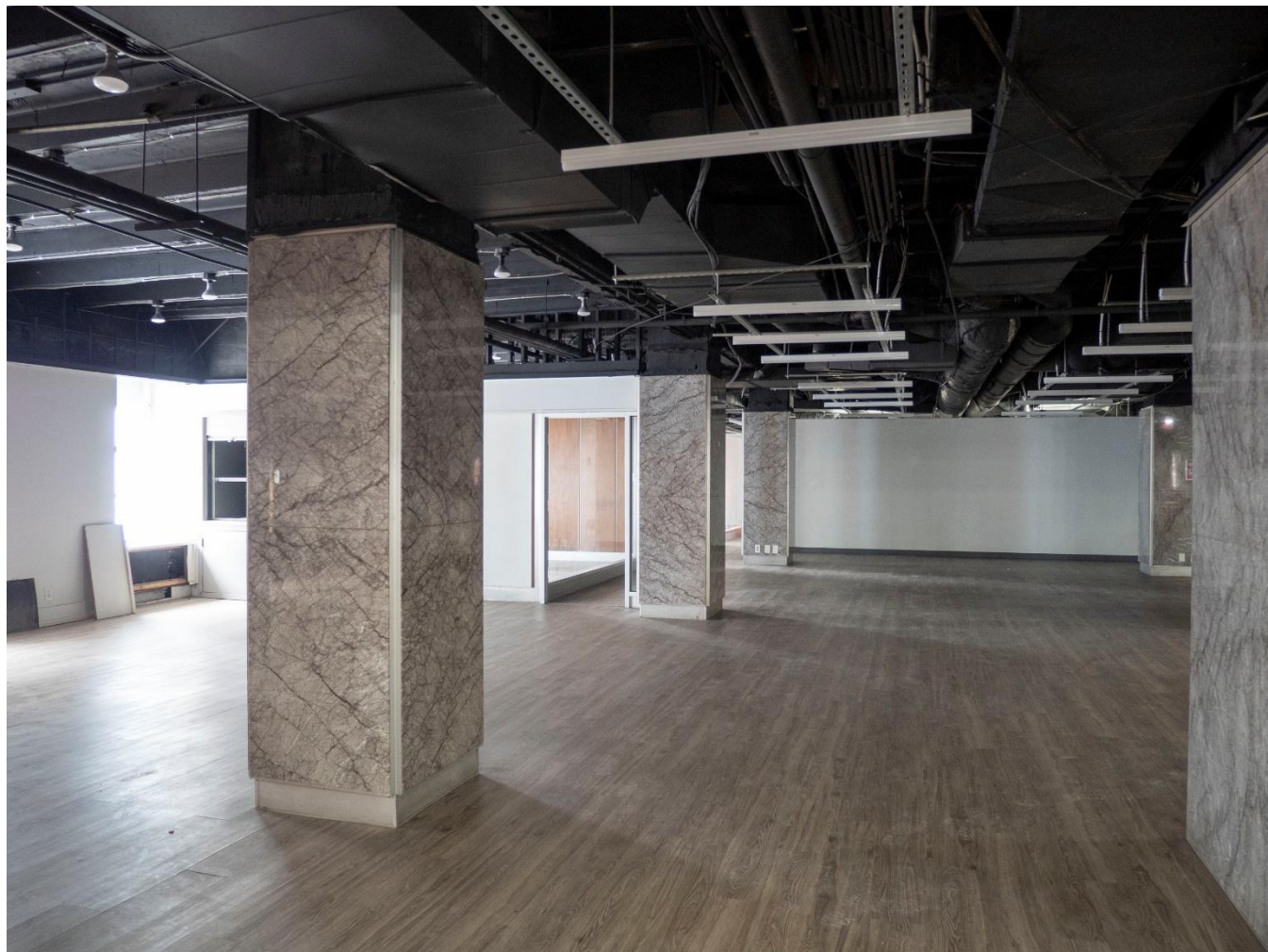
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 16: First Wichita National Bank mezzanine level. View north.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 17: First Wichita National Bank mezzanine level. View northwest.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 18: First Wichita National Bank 3rd floor foyer to board room. View northeast.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 19: First Wichita National Bank 3rd floor board room. View southwest.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 20: First Wichita National Bank 4th floor corridor. View northeast.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 21: First Wichita National Bank 4th floor office. View north.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 22: First Wichita National Bank 5th floor elevator lobby and corridor. View northwest.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 23: First Wichita National Bank 6th floor office. View east.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 24: First Wichita National Bank 7th floor typical office showing some original finishes. View southwest.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 25: First Wichita National Bank 8th floor corridor. View northeast.



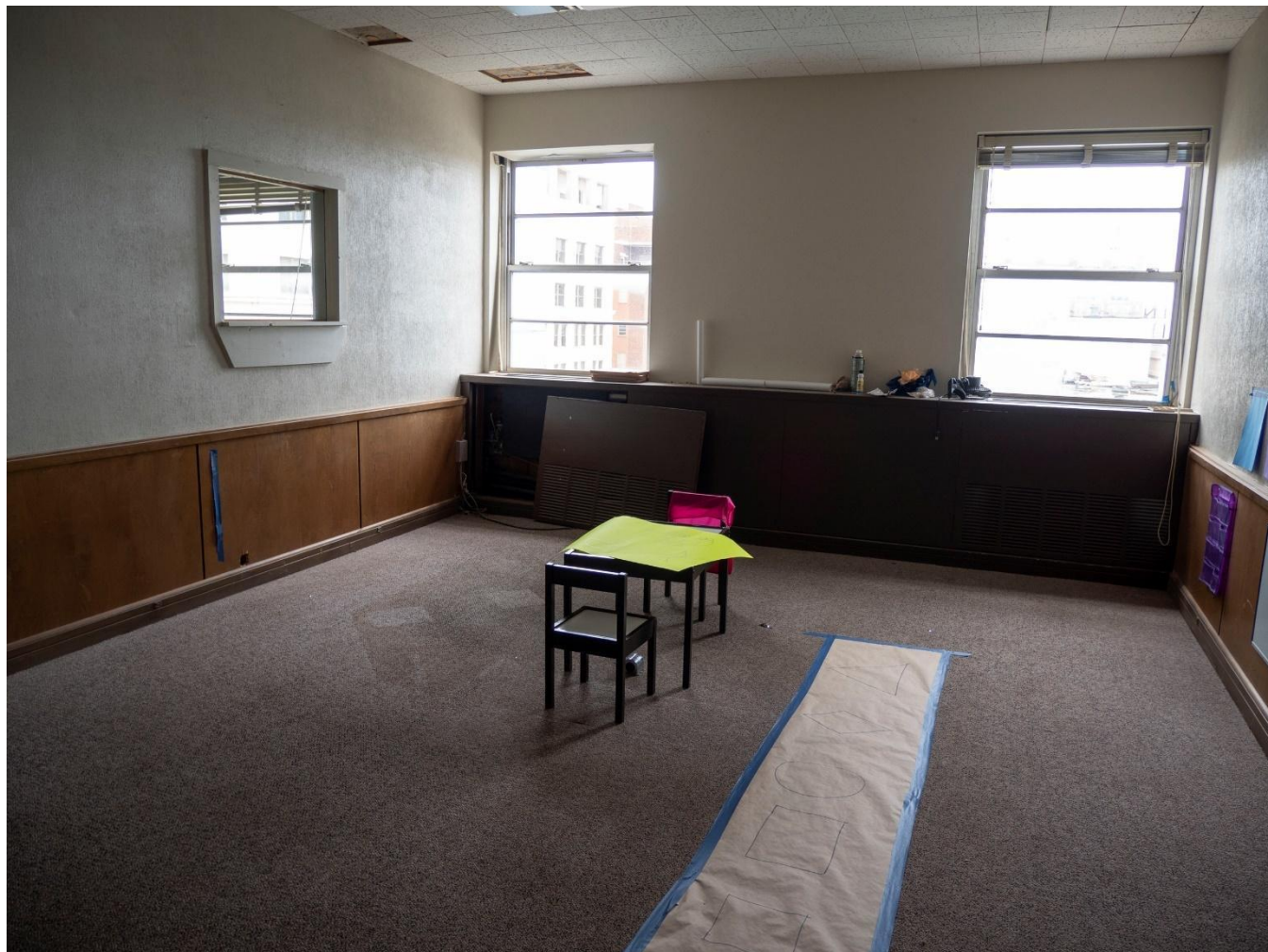
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 26: First Wichita National Bank 9th floor corridor. View northwest.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 27: First Wichita National Bank 10th floor office. View southeast.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 28: First Wichita National Bank 11th floor corridor showing original mail chute. View south.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 29: First Wichita National Bank 12th floor corridor. View northwest.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 30: First Wichita National Bank 12th floor office space. View southwest.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 31: First Wichita National Bank basement floor. View north.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 32: First Wichita National Bank basement vault. View northeast.



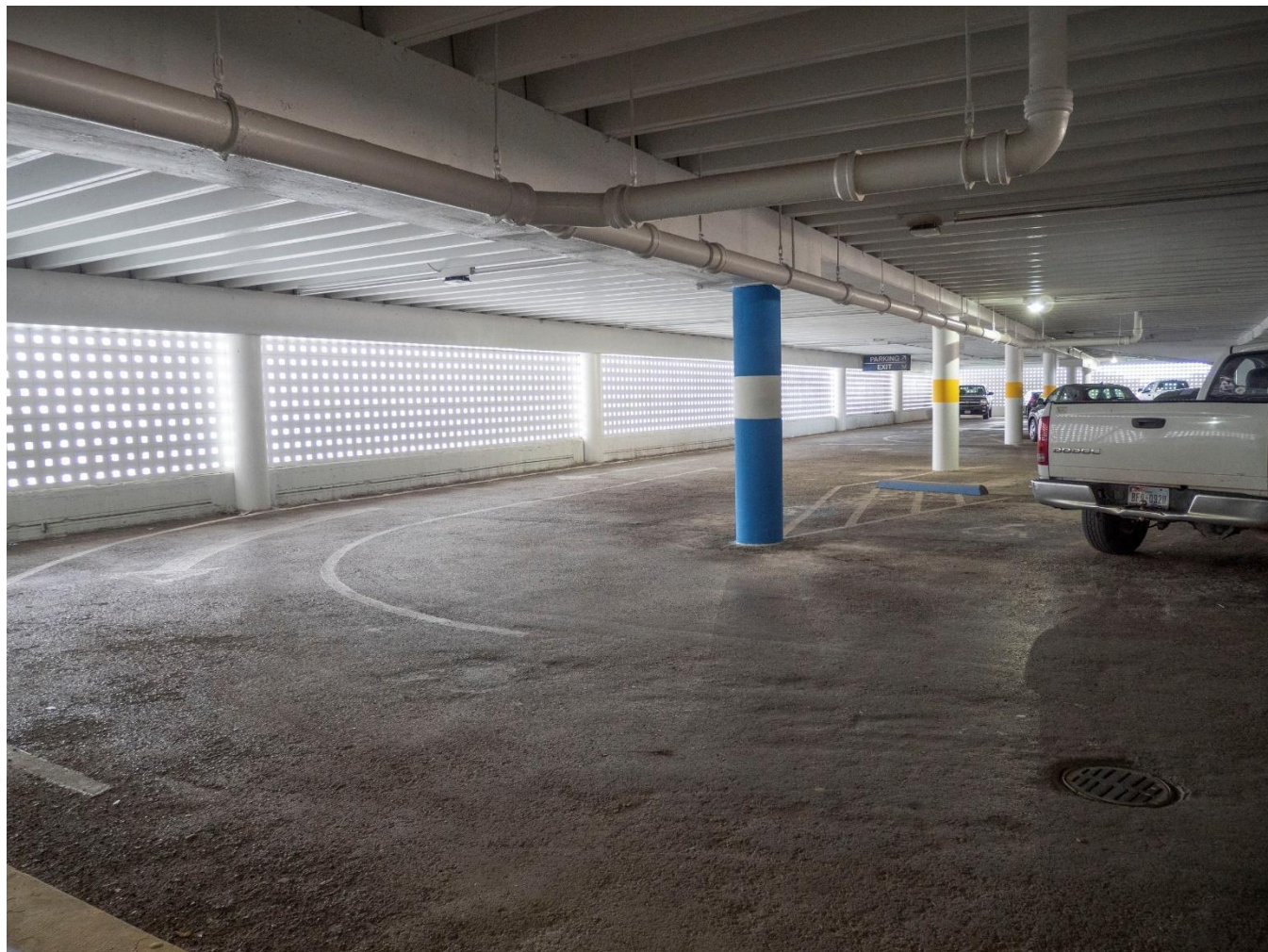
First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 33: First Wichita National Bank parking garage. View west.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 34: First Wichita National Bank parking garage. View northwest.



First Wichita National Bank, Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas

Photo 35: First Wichita National Bank roof. View northwest.

