

Dallas Landmark Commission Landmark Nomination Form

1. Name

historic: Davis Building
and/or common:

date: 1-14-98

2. Location address: 1309 Main Street

location/neighborhood: Dallas Central Business District

block: 69 lots: 11,12,13,14, 15, 16 and part of 10 land survey: Robert Speers Subdivision
tract size: 14,550 s.f.

3. Current Zoning CA-A-RP-PF

4. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in process	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes:restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes:unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other, specify
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None/Vacant

5. Ownership

Current Owner: Hamilton Properties Corporation

Contact: Lawrence E. Hamilton

Phone: (303) 340-3510

Address: 14231 East Fourth Avenue, Suite 300

City: Aurora State: Colorado

Zip: 80011

6. Form Preparation

Date: 1-12-98

Name & Title: Richard Flores, Vice President

Organization: Corgan Associates, Inc.

Contact: Richard Flores

Phone: (214) 748-2000

7. Representation on Existing Surveys

Alexander Survey (citywide) local state national National Register

H.P.L. Survey (CBD) A B C D Recorded TX Historic Ldmk

Oak Cliff TX Archaeological Ldmk

Victorian Survey

Dallas Historic Resources Survey, Phase high medium low

For Office Use Only

Date Rec'd: Survey Verified: Y N by: Field Check by: Petitions Needed: Y N
Nomination: Archaeological Site Structure(s) Structure & Site District

8. Historic Ownership

original owner: Republic National Bank
significant later owner(s):

9. Construction Dates

original: 1926
alterations/additions: 1931, 1967

10. Architect

original construction: C. D. Hill and Company
alterations/additions: 1931: Coburn and Fowler

11. Site Features

natural:
urban design: Central Dallas

12. Physical Description

Condition, check one:

excellent deteriorated unaltered original site
 good ruins altered moved(date _____)
 fair; unexposed

Describe present and original (if known) physical appearance. Include style(s) of architecture, current condition and relationship to surrounding fabric (structures, objects, etc). laborate on pertinent materials used and style(s) of architectural detailing, embellishments and site details.

The building is a 20 story plus 2 basement concrete and steel structure. In the original 1924 building, vaults were located in both basements. The ground floor banking room was a two story room with second floor work spaces surrounding a large open area that overlooked the main floor. In the center of the banking room was a grand staircase to the first basement level. The original building was 95' wide by 99'-8" deep. The finishes in public spaces consisted of travertine floors with marble borders, wood and/or marble wall wainscot, and plaster walls cornices and beams.

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The exterior facades of the original 1924 building were clad in stone panels with a clay tile and plaster backup. Stone trim was used to accentuate cornice moldings, water tables, entry pediments, window stools, parapets, urns and balustrades. The south facade design was symmetrical with the entrance into the banking room stepped in from the face of the upper stories and framed by four three story tall Corinthian column pilasters atop which sat a beam incised with the name of the building. The entrance into the secured and separated elevator lobby was surmounted by a stone header incised with Republic Bank Building letters. The top of the visual base of the building was the fourth floor which was defined by stone water tables punctuated by urns. At the 19th floor, the building stepped in from the east and west facades and was crowned above the 20th floor by an octagonal room and an open colonnaded cupola and antennae. The 19th and 20th floor south facade was recessed with the central pairs of windows framed by two story double column pilasters. Windows in all facades were single hung and operable on the upper floors and casement type on the lower floors. Metal fire escapes were located on the north facade.

When the 49'-8" wide x same depth addition was added in 1931, the architects continued the horizontal datum lines, cornice treatment and exterior cladding on the Main Street facade. They changed, however, the cladding on the west and north facades to face brick with stone water tables on the 20th and 19th floors only. The rhythm of window openings was retained. A second bank of elevators was added after first removing the fifth elevator from the original construction to facilitate circulation in the new elevator lobby.

The exterior of the building today is in fairly good condition although a bit dirty. Urns and balustrades on the upper floors have long been removed. The operable windows on the south and east facades have been replaced with bronze tinted glass and frame fixed windows. The ground floor facade infill of the banking room has been replaced with two story bow windows of bronze color and frame which sit on the sidewalk level. Door entries have been replaced with frameless glass and chrome hardware storefronts. The cupola balustrade and columns are in disrepair and need patching/replacement. The second floor opening into the banking room was long ago infilled.

About three-fourths of the floors in the interior of the building today have been gutted of all partitioning. The other one-fourth are partitioned with 70's and 80's carpet and finishes. On the ground floor the elevator lobby was remodeled in 1986 with cove lighting and painted ceiling medallions mounted in drywall ceiling coffers. In the shell spaces off the lobby which are delineated with the same frameless glass storefront and chrome trim/hardware, the floors are concrete, there is no finished ceiling and the majority of the columns are stripped down to the clay tile furr outs. On the north and west sides, the building abuts existing buildings which block some window openings.

13. Historical Significance

Statement of historical and cultural significance. Include: cultural influences, special events and important personages, influences on neighborhood, on the city, etc.

Davis Building: Architecture

The Davis is one of the most historic and architecturally distinguished buildings in downtown Dallas. The eastern, cupola crowned portion of the structure was completed in 1926 as the headquarters of Republic National Bank. At the time, the Davis was the second tallest building in Dallas. When the west extension was added in 1931, the Davis became the largest office building in the state of Texas.

The original building was designed by C. D. Hill and Company of which C. D. Hill, D. F. Coburn and H. D. Smith were the principals. The drawings for the project were prepared by Coburn. The 1931 addition was designed by Coburn and Fowler with D. F. Coburn and W. B. Fowler as principals and drawings prepared by Fowler.

In constructing the new extension, considerable effort was exerted to maintain stylistic continuity and today the two structures are perceived as one building. Together they display an eclectic mix of stylistic references that range from the Classic to the Victorian in an assemblage that is popularly called "Western Victorian."

Reflecting its role in the emergence of Dallas as a major city, the Davis forms part of a core group of historic buildings in the vicinity of Main Street near Akard and Ervay. These include the original Neiman Marcus store; the Busch-Kirby Building; the Adolphus Hotel; the Wilson Building; and the Magnolia Building.

Davis Building: Republic Bank History

Republic Bank began when a group of Dallas Businessmen headed by Tom Dees secured a state charter. The bank, originally called Guaranty Bank and Trust, opened for business February 14, 1920, in the Boger Building on Main Street. Its initial capital was \$100,000.

A few weeks after the bank's opening W.O. Conner, a former director of Sanger Brothers wholesale division, was recruited to become the bank's president. The new bank was well received and within three months its capital had expanded to \$1,000,000. During this early period it was popularly known as the Day and Night Bank because it stayed open until 8 p.m. week nights and 10 p.m. on Saturday.

In 1922 the bank secured a national charter and was renamed Republic National Bank and Trust in honor of the Republic of Texas. Two years later it acquired Texas Farm Mortgage Company from Wirt Davis and Leslie Waggener who later served prominently as the bank's Board Chairman and Chairman of the Executive Committee, respectively. In the same year the bank began construction

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of its 20 story Main Street tower which was completed and occupied in 1926.

By 1929 the bank's capital had increased to \$2,500,000. That year Republic started its widely imitated School Savings Plan. The plan was suggested by bank vice president James Cumby whose sons had become enthusiastic savers when their father opened savings accounts for them. Under the plan teachers would collect deposits from the children, record the amount, then turn it over to the school principal for pickup by the bank's money wagon. By 1946 Republic had 40,000 youthful thrift accounts.

One of the most important events in the bank's history occurred in 1929 when Fred Farrel Florence was elevated to the position of president. Florence, one of the outstanding bankers of his era, had begun his banking career as an office boy in a bank in Rusk at the age of 15. By the age of 24, he had risen to become the president of Alto State Bank in the village of Alto, Texas. W.O. Connor, recognizing Florence's vigor and talent, in 1921 brought him to Dallas to serve as Guaranty's first vice president. Florence was 37 when promoted to the presidency of Republic Bank.

The 20 story west wing was added to the bank's tower in 1931. It was built on the site of the Boger Building where the original Guaranty Bank had first been opened.

By 1933 Republic had become one of the 100 largest banks in the United States. Throughout this period, Fred Florence was tireless in his efforts to recruit new industry for Dallas. He was also active in a wide variety of civic organizations and in 1936 served as president of the Texas Centennial Exposition.

In 1946, Republic received national recognition as an aggressive lender. That year Business Week reported that Republic was first among the nation's 100 largest banks in the ratio of loans and discounts to deposits and resources. At that time, loans and discounts among the largest 183 banks averaged 19.53% of resources while at Republic they were 43.09%.

According to the Business Week article Republic specialized in cotton and oil loans and had the top ranking in the southwest in these two categories. The bank was also an early lender in Latin America and was one of only six U.S. agencies to issue travelers checks, which it promote heavily in Mexico.

Republic was identified in Fortune magazine in 1949 as the second largest bank in Dallas after First National. In 1954, Republic merged with its long time affiliate National City Bank. The merger brought the bank's capital to \$68,000,000 making it the 19th largest bank in the United States. By 1958, American Banker ranked Republic as the largest bank not only in the Dallas, but also in Texas and the entire South.

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By this time, however, the bank had left its location on Main street. In 1954 Fred Florence presided over lavish celebrations marking the bank's move to a new 40 story aluminum and glass tower at the corner of Ervay and Bryan. The bank's old building on Main Street was renamed the Davis Building in honor of Wirt Davis, longtime chairman of the bank's board, and became a regular commercial office property.

During its occupancy of the Davis Building, the Republic Bank's board of directors included some of the most prominent names in the history of Texas commerce including John W. Carpenter, Chairman of Southland Life Insurance; W.L. Latimer, President of Magnolia Petroleum (later Mobil); Tom Braniff, Chairman of Braniff Airways; Stanley Marcus, President of Neiman Marcus; Joe C. Thompson, President of Southland Corporation (Seven Eleven Stores); and Karl Hoblitzelle, President of Interstate Theaters.

14. Bibliography

"Republic Bank Annex: Built by Dallas Men of Dallas Material." The Dallas Magazine, April 1931.

"Bank to Celebrate Wednesday with Open House for Public." Dallas Morning News, March 12, 1940.

"Southwest Banking on Its Own." Business Week, October 26, 1946.

"The Dynamic Men of Dallas." Fortune, February 1949.

"Growth of the Republic Broadens Horizons of Southwestern Banking." Dallas Times Herald, November 28, 1954

"Gangling 15-Year-Old Boy Began Bank Carer at Rusk." Dallas Times Herald, November 30, 1954.

"Republic Resources to Top \$1 Billion." Dallas Morning News, October 24, 1958.

15. Attachments

District or Site Map

Site Plan

Photos (historic & current)

Additional descriptive material

Footnotes

Other: _____

Designation Merit

- | | | | |
|--|----------|--|----------|
| A. Character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Dallas, State of Texas or the United States. | <u>X</u> | G. Identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city. | <u>X</u> |
| B. Location as the site of a significant historical event. | _____ | H. Embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, material or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation. | _____ |
| C. Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city. | <u>X</u> | I. Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites or areas which are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on historic, cultural or architectural motif. | <u>X</u> |
| D. Exemplification of the cultural, economic, social or historical heritage of the city. | <u>X</u> | J. Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar feature of a neighborhood, community or the city. | _____ |
| E. Portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style. | _____ | K. Archaeological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories or historic or prehistoric value. | _____ |
| F. Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or specimen. | <u>X</u> | L. Value as an aspect of community sentiment of public pride. | _____ |

Recommendation

The Designation Task Force requests the Landmark Commission to deem this nominated landmark meritorious of designation as outlined in Chapter 51 and Chapter 51A, Dallas Development Code.

Further, the Designation Task Force endorses the Preservation Criteria, policy recommendations and landmark boundary as presented by the Department of Planning and Development.

Date:

Chair, Designation Task Force

Jim Anderson, Urban Planner
Historic Preservation