

Inventory Number: RA-SPC-03189
Historic Name: Security State Bank Address: 478 Robert Street South

This property was previously recorded in 1981 and reevaluated in 2018. It has not changed in appearance since the most recent inventory form was prepared. The following content is pulled from the 2018 RA-SPC-03189 inventory form and has been updated according to current standards.¹

Description Narrative

This property is a one-story, Classical Revival-style bank building constructed in 1926, according to the date stone. The massing is irregular as the building curves on its west and south elevations to face the oblique intersection of Robert Street South and Cesar Chavez Street. The building has a flat roof and parapet with a stone coping and a cast concrete, stepped cap with a shield motif and date of 1926. The foundation is not visible. The walls are clad in cream-colored brick. Brick pilasters with cast concrete capitals and bases divide the eight bays. Windows are large, replacement, multi-light, fixed units set into rounded-arch openings with cast concrete keystones and sills and non-historic-age fabric awnings. The arches over the windows are infilled with replacement wooden sunbursts. The entry bay is centrally located on the front (southwest) facade and flanked by angled window bays with decorative concrete surrounds. The front entrance includes a replacement metal and glass door slightly inset and surrounded by a stylized, pediment frontispiece with four-leaf clover motifs. The side (south) elevation is clad in stucco with a large painted mural. The side (north) elevation is also stucco clad with a stone skirting; small, fixed-glass, replacement windows; and a secondary entrance with a replacement metal and glass door. A parking lot is located at the rear (east) and north sides of the building. Alterations include replacement windows and the front entrance door, and window awnings.

Significance Narrative

A detailed historic context is presented in *Phase I Architecture/History Survey and Phase II Evaluation for the G Line Bus Rapid Transit Project*. The building was constructed in 1926 by contractor Ganley Brothers for the Security State Bank, which occupied the building until 1945. At that time, it was purchased by the Minnesota State Bank of Saint Paul, which remained in the building until 1971, when the bank relocated to a new building at 176 South Robert Street. In 1944, the St. Paul Association of Insurance Women also briefly had office space at the subject building. The Ramsey County Food Center occupied the building from 1976 through 1980. It was followed by numerous tenants who occupied the property for short periods.² A review of historic newspapers did not reveal additional information about the building or any of its occupants.

The property was evaluated under National Register of Historic Places (National Register) *Criteria A, B, and C* using the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form "Banks of Minnesota, 1853-1960" (Banks of Minnesota MPDF). Discussion of *Criteria A* and *C* is provided below. Research did not reveal potential significance for this property under *Criterion B: Significant Person*. The property was not assessed under *Criterion D* as part of this evaluation. This property was considered for its potential to contribute to a historic district, but no potential district was identified.

¹ Andrew Schmidt, "Minnesota Individual Property Inventory Form, RA-SPC-03189" (Streamline Associates, April 2018), Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office.

² *Saint Paul City Directories 1890-1980* (Saint Paul, Minn.: R.L. Polk & Co., n.d.); Schmidt, "Minnesota Individual Property Inventory Form, RA-SPC-03189."

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As outlined in the Banks of Minnesota MPDF, a bank is eligible for the National Register under *Criterion A* in the area of Commerce if it was constructed as a bank, operated as a for-profit institution, and made a demonstrably important contribution to the community or region within which it operated.³ The building was constructed in 1926 for the Security State Bank, which remained in the building until 1945, followed by the Minnesota State Bank through 1971.⁴ Further research is needed to determine if the subject Security State Bank made an important contribution to the community.

As outlined in the Banks of Minnesota MPDF, a bank may be eligible under *Criterion C: Architecture* if it reflects the characteristics of a particular architectural style or method of construction.⁵ The 1926 Security State Bank is a relatively intact, modest, yet full expression of the Classical Revival style with sympathetic alterations. The bank retains many character-defining features of the architectural style, including a brick soldier course, arched brick window surrounds, brick pilasters with cast concrete capitals, cast concrete window keystones and sills, and a prominent cast concrete entrance surround. A 1957 photograph of the building (see Figure 1) depicting its original fenestration and entrance doors indicates that the arched window openings have been retained despite replacement window units, and the original primary entrance surround remains intact.⁶ The replacement of windows and the entrance door are common alterations among commercial buildings of this age and do not significantly detract from the building's ability to express its original style. For the purposes of Section 106, the property is considered eligible for the National Register under *Criterion C: Architecture*.



Figure 1. 1957 photograph of the Minnesota State Bank. Note the original windows openings and entrance. Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.⁷

³ National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Banks of Minnesota, 1853-1960," Statewide, Minnesota, F-4.

⁴ *Saint Paul City Directories 1890-1980*; Schmidt, "Minnesota Individual Property Inventory Form, RA-SPC-03189."

⁵ National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Banks of Minnesota, 1853-1960," F-8.

⁶ Minnesota Historical Society. Gale Family Library. "Minnesota State Bank, 478 South Robert, St. Paul." 1957 photograph, St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press. Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.

⁷ Minnesota Historical Society. Gale Family Library. "Minnesota State Bank, 478 South Robert, St. Paul." 1957 photograph, St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press. Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

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Bibliography

Mead & Hunt, Inc. *Phase I Survey/Phase II Evaluation of the G Line Bus Rapid Transit Corridor, Ramsey and Dakota Counties, Minnesota*. Prepared for Metro Transit, a division of Metropolitan Council, 2024.

National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form. "Banks of Minnesota, 1853-1960." Statewide, Minnesota.

Saint Paul City Directories 1890-1980. Saint Paul, Minn.: R.L. Polk & Co., n.d.

Schmidt, Andrew. "Minnesota Individual Property Inventory Form, RA-SPC-03189." Streamline Associates, April 2018. Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office.

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Photographs



RA-SPC-03189, January 31, 2024, front (southeast) facade, view facing northwest.



RA-SPC-03189, January 31, 2024, front (southeast) facade featuring parapet detail, view facing northwest.