

**DOCUMENTATION SUPPORTING HERITAGE LANDMARK
DESIGNATION OF THE EXCHANGE BANK BUILDING,
344 THIRD STREET**

**By Robert C. Vogel
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INTRODUCTION

This report documents the historical and architectural significance of the Exchange Bank Building, 344 Third Street. The report makes the case for the property's eligibility for designation as a Farmington Heritage Landmark pursuant to §2-11-4 of the Farmington City Code.

Farmington Heritage Landmarks are the buildings, sites, and districts so designated by the City Council in recognition of their historical, architectural, archeological, or cultural significance. Properties are nominated by the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) following a public hearing. Under state law, the Minnesota Historical Society must also review each nomination. Once a property has been designated a Farmington Heritage Landmark, this report becomes part of the official designation and is used to guide planning for the preservation, protection, and use of the historic property.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Name: The name of the property being designated is the Exchange Bank Building. It was also historically known as the Bank of Farmington and the First National Bank.

Location: 344 Third Street.

HPC determination of eligibility: The HPC evaluated the Exchange Bank Building and issued its finding of significance on May 15, 2000.

National Register status: The Exchange Bank was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 31, 1979.

Historic functions: Commercial building; financial institution (bank); auditorium; specialty shops

Current function: Commercial building.

DESCRIPTION

Architectural classification: Romanesque Commercial Block (corner business block)

Date of construction: 1880

Narrative description:

The Exchange Bank Building is a two-story, brick corner business block that shows the influence of the Romanesque style. Located at the intersection of Third and Oak, in the heart of downtown Farmington, it integrates two street elevations and a strong corner entrance. The elaborate pressed metal cornice displays Late Victorian period detailing in the form of Italianate-styled brackets, dentils, and a triangular pediment overlooking Third Street. The round-headed windows with stone headers and sills, together with the arched corner entrance, accent the vertical, while the brick pilasters divide both facades into distinct bays. Both elevations are characterized by solid massing and strong lines, but the Third Street facade is more lavishly ornamented and has a lighter, more picturesque feeling than the surface facing Oak Street. Both entrances exhibit arcading, and the canted main entry is set at a 45-degree angle to the intersection of the walls.

The Exchange Bank Building was acquired by the city and rehabilitated as an economic development project in 1996. Michael G. Mularoni was the project architect and all work was certified by the Minnesota Historical Society for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Vacant for much of the 1990's, the building is now privately owned and in commercial use. Once regarded as an eyesore, today the restored building is a visual and historical anchor for Farmington's downtown.

EVALUATION

Local historic context: The property was evaluated within the local historic context, "Downtown Farmington," as delineated in the 1995 historic context study.

Areas of significance: Architecture

Period of significance: 1880 to 1966

Narrative statement of significance:

The Exchange Bank Building is a product of the Late Victorian period design vocabulary and shows the influence of the Romanesque and Italianate styles. It was designed by master builder Augustus F. Gauger (1852-1929) of Saint Paul and was built as a business block, intended to be the most prominent commercial building in downtown Farmington. In addition to housing the bank, the building contained a combination of shops and offices. The masonry bank building replaced an earlier frame commercial building that was destroyed by fire in 1879, part of the conflagration which destroyed much of Farmington's original business district. As built, the building housed with Bank of Farmington on the south side of the ground floor, with the post office at the rear of the building, and a large hall (capacity five hundred) on the second floor. When the Exchange Bank acquired the property from the failed Bank of Farmington in 1896, the building assumed its present name. In addition to the bank, the building housed various small businesses, including a saloon, hardware store, billiard parlor, and cafe.

The Exchange Bank Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places because of its architectural qualities, reflecting the standards and tastes of the Late Victorian period in small-town Minnesota. In the context of downtown Farmington history, it is historically significant not only as a notable specimen of high-style commercial architecture, but as an enduring, tangible link to the city's business heritage.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Vogel, Robert C. *Farmington Historic Context Document*. Unpublished report prepared for the Farmington HPC, 1995.

_____. *Historic Resources Survey of the Downtown Historic Preservation Planning Area, Farmington, Minnesota*. Unpublished report prepared for the Farmington HPC, 1997.

ATTACHMENTS

1. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Exchange Bank (1979).
2. Views of the Exchange Bank Building, showing current conditions.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Exchange Bank Building

and/or common Rietz Building

2. Location

street & number 344 Third Street

not for publication

city, town Farmington vicinity of congressional district First

state Minnesota code 22 county Dakota code 037

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name James K. Rietz

street & number Law Building

city, town Owatonna vicinity of state Minnesota 55060

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dakota County Government Center

street & number 1560 West Highway 55

city, town Hastings state Minnesota 55033

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Historic Resources

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society -- 240 Summit Avenue-Hill House

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Exchange Bank Building is a two-story rectangular structure of red brick on a stone foundation. It is in the Italianate style with a bracketed primary cornice and a secondary cornice above the street-level facade. Bays are separated by pilasters. The first floor has a double storefront with large windows. Another storefront on the south side of the building has been altered. The entry for the second floor has a semi-circular arch with a fanlight.

The storefronts have been altered with a metal awning, metal siding between the awning and secondary cornice, and a colorful paint job. All of these are fundamentally reversible. A small balcony on the second floor facade has been removed.

The second floor has two-over-two windows with semi-circular arches of buff-colored brick. The keystone of each arch is of cast stone with a floral design. Similar stones are visible on the ground floor beneath the paint. The cornice and pediment appear to be of pressed metal. One of several original brick chimneys is intact.

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

Specific dates 1880

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Exchange Bank Building is significant as a notable example of the second-generation masonry commercial structures commonly constructed on the main streets of Dakota County towns during the last third of the 19th century. Built in 1880 on the busy corner of Third and Oak Streets in Farmington, the brick building replaced first-generation wooden stores destroyed in a disastrous fire in 1879. For many years the Exchange Bank occupied the south side of the first floor, with a hardware store on the north side; the Post Office in the rear of the first floor; and an opera hall on the second floor. The bank and post office have moved to newer quarters and the opera hall is defunct, yet the structure continues to function as an essential part of the business district with new tenants. The building's corner location ensures maximum visibility for the elaborate metal cornice and floral motif of the cast-stone trim. In spite of largely reversible alterations to the double storefront, the Exchange Bank Building remains one of the best-preserved second-generation commercial structures in Dakota County.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Farmington

UMT References

Quadrangle scale 7.5

A	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u>
Zone	Easting	Northing	
C			
E			
G			

B			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
D			
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

S 70 ft. of E 100 ft., Lots 4 and 5, ex. N 1 ft. of E 80 ft.
Block 22, Original Town of Farmington

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Susan Pommering Reynolds, Survey Analyst		
organization	Minnesota Historical Society	date	8 June 1979
street & number	240 Summit Avenue-Hill House	contact	Dennis Gimmestad
		telephone	612-296-9545
city or town	St. Paul	state	Minnesota

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature
 Russell W. Fridley
 title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

For HCERS use only:
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

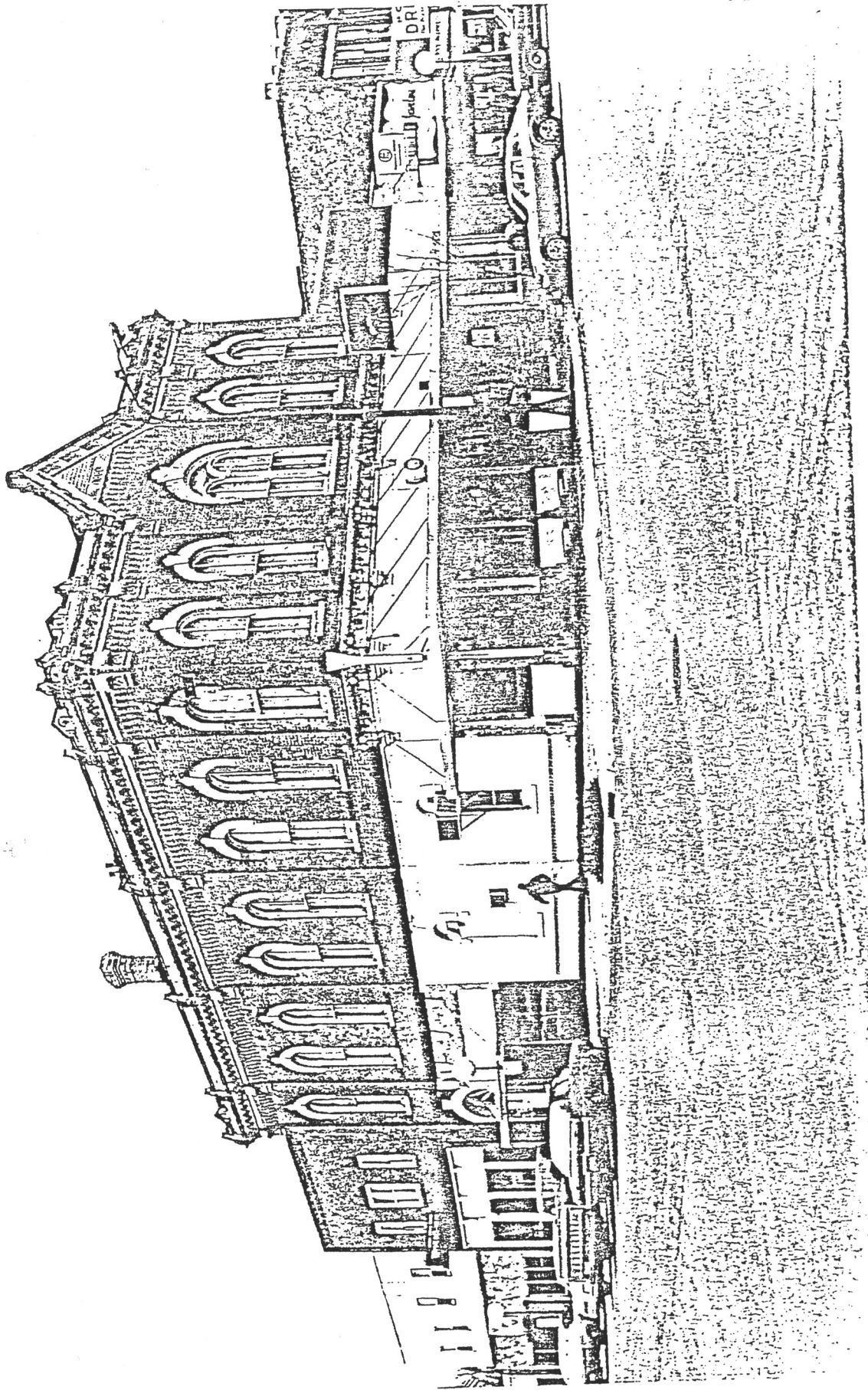
date

Keeper of the National Register

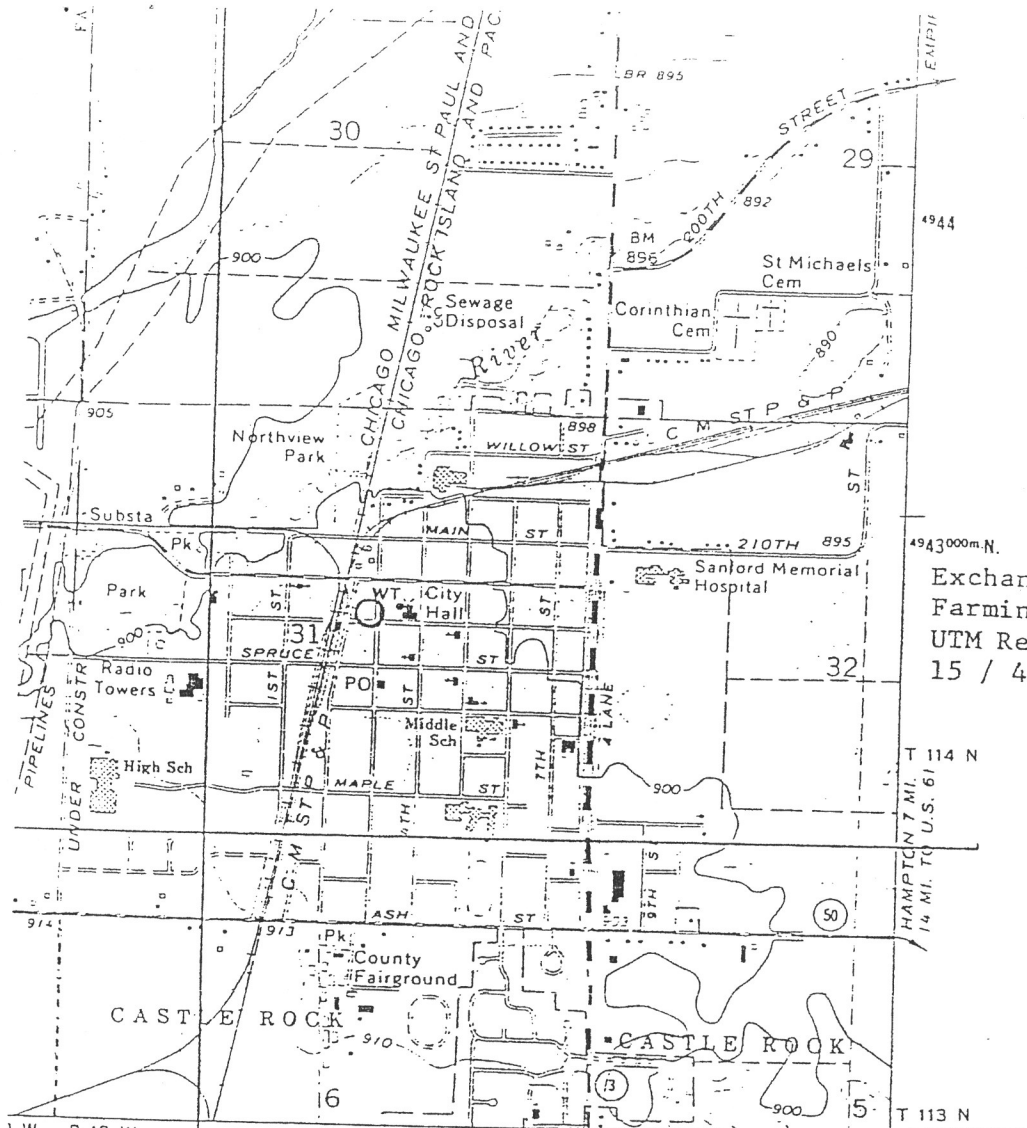
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



Exchange Bank Building, Farmington, Minnesota; 1978, View: Looking Northwest, 02893/16



Exchange Bank Building
 Farmington, MN; Dakota County
 UTM References
 15 / 488480 / 4942690

INTERIOR- GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA - 1974
 489000m E. 93°07'30"
 CASTLE ROCK 6 MI. NORTHFIELD 12 MI.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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

(RANDOLPH)
 7373 II SE

88B

FARMINGTON, MINN.

NW/4 FARMINGTON 15' QUADRANGLE
 N4437.5—W9307.5/7.5

1974

AMS 7373 II NW—SERIES V872

LOCATION

