

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Laramie State Bank Building

other names/site number N/A

Name of Multiple Property Listing N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

street & number 5200 West Chicago Avenue ☐ not for publication

city or town Chicago ☐ vicinity

state Illinois county Cook zip code 60651

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 level(s) of significance: ___ **national** ___ **statewide** ___ **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria: ___ **A** ___ **B** ___ **C** ___ **D**

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

Illinois Department of Natural Resources - SHPO
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this 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

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

☒	private
☐	public - Local
☐	public - State
☐	public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

☒	building(s)
☐	district
☐	site
☐	structure
☐	object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK, TERRA COTTA

roof: SYNTHETICS
other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

Summary

The Laramie State Bank Building, constructed in 1924 with substantial modifications in 1929, is located at 5200 West Chicago Avenue, in the Austin community on the west side of Chicago, Illinois. The building is situated on a rectangular parcel at the northwest corner of West Chicago Avenue and North Laramie Avenue and is built to the lot line on all sides. The building is a three-story masonry structure designed in the Art-Deco style with elaborate multi-colored architectural terra-cotta detailing on the primary south and east façades. The secondary west and north elevations are unornamented brick. The primary entrance to the building is located at the center of the south elevation, set within a three-story highly-ornamented recessed terra-cotta surround supported by polygonal columns. The primary elevations are regularly fenestrated with metal casement windows. The roof of the building is flat with a synthetic roofing material.

The basement through the second floor of the building is rectangular in plan; the third floor is C-shaped and wraps around a recessed lightwell on the west side. The first and second floors are primarily taken up by a large double-height banking hall. A small entrance lobby at the east end of the first floor gives access to the banking hall and houses the building's elevator and stair. Offices are located on the third floor off a single-loaded corridor.

The interior of the Laramie State Bank Building retains its original floor plan with minor alterations. Historic finishes are evident – including historic stone flooring, plaster walls, ornamental plaster ceilings, but the majority of the plaster detailing has delaminated and the plaster that remains is severely deteriorated due to prolonged water infiltration and exposure to the elements.

Narrative Description

Site and Massing

The Laramie State Bank Building is located at 5200 West Chicago Avenue in the Austin community on the west side of Chicago. The building is situated on a rectangular parcel at the northwest corner of West Chicago Avenue and North Laramie Avenue and is built to the lot line on all sides. Directly west of the building is a large vacant lot, which previously housed low-rise commercial buildings. To the north, an alley separates the building from the residential blocks along North Laramie Avenue. Buildings along West Chicago Avenue are a mixture of historic and non-historic low-to-mid-rise commercial buildings and surface parking lots.

The Laramie State Bank Building is three stories tall and set on a slightly raised basement. The first and second floors of the building are rectangular in plan; the third floor is C-shaped, with an inset lightwell on the west side. The roof above the second floor within the lightwell is flat, while the roof above the third floor is flat with a slight slope toward the lightwell.

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Exterior

The Laramie State Bank building is a three-story masonry building designed in the Art-Deco style. The primary south and east elevations are clad in polychrome glazed architectural terra cotta with elaborate Art-Deco detailing; the secondary west and north elevations are unornamented and clad in common brick laid in a running bond. The building retains most of its original windows. The south and east elevations are regularly fenestrated primarily with metal casement windows. The secondary north elevation, facing the alley, is regularly fenestrated with original three-over-three double-hung metal windows. The secondary west elevation has limited fenestration. Double-hung metal windows are located only at the third story along the inset lightwell. The building has a stone foundation and flat roof covered in bitumen roofing material. The ornamental terra-cotta cornice that originally topped the primary south and east elevations has been removed and replaced with flat stone coping. A low brick elevator penthouse is located near the southwest corner of the roof. Small brick chimneys are located at the south end of the second floor lightwell and near the northeast corner of the roof. Originally, three skylights were located on the lower west roof to provide light into the west side of the banking hall; these skylights have been removed.

South Elevation

The primary south elevation of the building is three bays wide, clad in textured stone-colored terra-cotta blocks, and dominated by a recessed central entrance portico that terminates above the third-story windows. The rectangular entrance surround is clad primarily in ochre-colored terra cotta with cream and gray-green accents. A stylized geometric border with chevron detailing and abstract floral designs frames the surround. The inset portico is supported by two polygonal columns clad in ochre-colored terra-cotta panels that are decorated with motifs reflecting wealth and industry—piles of coins and bills, and men shouldering sacks, carrying sheaves of wheat, and operating machinery. The columns are set on molded polygonal terra-cotta bases and topped by flared polygonal capitals with decorative panels of squirrels, owls, and abstracted floral motifs set below a simple chevron detail. The ceiling and back wall of the recessed entry are clad in ochre-colored terra cotta; ornamental panels with stylized roses on a geometric background are set within the center of the ceiling. The main entrance to the building is centered between the two columns and set in an ornamental two-story frame. The door opening holds a pair of non-historic aluminum framed glass doors with a single glass transom. Above the doorway is a molded stone-colored terra-cotta panel with the image of a family gathered around a large bowl of fruit. At the second story, above this panel, is a large window opening with three-part metal casement window. Surmounting this window is a stepped ornamental terra-cotta frame with silver and ochre geometric detailing that mimics swagged curtains. The third story above the entrance houses a three-part metal casement window.

The center entrance portico is flanked on the east and west by a vertical window bay with three-part casement windows at each story. The three windows in each vertical bay are set within a three-story frame of textured, stone-colored terra-cotta and separated by ornamental spandrel panels with geometric detailing. The window openings at the third story feature angled top corners.

White metal pin letters affixed near the top of the south elevation spell out “Laramie State Bank of Chicago.”

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A large, non-historic, internally-lit metal box sign projects from the southeast corner of the building, extending from the top of the first floor windows to the roof.

East Elevation

The primary east elevation of the building is seven bays long, clad in textured, stone-colored terra-cotta blocks, and features a five-bay center section that is similar in design and detailing to the south entrance portico, with Art Deco detailing rendered in ochre, gray-green, and cream colored terra-cotta. Within this center section, each window bay is separated by wide ochre-colored terra-cotta pilasters. The pilasters are clad in molded panels that feature an abstracted rose motif. The first-story windows are large, rectangular three-part metal windows with three part-transoms that mark the location of the double-height banking hall. The third-story windows directly above are paired double-hung windows. At each of the five center window bays, the banking hall windows and third-story windows are separated by ornamental terra-cotta spandrel panels that depict an eagle, wings spread, perched on a globe. The northern and southernmost bays on the east elevation are identical to the window bays flanking the entrance portico on the south elevation.

White metal pin letters affixed near the top of the east elevation spell out "Laramie Safety Vault & Security Corporation.

North Elevation

The secondary north elevation is unornamented, clad in common brick, and regularly fenestrated on all levels with three-over-three double-hung metal windows. A metal fire escape is located at the center of this elevation, accessed by a single door situated midway between the second and third floors. A narrow ladder extends from the top landing of the fire escape to the roof.

West Elevation

The secondary west elevation is unornamented and unfenestrated. The first two stories are clad in common brick; above the second story and within the recessed light well at the third story, the exterior walls are clad in buff colored brick. The recessed light well at the third story is regularly fenestrated with three-over-three double-hung metal windows. Two secondary entrances are located on the west elevation—one at the center of the wall and the second near the north end of the wall. Both entrances house non-historic metal doors. The center entrance is protected by a non-historic shed canopy.

Interior

The Laramie State Bank Building is rectangular in overall plan from the basement through the second floors; the third floor is C-shaped, following the recessed lightwell on the west side of the building. The primary stair and elevator, which connects all levels, is located near the southwest corner of the building. The large double-height banking hall occupies most of the first and second floors of the building. The third floor houses office spaces accessed by a single-loaded corridor. The interior of the building retains most of its original plan with minor alterations, although there is extensive damage and deterioration due to prolonged water infiltration and deferred maintenance.

Basement

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The basement level of the building is utilitarian with no significant historic features or detailing. The basement is divided into two separate north and south sections. The north section is small and is accessed by a stair from the first floor that runs perpendicular to the north wall.

The south section is organized into three rooms, with two rooms along the south wall and a third room along the east wall. Two stairs access the east and west rooms along the south wall. The west stair is utilitarian and is open with pipe railings and metal treads and risers. All spaces are finished with plaster walls and ceilings. Some floors have vinyl tile, while others are exposed concrete. Doors have plain wood trim. The stair is accessed from the first floor lobby and turns ninety-degrees south. The east stair is decorative and is open to the first floor corridor. The stair has metal risers, marble treads, and decorative cast iron newel posts with metal balusters and a wood handrail. The room along the east wall is a large space with later drywall-clad walls and finished soffits concealing pipes. Several upholstered seating banquets and booths line the space.

First floor

The main south entrance opens into a small entrance lobby with stone flooring and plaster ceilings. The east wall of the lobby features paneled wood walls and trim. The west wall features marble wainscoting. The enclosed main stair and passenger elevator are accessed from the west wall of the lobby. West of the main stair and elevator core is a small service stair. East of the lobby, a short corridor provides access to a basement stair and a rectangular meeting room with original red, brown, and black composite fiber and clay tile flooring and non-historic drywall walls and ceilings. North of the entrance lobby is the double-height banking hall, which extends to the north wall of the building. The lobby and banking hall are separated by a pair of non-historic wood paneled doors with oval glass insets. The large, open rectangular space features plaster walls and a coffered plaster ceiling and marble flooring. The original teller desks and banking fixtures were removed when the building was converted into a banquet hall; the bar and stage on the west side of the space and the mezzanine that extends along the east wall are non-historic additions. The small mezzanine and stair located on the south wall of the banking hall are also non-historic additions. At the north end of the banquet hall is a historic mezzanine, which housed a bank vault at the first floor and office spaces above. The door to the bank vault has been removed, and non-historic restrooms and storage rooms have been inserted at the northeast corner of the banking hall. The metal stair connecting the main banking hall floor to the mezzanine, at the west end of the mezzanine, is a non-historic addition. The original stair connecting the mezzanine is located north of the vault.

Second Floor

The double-height banking hall occupies all but the south end of the second floor. A short corridor north of the elevator and main stair enclosure gives access to the service stair and a small room located in the southwest corner of the floor. Directly south of the banking hall is a long rectangular meeting room with red and black tile flooring. Ceilings and walls are primary non-historic drywall, with remnants of severely deteriorated plaster at the west end. Non-historic doors on the north wall of the room open onto the non-historic mezzanine. A door on the east end of the south wall gives access to a small room at the southwest corner of the floor.

Third Floor

The third floor of the building houses offices. The south end of the third floor is a large open room, similar to the second floor. A corridor with marble wall panels stretches north from the main stair

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and elevator along the west wall of the third floor. Most of the marble panels along the west wall have broken and detached from the wall, leaving the masonry exposed. The east wall of the corridor houses original wood and glass doors with continuous wood and glass transoms above. A short secondary corridor extends from the west wall at the north end of the main corridor, giving access to restrooms and service spaces. At the north end of the main corridor, a set of steps leads down to the fire escape door on the north wall of the building. The ceiling is no longer extant.

The office spaces east of the corridor have largely been altered with non-historic partitions.

Integrity

The Laramie State Bank Building meets the National Register criterion for integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The building retains excellent exterior integrity, with no additions and minimal exterior alterations. The original masonry walls, ornate terra-cotta detailing, and original windows are intact. Alterations on the exterior are limited to the non-historic sign at the southeast corner and non-historic doors.

The interior of the building retains the vast majority of its original layout on all levels, including the main entrance lobby, historic stairs and elevator, double-height banking hall, and third-floor office corridor. Historic finishes remain in the primary interior spaces, although the plaster walls and ceilings are severely deteriorated due to prolonged water infiltration. The non-historic bar, mezzanine, and stairs in the banking hall are primarily additive and have not resulted in removal or alteration of historic fabric.

Overall, the Laramie State Bank Building retains sufficient integrity to reflect its significance as an early-twentieth century bank building and as an impressive example of Art Deco design rendered in colorful architectural terra cotta.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| ☐ | A | Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. |
| ☐ | B | removed from its original location. |
| ☐ | C | a birthplace or grave. |
| ☐ | D | a cemetery. |
| ☐ | E | a reconstructed building, object, or structure. |
| ☐ | F | a commemorative property. |
| ☐ | G | less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years. |

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

Period of Significance

1929

Architect/Builder

Meyer, Frederick H.

Cook, Norman W.

Significant Dates

1929

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The Laramie State Bank Building is locally significant under National Register Criterion C for Architecture as an excellent and unusual example of an Art Deco-style neighborhood bank within Chicago and reflects the pinnacle of artistic expression and craftsmanship reached by the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company during the late 1920s. The exuberant, colorful, and modern exterior of the Laramie State Bank Building was a distinct departure from the conservative styles that dominated bank architecture in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. By embracing Art Deco design for the remodeling and expansion of its 1924 bank building at 5200 West Chicago Avenue, the Laramie State Bank created an eye-catching advertisement for its services that stood apart from other banking institutions in Chicago and stood out among the traditional commercial buildings in the Austin community.

The period of significance is 1929, the year that the Art Deco remodeling designed by Chicago architects Meyer and Cook was completed.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Brief History of the Austin Community

The Laramie State Bank Building is located in the neighborhood of Austin, located seven miles west of the Loop along the western edge of Chicago. First created in 1865 by developer Henry Austin as a temperance settlement, the community developed as a residential suburb in the Cicero Township during the late 1800s. Residents built gracious single-family homes and tree lined parkways and enjoyed easy access to Chicago through a well-developed system of streetcars and commuter railways. By the early 1890s, Austin was home to over 4,000 residents. Although the village was annexed into Chicago in 1899, the community continued to think of itself as relatively independent, going so far as to erect an Austin Town Hall (modeled after Philadelphia's Independence Hall) in 1929. After annexation, the single-family homes in Austin were largely supplanted by apartment buildings, two-flats, and bungalows, reflecting the growth and architectural trends in Chicago during the early twentieth century. Although most of the neighborhood grew denser and more urban, the residential core of the former village remains largely intact and was listed as a National Register historic district in 1985. Major east-west streets, including Madison Avenue, Lake Avenue, and Chicago Avenue, developed into commercial thoroughfares with a variety of businesses. Industrial corridors flanked the largely residential community on the east, north, and south.¹

Through the mid-twentieth century, residents were primarily middle-class German and Scandinavian families, followed later by Irish, Italian, and Greek families who created their own close-knit communities within Austin. During the 1960s, as upwardly mobile Black families sought to move into the neighborhood, racial tensions flared and triggered a sequence of events that played out in many Chicago neighborhoods during the post-war period—discriminatory practices such as “block busting” and “redlining” drove down real estate values, white residents fled to the suburbs, and the area suffered from disinvestment, vacancy, and demolition.² In recent decades, however, community organizations and stakeholders in the Austin area have worked together with Austin residents to bring improvements

¹ “Austin,” Encyclopedia of Chicago, <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/93.html>, accessed May 11, 2021.

² Ibid.

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and investment into the community. In 2019, Austin was selected as one of ten priority communities for Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot's INVEST South/West commercial corridor improvement strategy, created to "reactivate neighborhood cores that have historically served as focal points for pedestrian activity, shopping, services, transportation, public spaces and quality of life amenities for local residents." The proposed rehabilitation of the Laramie State Bank Building, part of a \$37.5 million multi-use redevelopment project, is one of three winning proposals recently selected under the City's INVEST South/West program.

Neighborhood Banks in Chicago (1900-1929)

From the post-Chicago fire period through the mid-twentieth century, Chicago developed as a "city of neighborhoods," and each community established its own distinct commercial and retail districts to serve the needs of residents. An essential component of Chicago neighborhoods through the post-World War II period was the independent neighborhood bank. Until the mid-1950s, Illinois state law prohibited banks from operating multiple branches with the intention of preventing bank monopolies and encouraging development of small, independent banks that specially served their communities. Neighborhood banks provided mortgages, business loans, and bank accounts for local residents, while also providing real estate loans that bolstered residential and commercial development within the communities in which they operated.³ They were also locally owned and operated, with prominent businessmen from the community serving as directors and officers, and stock owned by local residents and merchants.⁴ The buildings constructed to house neighborhood banks were typically imposing structures designed in historical styles by prominent architects. Although most were two- to three-stories tall to remain in scale with the surrounding streetscape, their traditional designs (most often Classical Revival or Colonial Revival) and quality craftsmanship were meant to "convey an image of permanence and stability." Thus, neighborhood banks served as important visual landmarks within local commercial districts.⁵

The exponential increase in neighborhood bank buildings between 1900 and 1929 reflected the tremendous growth of Chicago during the same period. In 1900, 11 neighborhood bank buildings operated in Chicago, which together accounted for \$22 million in total deposits. By 1929, the number had grown to 195, with deposits totaling \$769 million. As noted in the City of Chicago Landmark Designation Report on neighborhood bank buildings, by the late 1920s Chicago's neighborhood banks held more deposits "than in all the combined banks of six states—Idaho, New Mexico, Wyoming, Delaware, Montana, and North Dakota."⁶

The onset of the Great Depression proved particularly devastating for Chicago's neighborhood banks. Between 1929 and 1932, severe deflation in Chicago real estate investments and a wave of "bank runs" had forced over half of the city's neighborhood banks to close. Construction of new banks in the city would not resume until after World War II, and the bank buildings that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s would be markedly different in both operations and architectural design from their pre-Depression

³ "Neighborhood Bank Buildings," Landmark Designation Report, City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, May 2008, 2-4.

⁴ Ibid, 4.

⁵ Ibid, 4-6.

⁶ Ibid, 4.

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counterparts, as the industry embraced architectural Modernism to project an image of transparency and trustworthiness to its customers.⁷

Laramie State Bank of Chicago

The Laramie State Bank of Chicago and its subsidiary, the Laramie Safety Vaults and Security Corporation, was established in the early 1920s by local banker Carl A. Mueller. In 1922, Mueller purchased the parcel of land at the northwest corner of Chicago and Laramie Avenues from James Ruzika. The parcel included a modest two-story masonry building that Ruzika operated as a corner drug store with apartments above. Between 1922 and 1924, Mueller constructed an L-shaped building that wrapped around the existing drugstore to serve as the first home for the Laramie State Bank. The original building's design was typical of neighborhood bank buildings built during the 1910s and early 1920s—historic photographs show a traditional Classical Revival façade with columned entrance portico and prominent ornamental entablature. A large marquee sign projecting from the south façade announced the arrival of Austin's newest neighborhood bank.⁸ By 1927, buoyed by the economic boom that had swept Chicago and the nation, Mueller was ready to expand the Laramie State Bank by demolishing the corner commercial building and redesigning the bank to command the entire northwest corner of Chicago and Laramie Avenues. Originally, Mueller planned to construct a Classical Revival structure that was consistent with the conservative design of the existing bank. The *Chicago Tribune* reported on the proposed expansion in May 1927:

*Designed by Meyer & Cook, the architecture of the completed building will be the simple classical kind favored by banking houses. It is planned to make the Chicago Avenue entrance especially attractive. Marble and bronze will form the interior components. There will be little adornment, the architects deciding it would be better to let the marble and bronze speak for themselves.*⁹

Although work was scheduled to begin on the building in August of 1927, the building was not completed until 1929, and the design was markedly different than originally proposed. At some point after May of 1927, architects Meyer & Cook scrapped the plans for a conservative, traditional building and instead designed a thoroughly modern and eye-catching exterior for the Laramie State Bank. The resulting design, with its richly colored and lavishly ornamented facades, was less a testament to the skills of the architects and more a reflection of their close collaboration with the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company, one of the country's premier terra-cotta firms and leader in technological advancements that stretched the limits of architectural expression through the use of terra cotta.

The Emergence of Architectural Terra Cotta in Chicago

Terra cotta (a mixture of clay, pulverized terra cotta, and sand that was molded and fired with a durable glazed finish) was first widely used as a building material in the United States in 1870s and 1880s, and the industry expanded rapidly in the late nineteenth century with the corresponding rise in steel frame skyscrapers. Terra cotta was lightweight, fire resistant, and could be molded and tinted to mimic more expensive building materials such as stone. This combination of "economy, safety, and appearance—

⁷ Ibid, 5.

⁸ "Laramie State Bank Building," Landmark Designation Report, City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, January 4, 1995, 2-4.

⁹ "Laramie State Bank Will Add to Size of Home," *Chicago Tribune*, May 1, 1927, B3.

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important considerations in skyscraper construction—suggested the use of terra cotta as an ideal building material” for the new architecture.¹⁰ As a center for early high-rise construction, Chicago naturally emerged as the Midwest center for terra cotta production from 1869 through the 1960s. Four of the largest terra cotta manufacturers in the United States—the Chicago Terra Cotta Company, the American Terra Cotta Company, the Midland Terra Cotta Company, and the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company--were headquartered in Chicago.¹¹ By the turn of the century, “the [Chicago] Loop was dominated by steel-framed structures sheathed in glazed brick and terra-cotta,” including the Rookery (Burnham & Root, 1885), the Reliance Building (D.H. Burnham & Co. 1890, 1895), the Manhattan Building (William LeBaron Jenney, 1890), the Marquette Building (Holabird & Roche, 1895) and the Fisher Building (D.H. Burnham & Co., 1886).¹² The plasticity of terra cotta also allowed architects to create buildings with elaborate ornamentation that would have been nearly impossible to create using more traditional materials like stone or brick. Louis Sullivan in particular was an early and enthusiastic adopter, utilizing the material to create the imaginative and profuse detailing on his designs for the Wainwright Building (St. Louis, 1891), the Chicago Stock Exchange (Chicago, 1893), the Guaranty Building (Buffalo, 1895) and the Carson Pirie Scott and Company Building (Chicago, 1899 and 1902).¹³

The nearly endless adaptability of terra cotta was pushed to its limits during the 1920s, when Chicago’s architects and builders erected increasingly spectacular and richly-decorated buildings in a variety of eclectic historical styles. The Wrigley Building on Michigan Avenue at the Chicago River, designed by Graham, Anderson, Probst and White and completed in 1921, was clad entirely in cream-colored terra cotta with elaborate Spanish Renaissance-inspired ornamentation. To take full advantage of its prominent location and dazzling exterior, the building was illuminated at night by over 200 floodlights, “transforming the building into a dazzling spire that could be seen for miles.”¹⁴ In 1925, architects Thielbar and Fugard took terra-cotta embellishment to new heights with their design for the Jeweler’s Building at 35 East Wacker Drive. Architectural historian Carl Condit described the building a “recklessly extravagant work.... the entire surface of the twenty-four-story main block and the seventeen-story tower above it is covered with molded tile in the thickly encrusted manner of certain kinds of Baroque architecture.”¹⁵

While these prominent buildings took full advantage of terra cotta’s sculptural possibilities, their color palette remained largely restrained through the early 1920s. By 1900, terra cotta manufacturers had developed a wide range of colorful glazes that could be applied to architectural terra cotta, but most architects continued to opt primarily for muted tones that mimicked brick and stone. In the June 1898 edition of the *Brickbuilder*, New York painter and muralist Elmer Ellsworth Garnsey implored architects to embrace color for exterior decoration rendered in terra cotta:

Above all other considerations, the value of terra-cotta as an exterior covering or enrichment on modern large buildings lies in its adaptability for color treatment, the absence of which is no less remarkable than regrettable in contemporaneous architecture.... The range of colors for terra-cotta glazes, already known and proven, is astonishingly wide.... Reds, ranging from the palest pinks to the deepest madder

¹⁰ Sharon S. Darling, *Chicago Ceramics and Glass: An Illustrated History, 1871-1933* (United States: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 172.

¹¹ Timothy Barton, “Architectural Terra Cotta: Ornament Comes of Age in Chicago,” *The L.A. Modernism Show* (San Francisco: James H. Barry Co., 1992), 12.

¹² Darling, 175-179

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, 188-189.

¹⁵ Carl W. Condit, *Chicago: 1910-1929* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 114-115.

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*tints; blues, from faint cerulean to dark indigo; greens, from delicate malachite to olive; yellows, from primrose to stone ochre; exquisite pale mauves, royal purple and velvety black—a palette fit for a Titian.*¹⁶

Although Garnsey's vision for masses of polychrome skyscrapers never materialized, during the 1920s architects in Chicago began experimenting with color in terra cotta ornamentation. One of the earliest and most impressive examples of a polychrome terra-cotta facade is the Reebie Storage and Moving Company warehouse at 2325 North Clark Street, completed in 1923. Architect George Kingsley designed the building with an elaborate Egyptian Revival storefront to reference the Reebie Brother's new marketing slogan, inspired by the discovery of King Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922—"If old King Tut were alive today, he'd store his goods the Reebie Way."¹⁷ Kingsley worked in close collaboration with Fritz Albert, a German-born sculptor for the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company, to create custom terra cotta ornament—pharaohs, scarabs, serpents, pillars, lotuses, papyri and other exotic Egyptian motifs—in a range of colors that would have pleased Elmer Ellsworth Garnsey.¹⁸

Polychrome Terra Cotta and the Art Deco Style

By the late 1920s, richly colored terra-cotta designs became more common with the rise of the "modern" style, later coined Art Deco. The style, first introduced to the world at the 1925 Paris *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, was characterized by abstracted geometric interpretations of natural forms, with an emphasis on craftsmanship and rich, colorful materials. As the style developed in the late 1920s, it became increasingly eclectic, with architects and designers utilizing angular Mayan, Incan, and Aztec forms into Art Deco motifs, and also adapting Asian, African, and Egyptian design elements into the characteristic geometric Art Deco style.¹⁹ Terra-cotta manufacturers in Chicago, led by Northwestern Terra Cotta, quickly adapted their production to create a wide variety of Art Deco ornamentation.

Architect B. Leo Steif's design for the apartment building at 10 West Elm Street (completed in 1928), was hailed by newspapers and critics at the time for its flamboyant and rainbow-hued polychrome terra cotta ornamentation, which included "Muse-like figures and fanciful geometrics, all in French and robin's egg blue on a field studded with flat sculptural medallions of Roman gold and plaques of peach, coral, cream and indigo."²⁰ The following year, an even more impressive example of polychrome terra cotta, the Carbide and Carbon Building, was completed at 230 North Michigan Avenue. Designed by Burnham Brothers, the forty-story skyscraper was clad almost entirely in green terra cotta and crowned by a gleaming campanile constructed of gold-glazed terra cotta that had been specifically developed for the building by the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company.²¹

The Northwestern Terra Cotta Company

¹⁶ Elmer Ellsworth Garnsey, "Notes on Terra-Cotta for Exterior Polychrome Decoration," *The Brickbuilder* VII, June 1898, 117-120.

¹⁷ Darling, 195.

¹⁸ Eleanor Gordon and Jean Nerenberg, "Chicago's Colorful Terra Cotta Facades," *Chicago History: The Magazine of the Chicago Historical Society*, Vol. VII, Number 4 (Winter 1979-1980), 228-229.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, 227.

²¹ Darling, 189.

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At the time that Carl Mueller was contemplating the expansion of the Laramie State Bank, the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company had emerged as the largest terra cotta manufacturer in the world and was known for its innovative molding, firing, and glazing techniques. Incorporated in 1877 and headquartered in Chicago, the company was a pioneer within the industry and produced architectural terra cotta for thousands of buildings across the country in a wide array of styles. Unlike many other terra cotta companies that produced prefabricated stock pieces, Northwestern Terra Cotta primarily worked on commission to produce custom designs for specific buildings, collaborating with architects and building owners on the final designs, production, and installation of its products. The firm hired highly-skilled European craftsmen to work as sculptors in its modeling studio and by the early 1920s had perfected new techniques that allowed for increasingly intricate sculptural effects without significantly affecting cost. Northwestern Terra Cotta also experimented with new clays, glazes, and surface treatments to provide a wide range of color options and textures for its clients. Nearly all of the premier examples of architectural terra cotta constructed in Chicago between 1880 and 1929 were the work of Northwestern Terra Cotta.

One key to the company's great success in the early twentieth century was its aggressive marketing strategy—the firm widely advertised its most impressive commissions in building trade publications and architectural journals. When the Wrigley Building was completed in 1923, it was the first skyscraper to be clad entirely in terra cotta, and Northwestern Terra Cotta heavily promoted its key role in the project. The elaborate and colorful Egyptian motifs produced for the Reebie Storage and Moving Company Building at 2325 North Clark Street in Chicago were also heavily marketed to show the firm's wide range of products and the nearly limitless sculptural possibilities of terra cotta.²²

Northwestern Terra Cotta was constantly expanding product lines to reflect the latest architectural trends and increase its business. One of the most significant of these new trends was Art Deco. The style's bold geometric forms, bright colors, and emphasis on fine craftsmanship and rich materials were well suited to expression in architectural terra cotta, and Northwestern Terra Cotta moved quickly to bring the style to market in America. To ensure that Northwestern would dominate the market in this modern style of ornamentation, the company hired six of the prize-winning sculptors—including young Parisian Edouard Chassaing, the gold medal winner—from the 1925 Paris exhibition to produce Art Deco designs for its customers. Chassaing in particular would become a major artist in the Northwestern Terra Cotta studio and played a central role in creating lavish and flamboyant modern designs for the company in the late 1920s.²³

Working in partnership with Northwestern Terra Cotta and its newly acquired artisans, architectural firms that had little experience with the modern decorative style were suddenly able to produce highly ornamented Art Deco buildings with elaborate motifs that expressed each building's specific function. The stylized designs introduced by Northwestern Terra Cotta in the late 1920s were "immediately comprehensible and appealing to a large, general public" and could function as advertisement, making them ideal for commercial architecture. The Hyde Park Chevrolet showroom at 55th and Lake Park Avenue (1929-1932) featured terra-cotta ornament sculpted into the forms of speeding roadsters, engines, wheels, and traffic lights. The L. Fish Furniture Company Building at 3322 West Lawrence

²² "Northwestern Terra Cotta," National Building Museum, <https://www.nbm.org/collections/northwestern-terra-cotta/>, accessed May 12, 2021.

"Laramie State Bank Building," Landmark Designation Report, City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, January 4, 1995, 9.

²³ Ibid, 9-10.

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Avenue (1930) was adorned with marine motifs, including fish and shells against a waving background meant to mimic water.

The New Laramie State Bank Building

Although no records have been uncovered detailing the design process for the Laramie State Bank Building, the unveiling of Northwestern Terra Cotta's new Art Deco products and the firm's effective salesmanship likely influenced the abrupt change in plans for the building's exterior design. Architects Frederick H. Meyer and Norman W. Cook, like many middle-tier firms working in Chicago during the 1920s, were well versed in the prevailing historic revival styles of the day but not considered innovative—between 1910 and 1930, they produced typical designs for a variety of residential and commercial structures in Chicago and the outlying suburbs, as well as several church buildings.²⁴

Although Art Deco was not a common choice for neighborhood bank architecture, its commercial advantages must have appealed to Laramie Bank president Carl Mueller. Success in neighborhood banking depended on drawing in new customers, and the colorful facades and playful ornamentation designed by Meyer & Cook in collaboration with Northwestern Terra Cotta gave the bank an accessible and inviting appearance. Scenes of industrious workers and piles of coins, eagles perched on globes, and families gathered around abundant tables—all incorporated into building's facades--conveyed ideals of prosperity, patriotism, and community and served to remind residents of the bank's important role within the Austin neighborhood. So that it was still readily identifiable as a bank, the architects designed the main entrance on Chicago Avenue with a recessed, columned portico and included an elaborate cornice along the top of the primary south and east façade. Otherwise, the exterior of the building was a complete departure from traditional bank architecture and reflected the modern, streamlined aesthetic of Art Deco.

To balance out the exuberance of the exterior, the interior of the Laramie State Bank conveyed a more traditional image, with marble flooring, ornamental plaster walls, and coffered ceilings with Classical detailing.

When the Laramie State Bank re-opened in 1929, it was one of the only Art Deco neighborhood bank buildings in Chicago and stood in stark contrast to the surrounding commercial buildings along Chicago Avenue. Reflecting the success of the overall design, in 1929 Northwestern Terra Cotta Company issued a special folio featuring the Laramie State Bank as its premier example of Art Deco design.²⁵ The building was also used in the firm's advertisement campaigns through 1930. A full-page display ad in *Pencil Points* (later *Progressive Architecture*) included full photographs of the building's primary elevations along with the following description:

*Another fine example of the modern spirit in American architecture. The rugged texture of ashlar work and the symbolic ornamentation are frankly and sincerely products of burnt clay--masculine and strong in character.*²⁶

²⁴ Ibid, 7.

²⁵ Ibid, 10.

²⁶ Northwestern Terra Cotta advertisement, *Pencil Points*, Vol 5, February 1929, 59.

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Excitement over the completion of the new Laramie State Bank Building was short-lived, and the bank fell victim to the wave of bank closures sweeping the nation. After less than a decade in operation, the bank closed its doors on August 16, 1930. Laramie Bank president Carl A. Mueller was subsequently charged and convicted by the criminal court of Cook County for falsifying bank records from June of 1929 in an attempt to hide the fact that the bank was overdrawn.²⁷ Citizens National Bank moved into the building in 1946 and the building remained in operation as a bank until 1991.²⁸

Despite the short and troubled history of the Laramie State Bank as a financial institution, the building in which it was housed remains an excellent and well-preserved example of a neighborhood bank building in Chicago and exemplifies the technical and artistic achievements of the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company in the late 1920s. The building's lavish and colorful Art Deco exterior is the best example of the style within the context of the Austin neighborhood, and the building has been recognized in several scholarly publications of Art Deco architecture.

Art Deco Buildings in the Austin Neighborhood

Within the context of Austin, the Laramie State Bank is the most elaborate and most intact example of Art Deco architecture and the only example that utilizes polychrome terra cotta. The Chicago Historic Resources Survey lists five Art Deco/Art Moderne buildings in the Austin Community.²⁹ A brief description and comparative analysis of three of these buildings is below.

126 South Central Avenue

The three-story masonry apartment building at 126 South Central Avenue was designed by the architecture firm of Dubin & Eisenberg and completed c. 1925. The primary façade of the building features buff-colored terra-cotta end bays decorated in a variety of Art Deco motifs. The center bays above the terra-cotta-clad raised basement level are yellow brick with horizontal brick banding. The remaining elevations are unornamented and clad in common brick. The building is a good and intact example of an early-twentieth century apartment building with Art Deco detailing but is smaller in scale and with less exuberant ornamentation than the Laramie State Bank.

1741 North Sayre Avenue

Designed by architect Charles A. Kristen and completed c. 1925, the single-story masonry house at 1741 North Sayre Avenue is an unusual example of Art Deco detailing applied to a modest single-family house. Set amongst more typical early twentieth century revival styles, the house features multi-hued face brick and limestone trim with chevron patterns and stylized fluted panels that draw the eye upward.

5325 West Lake Street

The decal and sign manufacturer, the Meyercord Company, commissioned designer Abel Faidy and architect Julius Floto to design their company headquarters at 5323 to 5325 West Lake Street in 1938. The two-story and basement building is clad in buff colored brick with smooth bands of limestone and curving panels of glass block windows. The overall symmetrical building reflects the streamlined modernism or Moderne style. The building retains its overall form, design, and materials.

²⁷ The People v. Mueller, No. 21709, Opinion filed February 23, 1933, Rehearing denied April 1, 1933, <https://casetext.com/case/the-people-v-mueller-2>, accessed May 11, 2021.

²⁸ "Neighborhood Bank Buildings," Landmark Designation Report, City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, May 2008, 3.

²⁹ Although 115-119 North Parkside Avenue is also listed as Art Deco/Art Moderne in the survey, the building has Tudor Revival style details and is not included here as a comparable.

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Architects: Frederick H. Meyer and Querin H. Cook

The firm of Meyer and Cook designed the Art Deco style remodeling and expansion of Laramie State Bank. The firm was formed sometime before 1920 by architect Frederick H. Meyer and engineer Querin H. Cook.³⁰

Frederick H. Meyer (1888-) was born in Chicago to Germany immigrants. For a time in his youth, he lived at the Angle Guardian German Orphan Asylum, which was located at 2001 West Devon Avenue in Chicago. Meyer passed his architect's license exam in 1915 and proceeded to form his own firm before partnering with engineer Querin H. Cook.

Querin Henry Cook (1891-1962) was born in Chicago and studied electrical engineering at Chicago's Lewis Institute, which later became part of the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). After graduating, Cook moved to Oak Park, Illinois and found employment with the Crane Co. plumbing fixture manufacturer.

Meyer and Cook partnered to form an architectural firm with a focus on industrial design and production planning. The firm was frequently listed during the 1920s in directories, such as the *Blue Book of Chicago Commerce*, as a consulting firm for "complete engineering services for industrial buildings and equipment, including surveys, reports, layout, design and construction." The firm designed several factory buildings across Chicago, such as the extant rear machine shop for the General Stamping and Manufacturing Co. at 2223-2229 West Chicago Avenue in 1920; the non-extant concrete building for the G. J. Nikolas & Co., manufacturers of lacquer finishes, at 1227 West Van Buren Street in 1923; and the extant three-story factory for the Allied Industrial Products Company at 17-19 North Elizabeth Street in 1928. Meyer and Cook evolved very quickly from a specialized engineering and architecture firm to a firm that could design any type of building for any use.

Although the firm specialized in industrial buildings, Meyer and Cook also designed residential buildings in a variety of popular styles in Chicago and throughout the city's surrounding suburbs. However, the firm was later known especially for its and ecclesiastical buildings. One of the firm's earliest religious commissions was for the reconstruction of Grace Episcopal Church at 1439 South Wabash Avenue following a disastrous fire in 1915. Meyer & Cook engineered a non-extant, fireproof, single-story church on the site of and using portions of the destroyed 1868 church. The firm went on to design numerous churches, including several extant examples, such as, the Tudor Gothic style St. Adrian Catholic Church at 7000 South Washtenaw Avenue in 1929, the Italian Romanesque style Church of the Ascension at 815 South East Avenue in Oak Park in 1930, the Modern style St. Therese (Little Flower) Catholic church at 8000 South Wood Street in 1950, the remodeled Mission Revival style upper portion of Our Lady of Victory church at 5212 West Agatite Avenue, and the Gothic style Queen of All Saints Basilica at 6820 North Sauganash in 1960.

Finally, Meyer and Cook also left its mark on commercial thoroughfares across the Chicago area, including several in Cook's home of Oak Park. The firm capably designed commercial blocks, mixed

³⁰ Some sources cite Ottawa, Illinois architect Norman Walcott Cook (1882-1959) as a partner in the architectural firm of Meyer and Cook; however, there is no primary evidence to support Norman Cook's association with Frederick Meyer. Norman Cook passed his architect's license exam in 1914 and designed a range of residential apartments and single family houses across Chicago and the greater metropolitan region. Also, Chicago architect Frederick H. Meyer is not to be confused with San Francisco, California architect Frederick Herman Meyer (1876-1961).

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use, and professional buildings of all kinds, such as the Laramie State Bank Building. In 1930, the firm designed another non-extant bank building in the Art Deco style for the Chatfield Trust and Savings Bank at 7936-40 South Cottage Grove Avenue. The bank was clad in limestone with a dramatic central entrance that was set in a three-story tall recess with black granite and bronze trim. Another extant bank that is similar to the Chatfield Bank in form and materials is the 1938 façade remodeling completed for the Pioneer Trust & Savings Bank at 1034-36 Lake Street in Oak Park. Meyer and Cook's work in the Art Deco style include the 1930 remodeling of the 1897 Wright Elsom Building at 117-119 North Marion Street in Oak Park. The building is clad in smooth limestone panels with contrasting window surrounds in carved black granite with richly decorated bronze panels. The firm also designed an adjoining Tudor Revival style retail and office building at 1112-26 Westgate in Oak Park.

The firm of Meyer and Cook continued to operate through the early 1960s.

Conclusion

The Laramie State Bank Building is locally significant under National Register Criterion C for Architecture as an excellent and unusual example of an Art Deco-style neighborhood bank within Chicago and reflects the pinnacles of artistic expression and craftsmanship reached by the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company during the late 1920s. The exuberant, colorful, and modern exterior of the Laramie State Bank Building was a distinct departure from the conservative styles that dominated bank architecture in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. By embracing Art Deco design for the remodeling and expansion of its 1924 bank building at 5200 West Chicago Avenue, the Laramie State Bank created an eye-catching advertisement for its services that stood apart from other banking institutions in Chicago and stood out among the traditional commercial buildings in the Austin community.

The period of significance is 1929, the year that the Art Deco remodeling designed by Chicago architects Meyer and Cook was completed.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Barton, Timothy. "Architectural Terra Cotta: Ornament Comes of Age in Chicago," *The L.A. Modernism Show*. San Francisco: James H. Barry Co., 1992.

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Garnsey, Elmer Ellsworth. "Notes on Terra-Cotta for Exterior Polychrome Decoration," *The Brickbuilder* VII, June 1898: 117-120.

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"Northwestern Terra Cotta," National Building Museum, <https://www.nbm.org/collections/northwestern-terra-cotta/>, accessed May 12, 2021.

Northwestern Terra Cotta advertisement, *Pencil Points*, Vol 5, February 1929: 59.

Obituary for Querin H. Cook, *Chicago Tribune*, January 11, 1962: 10.

The People v. Mueller, No. 21709, Opinion filed February 23, 1933, Rehearing denied April 1, 1933, <https://casetext.com/case/the-people-v-mueller-2>, accessed May 11, 2021.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
☐ 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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☒ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>41.89511</u> Latitude	<u>87.75578</u> Longitude	3	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude
2	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude	4	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for the Laramie State Bank Building corresponds to the legal description as follows:
Lot 19 and 20 in Block 4 of the Sub. Of the E ½ of the S.E. ¼ of the S.W. ¼ of Section 4-39-13.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The proposed boundary follows the original property that was historically associated with the Laramie State Bank Building during the period of significance (1929).

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Emily Ramsey, Senior Affiliate; Matthew Wicklund, Senior Consultant date September 2, 2022
organization MacRostie Historic Advisors/ Ryan LLC telephone 312.980.1122
street & number 311 South Wacker Drive email matt.wicklund@Ryan.com
city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60606

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **GIS Location Map (Google Earth or BING)**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property:	<u>Laramie State Bank Building</u>		
City or Vicinity:	<u>Chicago</u>		
County:	<u>Cook</u>	State:	<u>Illinois</u>
Photographer:	<u>Emily Ramsey</u>		
Date Photographed:	<u>June 2021</u>		

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 of 18:** South and east elevations, looking northwest
Photo 2 of 18: South elevation, looking north
Photo 3 of 18: East elevation, looking west
Photo 4 of 18: East and north elevations, looking southwest
Photo 5 of 18: West elevation, looking east
Photo 6 of 18: East elevation, main entrance, looking north
Photo 7 of 18: Detail of terra-cotta and windows above main entrance, looking north
Photo 8 of 18: Detail of columns at main entrance, looking north
Photo 9 of 18: First floor, main entrance vestibule, looking north
Photo 10 of 18: First floor, banking hall, looking south from north end
Photo 11 of 18: First floor, banking hall, looking north from south end at mezzanine
Photo 12 of 18: First floor, Detail of plaster beam in banking hall
Photo 13 of 18: First floor, northeast corner office, looking north
Photo 14 of 18: Second floor, room south of banking hall, looking southwest
Photo 15 of 18: Third Floor, main stair and elevator at southwest corner of building, looking southwest
Photo 16 of 18: Third floor, corridor, looking north
Photo 17 of 18: Third floor, typical office, looking northeast
Photo 18 of 18: Third floor, typical office, looking southwest

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.

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List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all documents should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.)

Figure 1. Location Map showing the Laramie State Bank Building and National Register boundary

Figure 2. Detail Location Map of Laramie State Bank Building

Figure 3. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing Laramie State Bank Building (shaded) before 1929 rebuilding

Figure 4. Historic image of Laramie State Bank Building before 1929 remodeling

Figure 5. 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing Laramie State Bank Building after 1929 rebuilding

Figure 6: Nighttime view of Laramie State Bank from Edison Roundtable, February 15, 1929

Figure 7. Northwestern Terra Cotta Company advertise from 1929 showing Laramie State Bank

Figure 8. 1929 Northwestern Terra Cotta Company brochure featuring Laramie State Bank

Figure 9. Existing First Floor Plan

Figure 10. Existing Second Floor Plan

Figure 11. Existing Third Floor Plan

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Figure 1. Laramie State Bank Building, Location Map with National Register Boundary, 2022.

Source: Bing, 2022.

Laramie State Bank Building
5200 W. Chicago Avenue, Chicago, Cook County, IL, 60651
41.895233, -87.755846



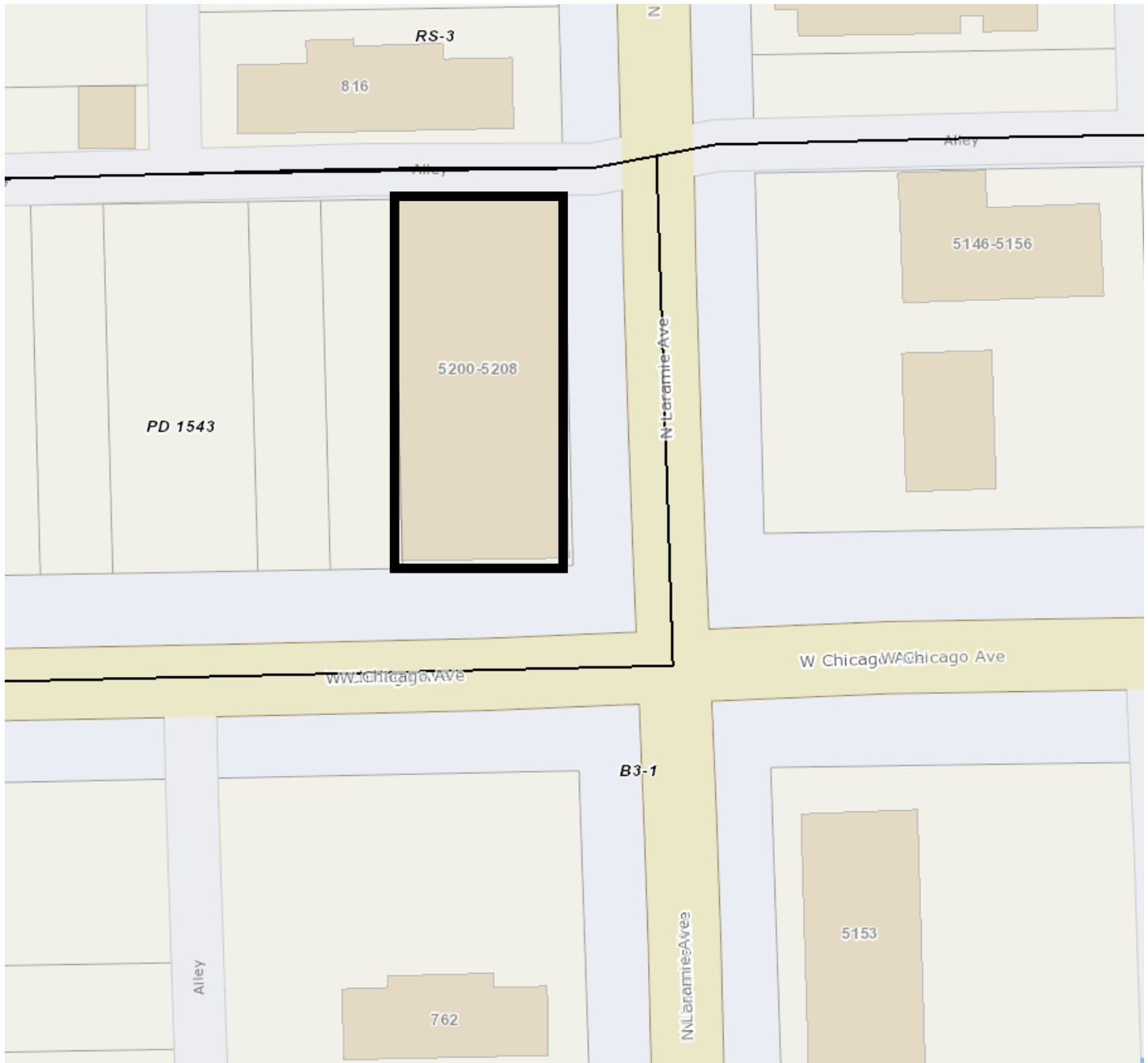
Laramie State Bank Building

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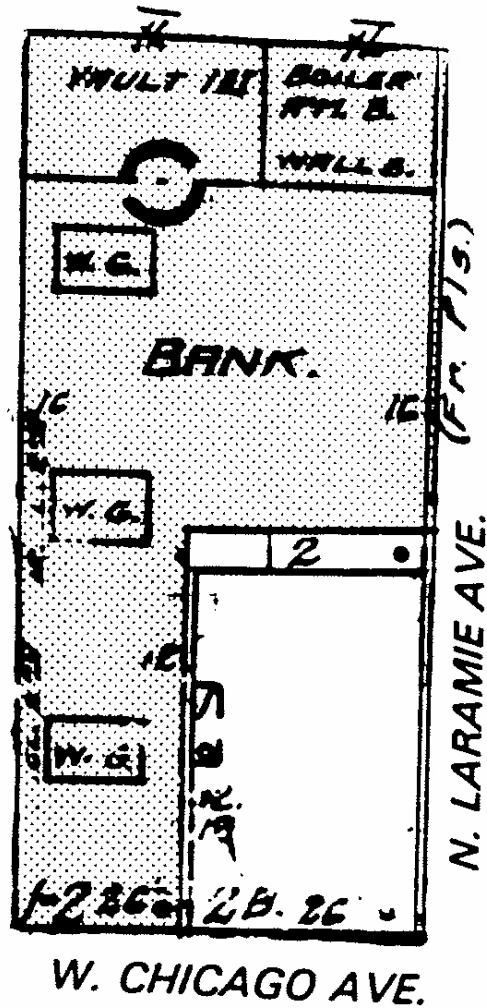
Figure 2. Location Map of Laramie State Bank Building showing National Register boundary (in black)



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Figure 3. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing Laramie State Bank Building (shaded) before 1929 rebuilding



Laramie State Bank Building

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Figure 4. Historic image of Laramie State Bank Building before 1929 remodeling
(Chicago Landmarks Commission Designation Report)



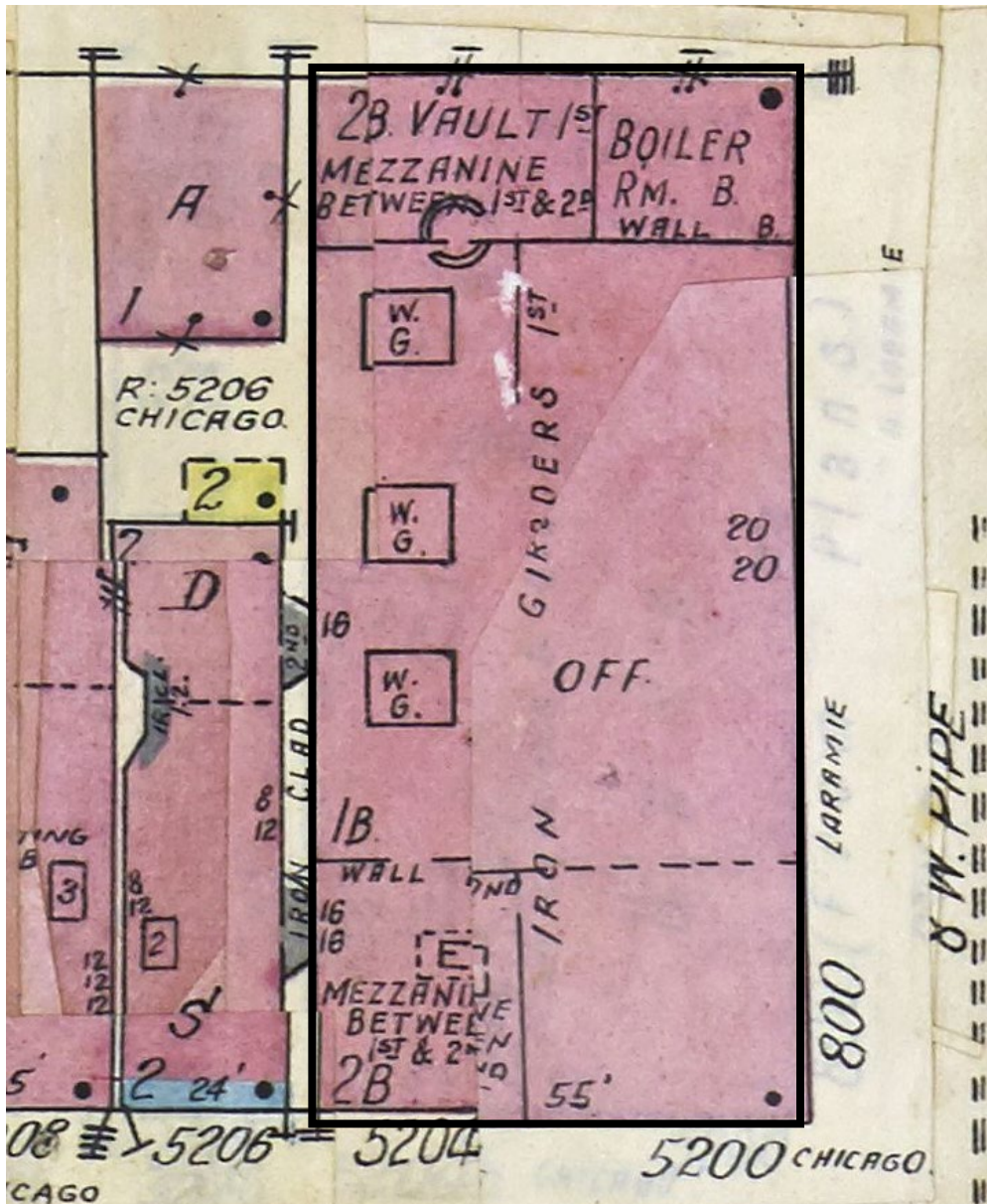
Laramie State Bank Building

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Figure 5. 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing Laramie State Bank Building after 1929 rebuilding



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Figure 6: Nighttime view of Laramie State Bank from Edison Roundtable, February 15, 1929
(Commonwealth Edison)



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Figure 7. Northwestern Terra Cotta Company advertise from 1929 showing Laramie State Bank

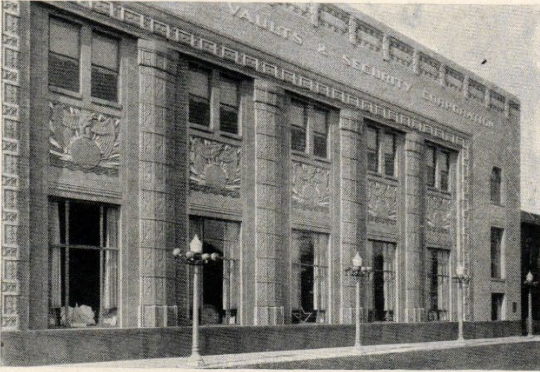
PENCIL POINTS



LARAMIE STATE BANK OF CHICAGO

NORTHWESTERN TERRA COTTA

Another fine example of the modern spirit in American architecture. The rugged texture of ashlar work and the symbolic ornamentation are frankly and sincerely products of burnt clay—masculine and strong in character. Colors: White, mottled tan and white in ashlar field, with golden yellows and warm greens in motifs. Laramie State Bank of Chicago, Meyer & Cook, Architects.



THE NORTHWESTERN TERRA COTTA COMPANY

DENVER. ST. LOUIS. CHICAGO CHICAGO HEIGHTS

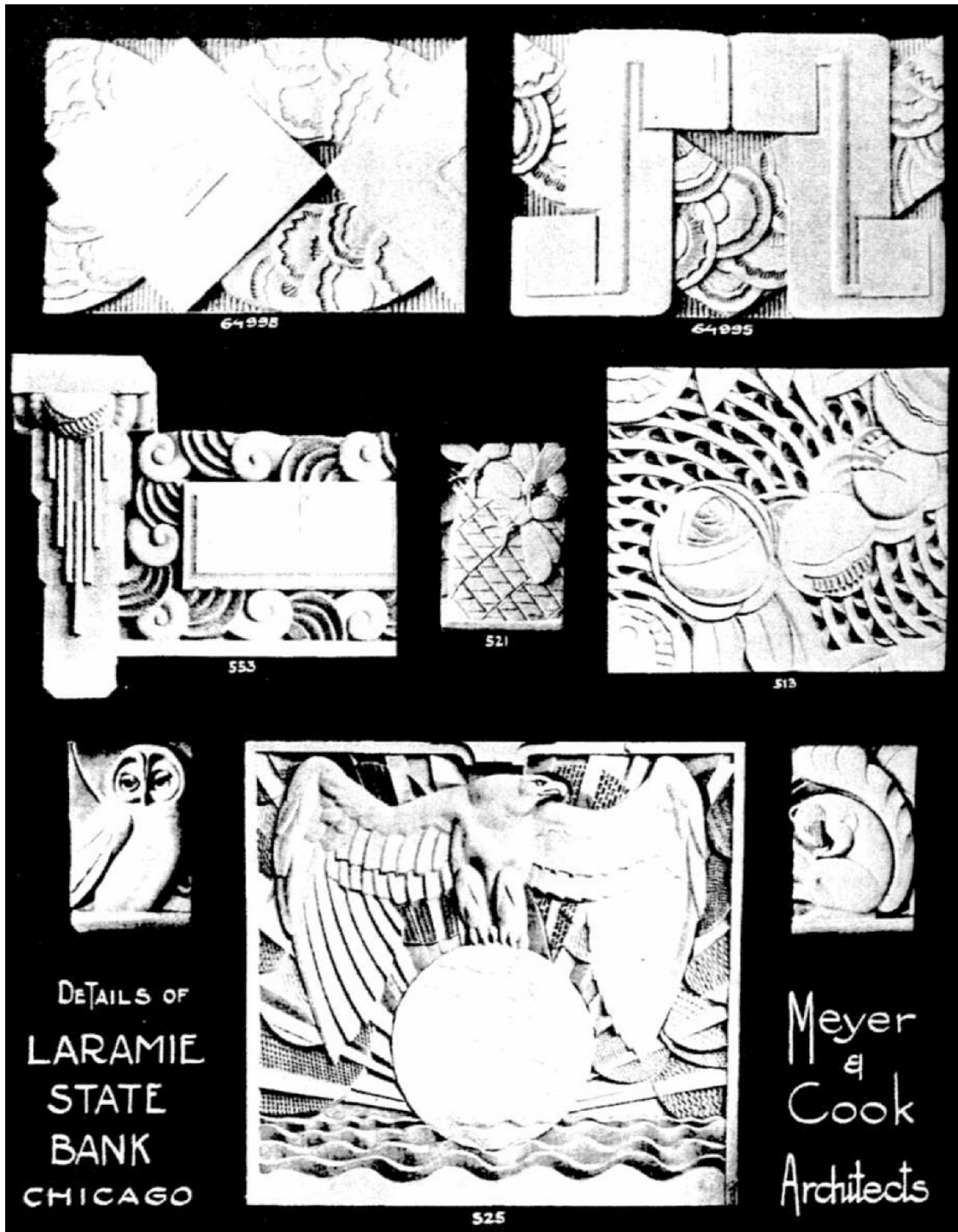
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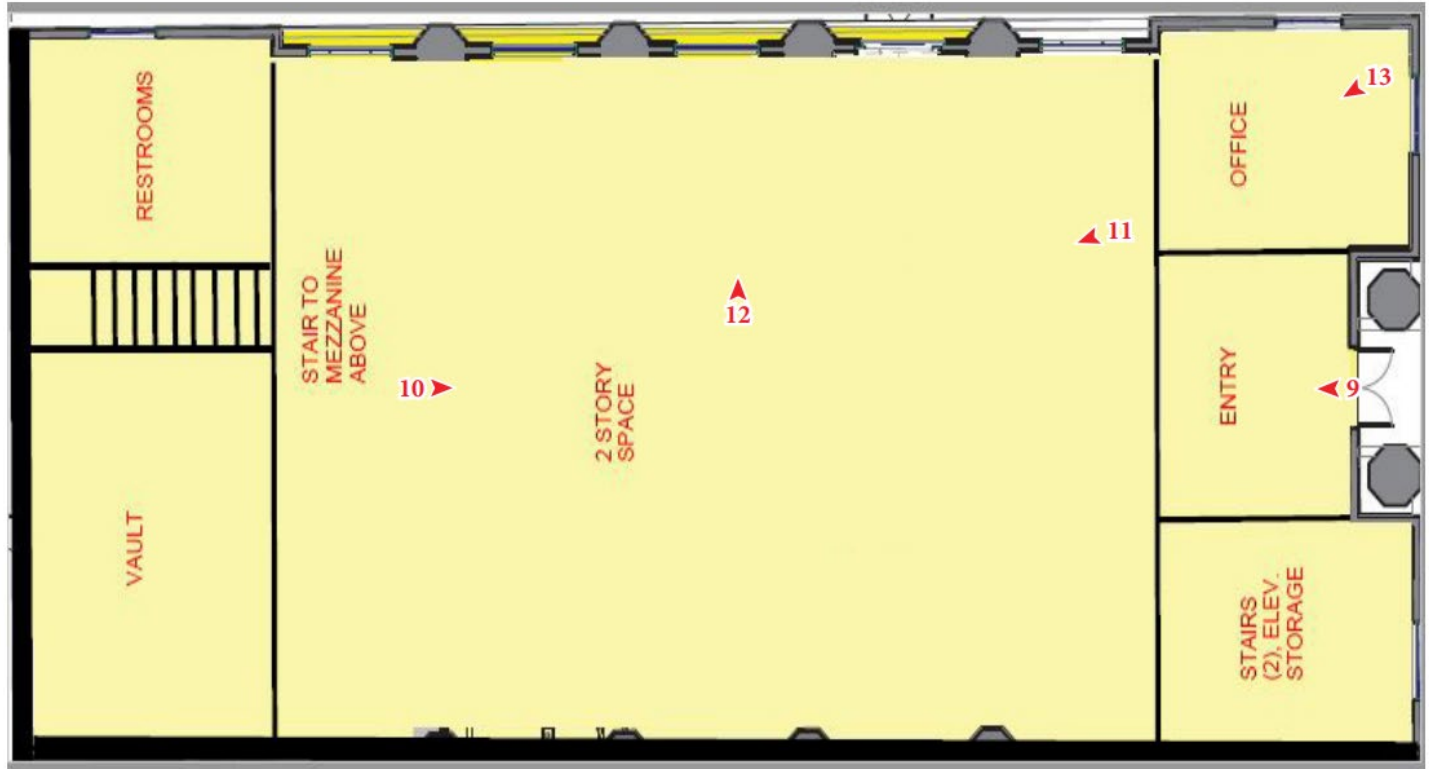
Figure 8. 1929 Northwestern Terra Cotta Company brochure featuring Laramie State Bank



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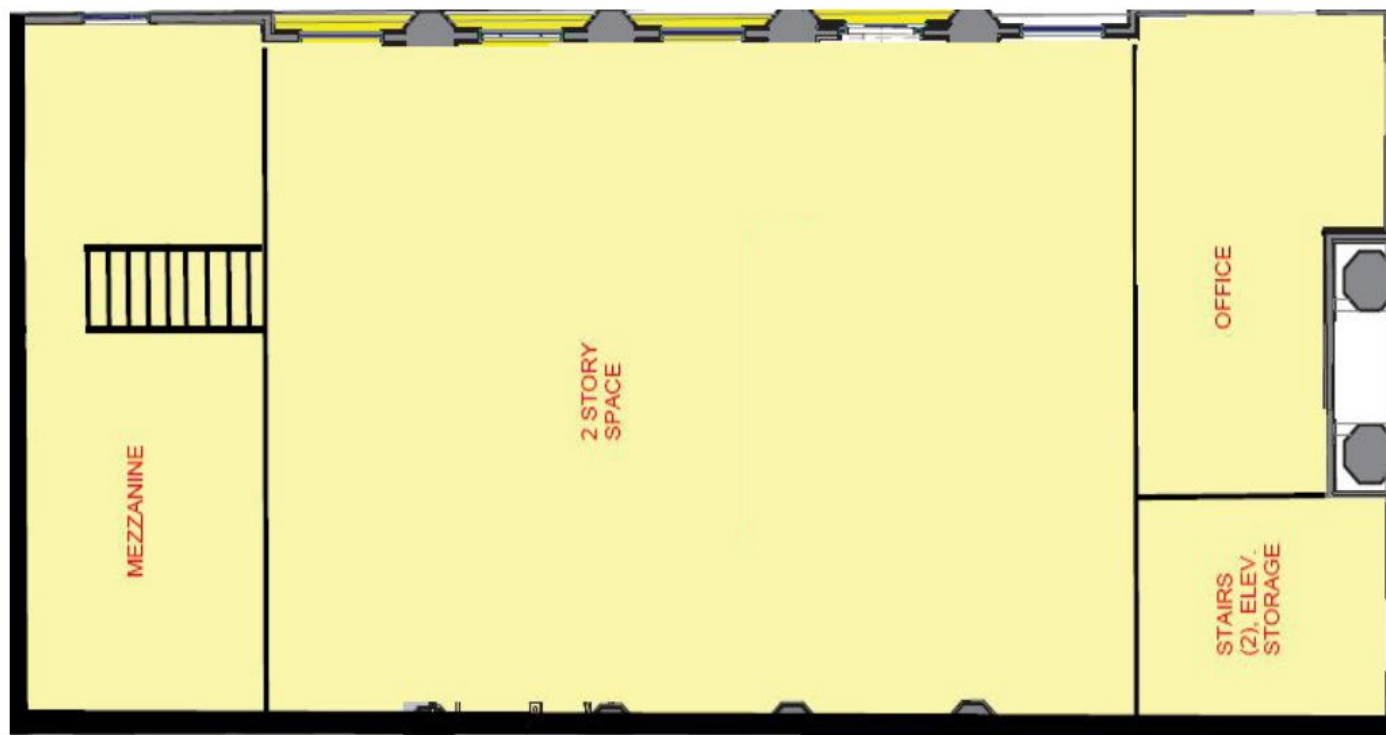
Figure 9. Existing First Floor Plan



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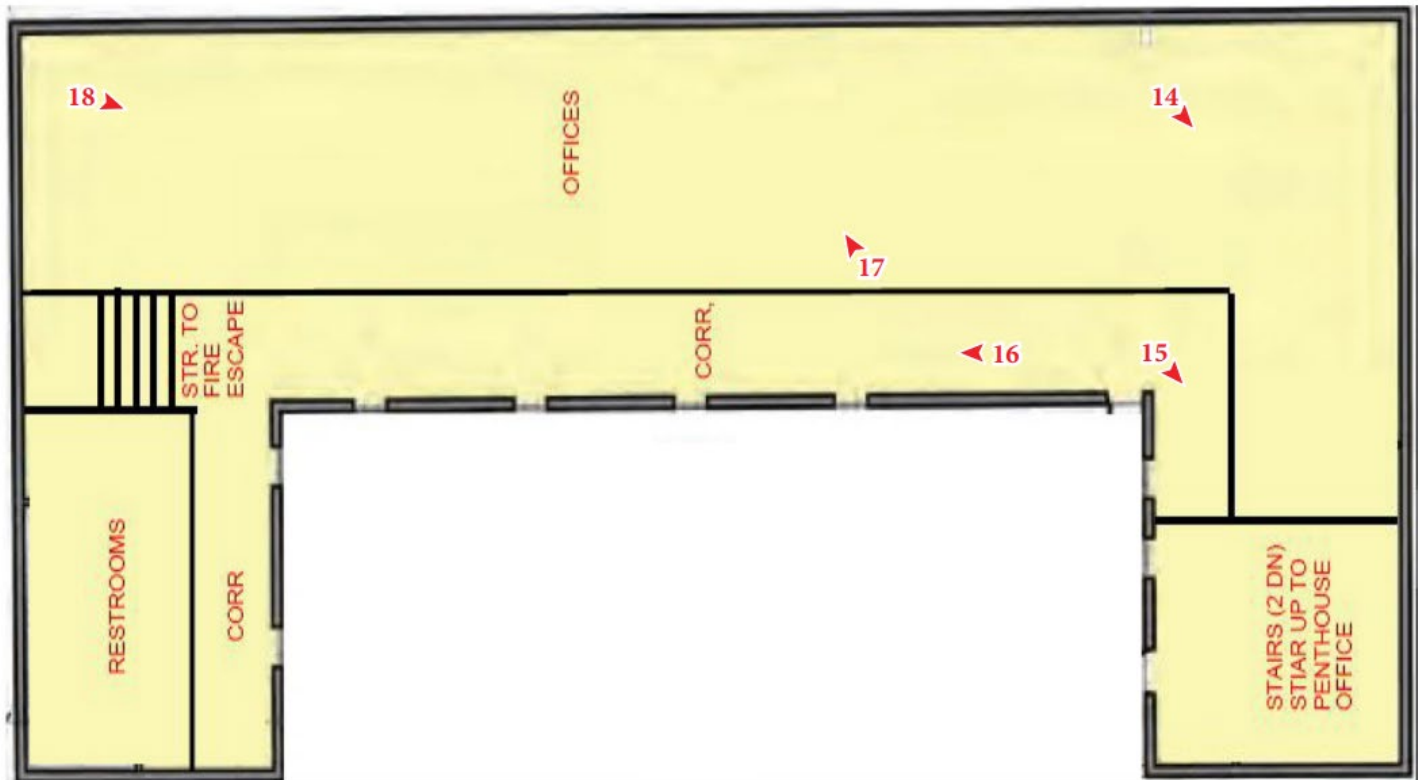
Figure 10. Existing Second Floor Plan

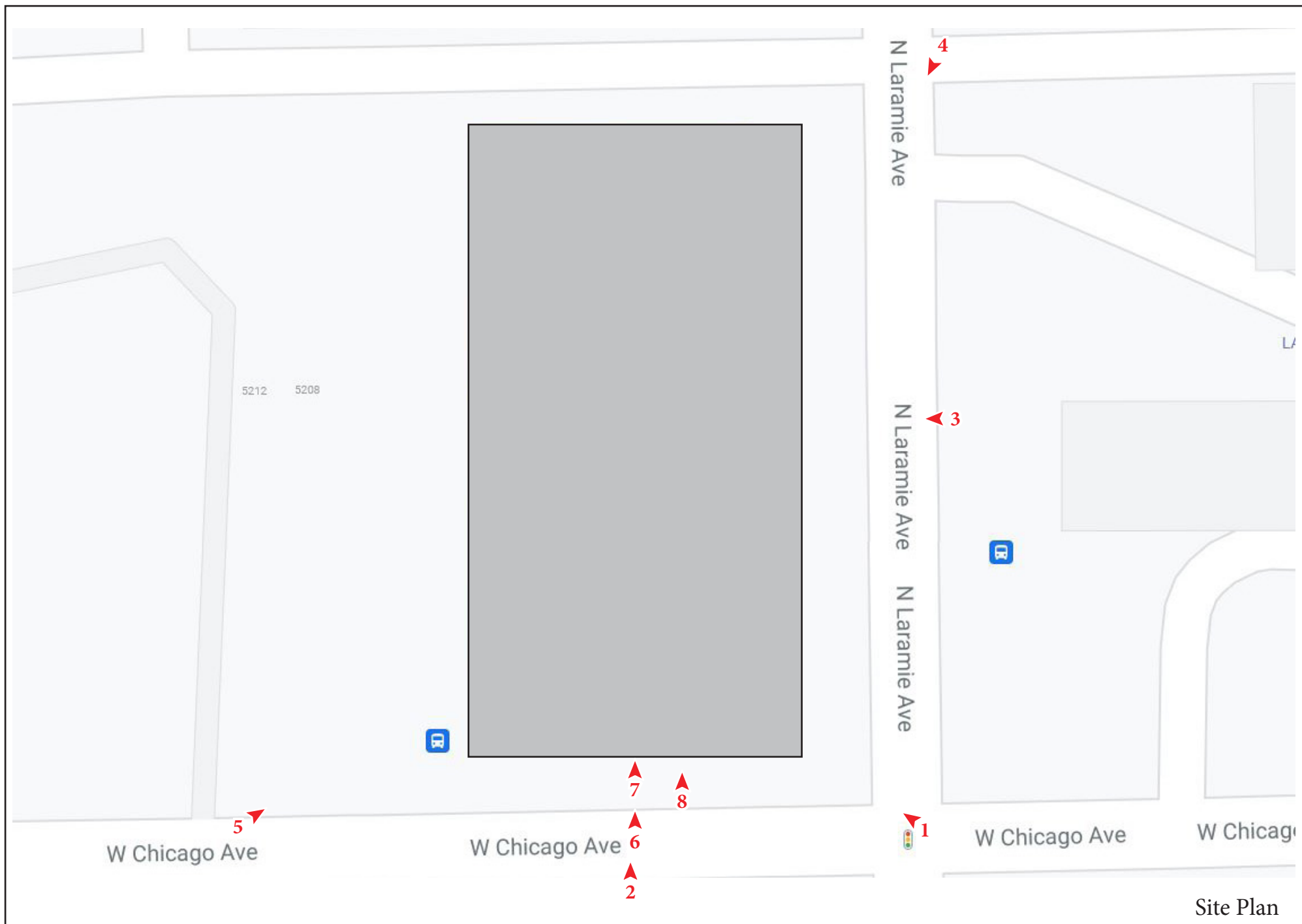


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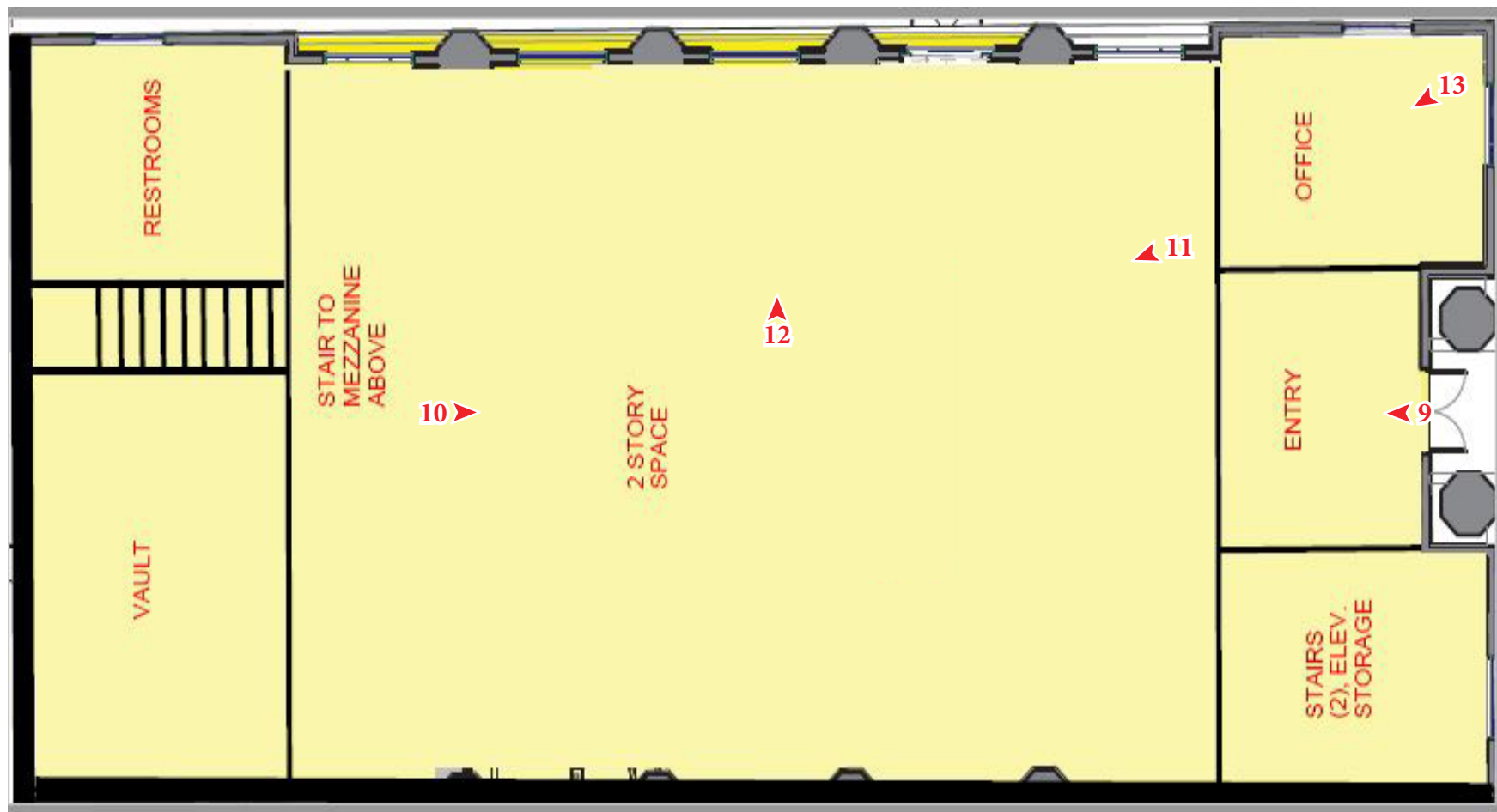
Figure 11. Existing Third Floor Plan



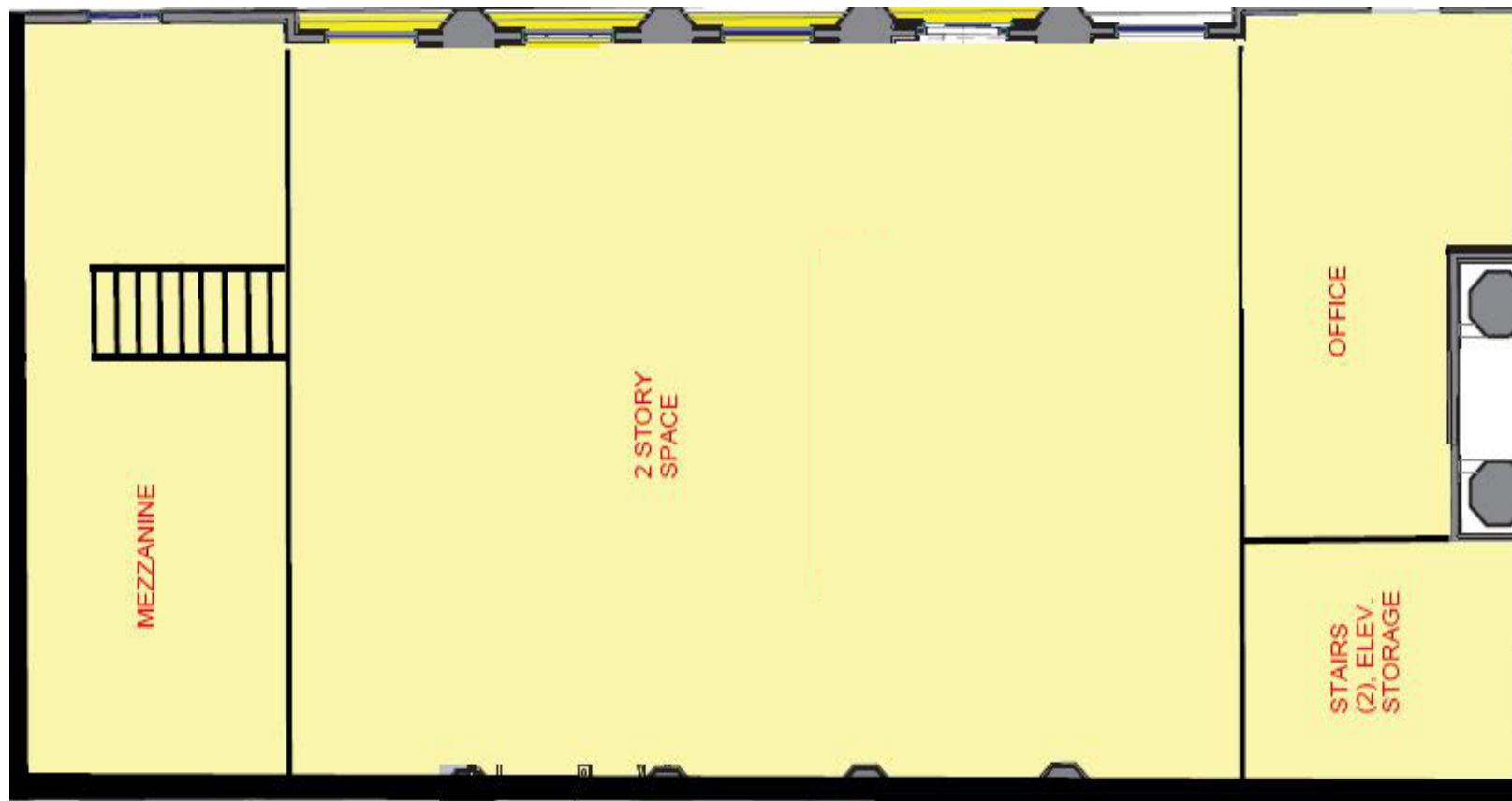


Site Plan



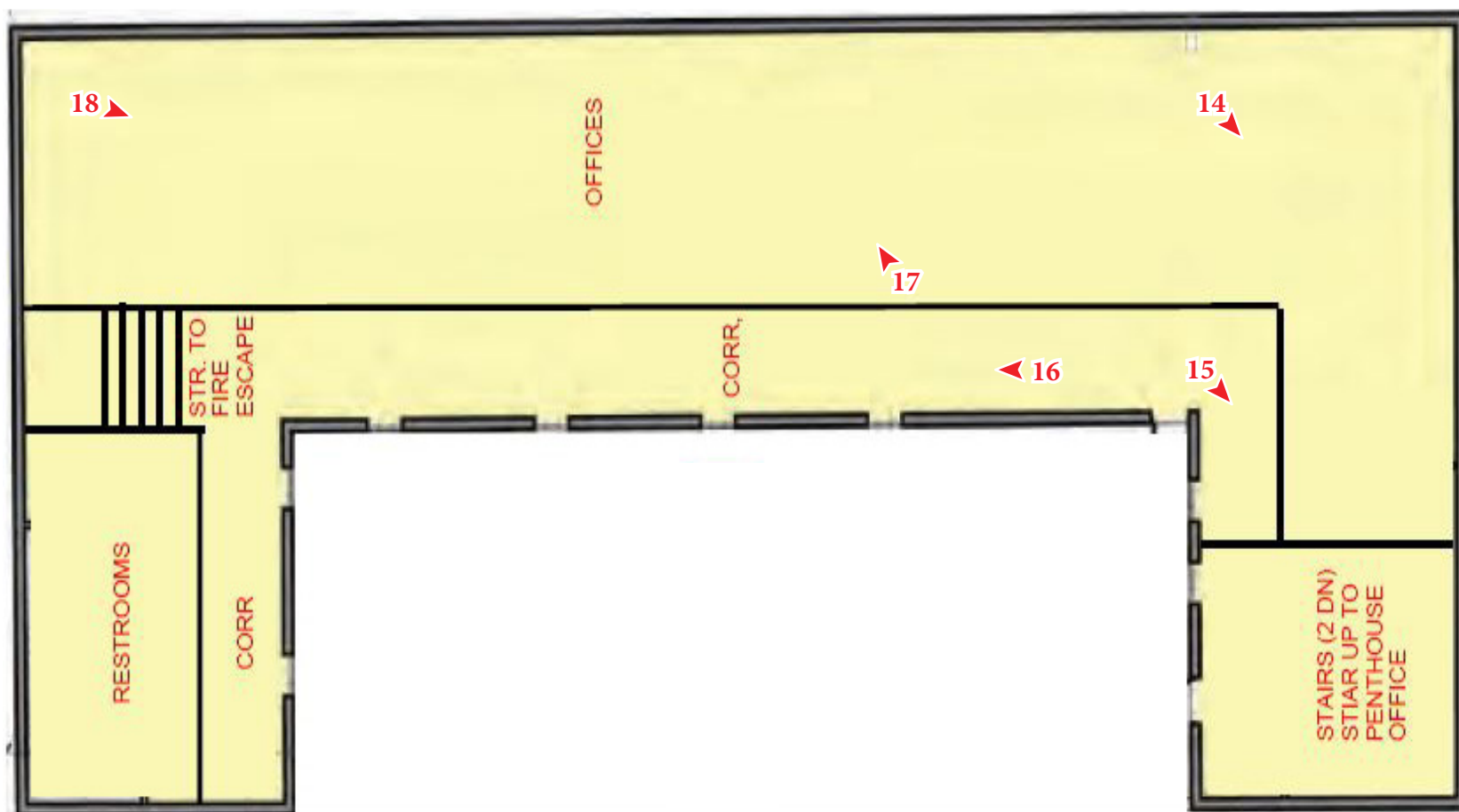


First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan





Third Floor Plan



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1. South and east elevations – looking northwest



2. South elevation – looking north



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3. East elevation – looking west



4. East and north elevations – looking southwest

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5. West elevation – looking northeast



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6. South elevation, main entrance – looking north



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7. South elevation, detail of terra cotta above main entrance – looking north



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8. South elevation, detail of terra cotta column at main entrance – looking north



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9. First floor, main entrance vestibule – looking north



10. First floor, banking hall – looking south



11. First floor, banking hall – looking north



12. First floor, detail of plaster ceiling beam in the banking hall



13. First floor, northeast corner office – looking north



14. Second floor, room south of banking hall –
looking southwest

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15. Third floor, main stair and elevator at the southwest corner of the building – looking southwest



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16. Third floor, corridor – looking north

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17. Third floor, typical office – looking northeast



18. Third floor, typical office – looking southwest