

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 MAY 30 1985

date entered JUN 27 1985

**1. Name**

historic Northern National Bank

DEC 30 1984

and/or common

**2. Location**

HISTORIC PRESENTATION

street & number 2300 Germantown Avenue not for publication

city, town Philadelphia vicinity of congressional district

state Pennsylvania code county Philadelphia code

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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 Ile-Ife Center for the Arts and Humanities/Arthur Hall Afro American Dance Ensemble

street & number 2544 Germantown Avenue

city, town Philadelphia vicinity of state Pennsylvania

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City Hall Office of Records

street & number Broad and Market Streets

city, town Philadelphia state Pennsylvania

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Philadelphia Historical Commission Register

has this property been determined eligible? yes ☒ no

date November 1974 federal state county ☒ local

depository for survey records Philadelphia Historical Commission

city, town Philadelphia state Pa

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			N/A

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Northern National Bank, 2300 Germantown Avenue, stands as a two story flat-iron building occupying the corner of a six-way intersection in North Philadelphia. The brick and stone bank has a grand arched entranceway where the building wraps around the corner. The building stretches five bays along Dauphin Street and two finished bays along Germantown Avenue. A rusticated pink granite base supports the bank's walls of yellow Roman brick. The building is decorated with an assortment of terra cotta and pressed metal details.

The bank's rounded corner receives the most lavish design treatment. A cascade of pink granite steps leads up to the arched doorway. The door surround, composed of two sets of short polished granite columns, supports a wide arch of terra cotta voisoirs with a projecting keystone. A set of ornate wrought iron gates protects the entranceway. The doorway is flanked by two elaborately decorated terra cotta buttresses and two terra cotta cartouches giving the dates the bank was founded and erected. Above the doorway the second story contains three small arched windows set against a background of terra cotta diaperwork. A pressed tin crest sits on the cornice above the doorway.

The Dauphin Street facade contains five bays. The bays include three two-story arched window registers closest to the corner and two additional bays with separate rectangular windows on each floor toward the rear of the building. The two story arched window registers contain 1/1 wooden sash windows on the first floor and single pane windows with arched transoms on the second floor. Pierced tin spandrels and cast iron window grates further adorn the windows. In the last two bays, the first and second story windows are separate, each having their own terra cotta window frame. The second floor windows are set into a panel of terra cotta diaperwork.

The Germantown Avenue facade contains two arched bays identical to those on Dauphin Street and a large unfinished wall section originally hidden from view.

The building has a low hipped standing seam metal roof and a heavy-modillioned pressed metal cornice.

The bank contains an intact 19th century interior. The banking floor is an open two story space with marble counters and tellers cages made of brass and frosted glass. The floor is overlooked by a wrought-iron gallery and the bank president's office. This office has unusual parquet floors and wooden panelling. The enormous vault attests to the building's historic function.

The Northern National Bank remains a remarkably intact example of an ornate late 19th century neighborhood financial institution.

## 8. Significance

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1893

**Builder/Architect** Walter D. Smedley

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Northern National Bank, 2300 Germantown Avenue, possesses significance as a fine example of a Romanesque Revival bank designed in 1893 by Philadelphia architect Walter D. Smedley. In addition, the bank played a significant role in the North Philadelphia community as the only bank within a ten block radius of Germantown Avenue and Dauphin Street.

The architecture of the Northern National Bank expresses both the decorative exuberance of the Victorian era and the solid image the bank wished to convey to its customers. Architect Walter Smedley, creatively interpreting the Romanesque Revival style introduced a few years earlier by H.H. Richardson in Boston, used elements such as wide arched windows and doorway, a heavy rusticated base and a variety of deeply colored material to achieve an orchestrated decorative effect. The placement of the doorway at the corner of the flat-iron building follows a common pattern of the time, and serves as effective advertising as well as decoration for the bank.

Smedley's elaborate interior design is particularly significant because it is one of the few intact 19th-century bank interiors in Philadelphia. The open banking floor contains a marble tellers counter with a brass cage and frosted glass windows. The floor is overlooked by the bank president's office and a cast-iron balcony running the perimeter of the walls. Other important original details include the wood panelling in the president's office and the enormous vault.

Walter D. Smedley (1862-1939), the architect of the Northern National Bank, born in Philadelphia, attended drawing school at the Franklin Institute in 1880-81 and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1883, before apprenticing with the firm of Addison Hutton. Smedley opened his own firm in 1890, but continued his relationship with Hutton, having office space in the same building. Most of Smedley's commissions were grand residences located in Philadelphia suburbs, particularly the planned residential community of Wynnefield. He also designed the Town Hall in Media (Pa.) and the Delaware County (Pa.) Prison. The Smedley building most similar to the Northern National Bank is the West Philadelphia Title and Trust company of 1897. This building incorporates similar elements such as the flat-iron shape, the Romanesque Revival arched windows and terra cotta trim. The Northern National Bank stands as one of Smedley's finest commercial buildings.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Boyd's City Directory 1888-1895  
Moody's Banks and Insurance Manual 1929  
Smedley, Atlases 1862-1895  
(see attached sheet)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Philadelphia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	8
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4	8	7	5	3	0
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4	4	2	6	0	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at a point a corner situate on the Southwesterly side of Germantown Avenue and the Northerly side of Dauphin Street in the Thirty-seventh Ward of the City of Philadelphia, thence extending North Twenty-seven degrees three

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

state	N / A	code	county	code
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state	N/A	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Willoughby/Randal Baron

organization Philadelphia Historical Commission date December 17, 1984

street & number 1313 City Hall Annex

telephone 215-686-4543

city or town Philadelphia

state Pa

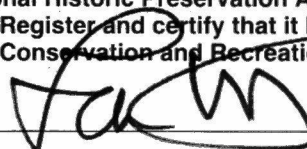
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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

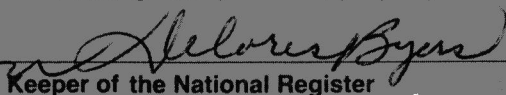


title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer

date 5/4/85

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 6-27-85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Northern National Bank, Philadelphia PA.

Continuation sheet Significance

Item number 8

Page 2

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

In 1890, the Northern National Bank was founded in a row house at 2122 Germantown Avenue in North Philadelphia. The surrounding neighborhood, which developed between 1875-1885, consisted of an established mix of factories and workers' row houses. The Northern National Bank was the first and only bank to locate in this area in the 19th century. Edward T. Tyson, a real estate broker, founded the bank in 1890 and became its acting president. Three brick row houses in the 2100 block of Germantown Avenue served as Mr. Tyson's home, his office, as well as the branch of the bank. The bank was so successful that they were able to erect this substantial building in 1893, a depressed year in which over 500 banks closed around the country.

In 1929, the Northern National Bank merged with the Ninth National Bank, but continued to operate from the same location under the new name. The building remained a branch of the bank until its merger with the Philadelphia National Bank in 1951. The building operated as the Philadelphia National Bank until 1971, when it was sold for \$1 to the Ile-Ife Black Humanitarian Center.

The Northern National Bank is significant as an exuberant example of the work of Walter D. Smedley and the Romanesque style; as one of the very few intact 19th-century interiors in Philadelphia; and lastly as the sole building of the Northern National Bank, an important 19th-century institution in this section of Philadelphia.

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Northern National Bank, Philadelphia PA. Item number 9

Page 2

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to  
the Styles. (MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1969)  
Walter D. Smedley. Collection at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Northern National Bank, Philadelphia PA

Continuation sheet Geographical Data

Item number 10

Page 2

minutes West along the said Southwesterly side of Germantown Avenue one hundred feet five and one quarter inches to a point; thence extending Southwesterly on a line at right angles to said Germantown Avenue forty-eight feet six and three-quarter inches to a point; thence extending Southwesterly on a line at right angles to said Dauphin Street forty-eight feet six and three-quarter inches to the Southwesterly side of said Germantown Avenue and the first mentioned point and place of beginning.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Ref #  
85001388

Northern National Bank  
Philadelphia County  
PENNSYLVANIA

Working No. MAY 80 1985  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/4/86  
Date Due: 6/27/85 - 7/14/85  
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 6-27-85  
☐ RETURN  
☐ REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

- ☐ resubmission  
☐ nomination by person or local government  
☐ owner objection  
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: \_\_\_\_\_ technical corrections cited below  
\_\_\_\_\_ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	
	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	
	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph  
☐ completeness  
☐ clarity  
☐ alterations/integrity  
☐ dates  
☐ boundary selection

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## 8. Significance

Period      Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References

Verbal boundary description and justification

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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### 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_\_ state      \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

---

### 13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet*

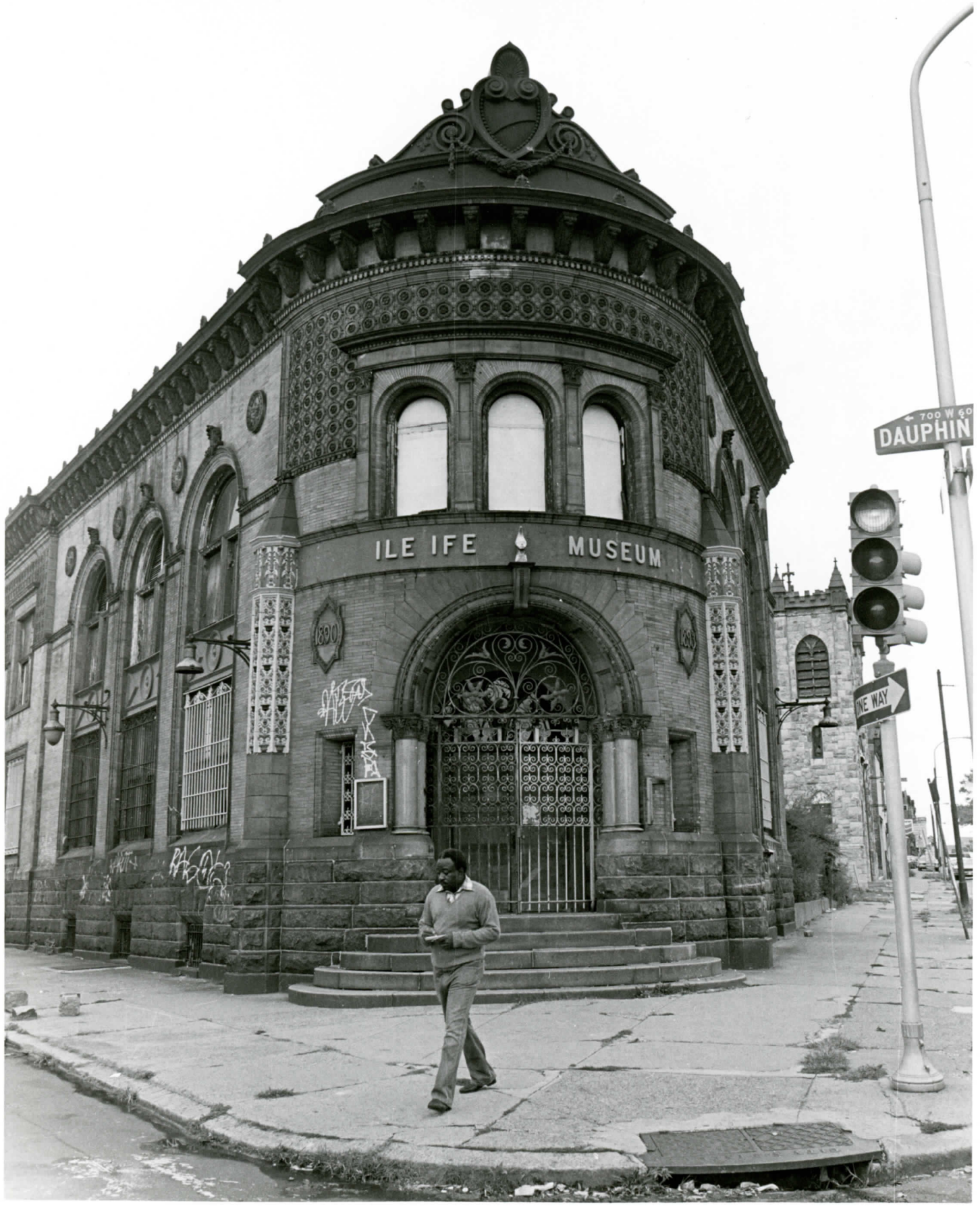




Northern National Bank  
Philadelphia County  
PD 1984 PC Obrafo  
NL ILE IFE Center

*PV front and south elevation*





Northern National Bank  
Philadelphia County  
PD 1984 PC Obrafo  
NL Ile Ife Center

*pv front elevation*







*Northern National Bank*

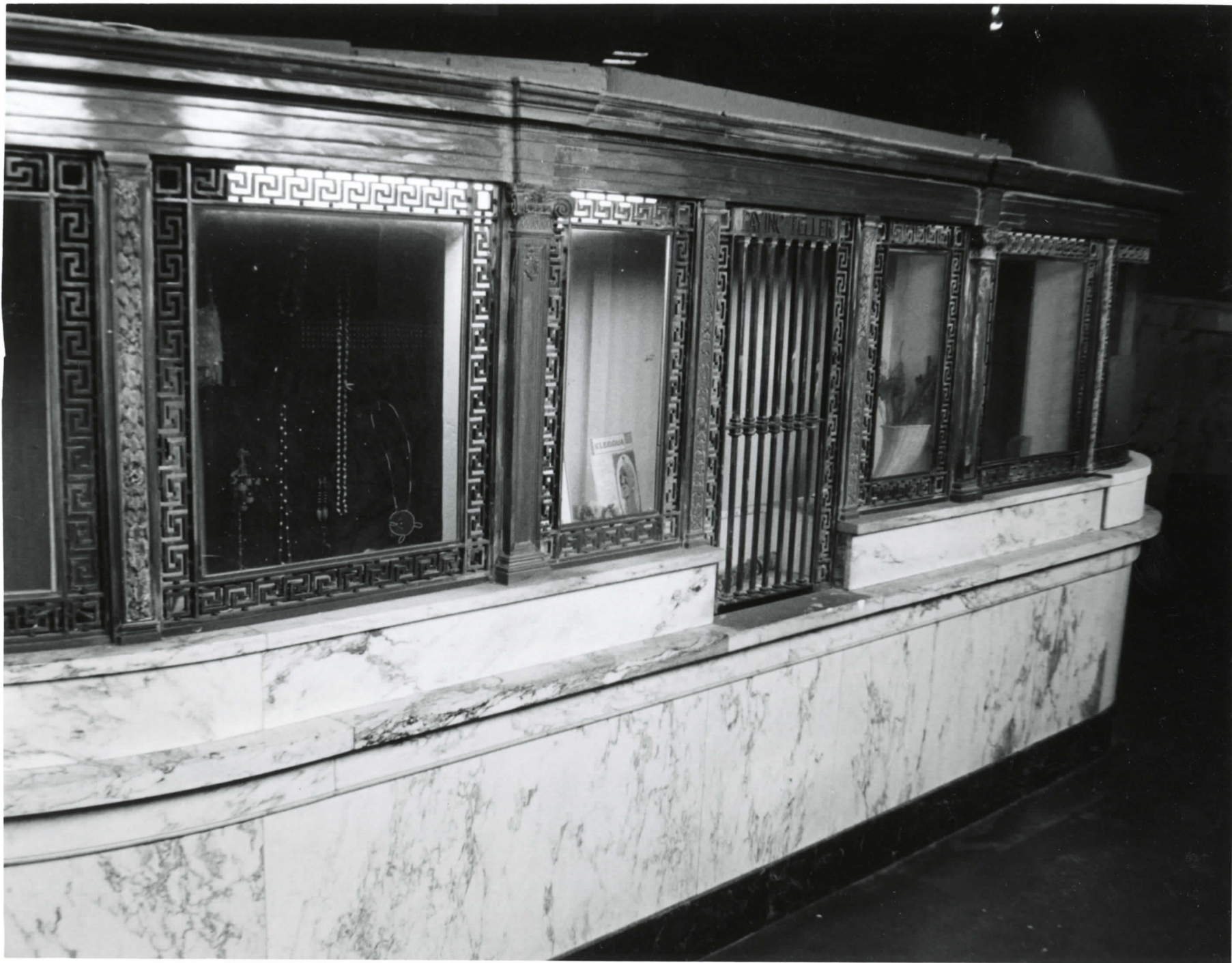
Northern National Bank

Philadelphia County

PD 1984 PC Obrafo

NL ILE IFE Center

*PV northwest elevation + rear*



Northern National Bank  
PD 1984 PC Obrafo  
NL ILE IFE Center  
PV Tellers Cages



Northern National Bank

PD 1984 PC Obrafo

NL ILE IFE Center

NL ILE IFE Center

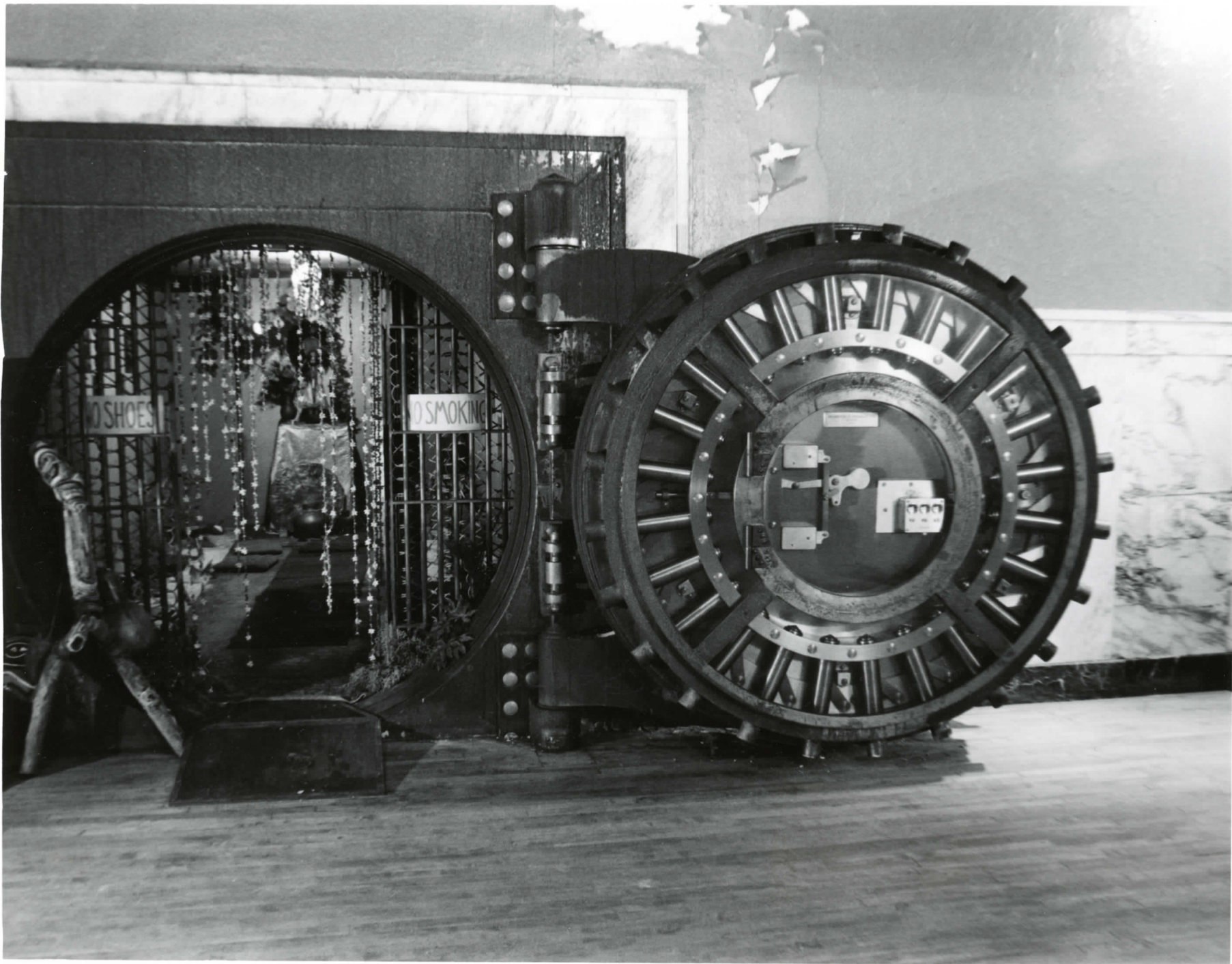
PV Director's Office: from Gallery





Northern National Bank  
PD 1984 PC Obrafo  
NL ILE IFE Center

*PV tellers floor: from Director's office*



Northern National Bank

PD 1984 PC Obrafo

NL ILE IFE Center

*PV bank vault*







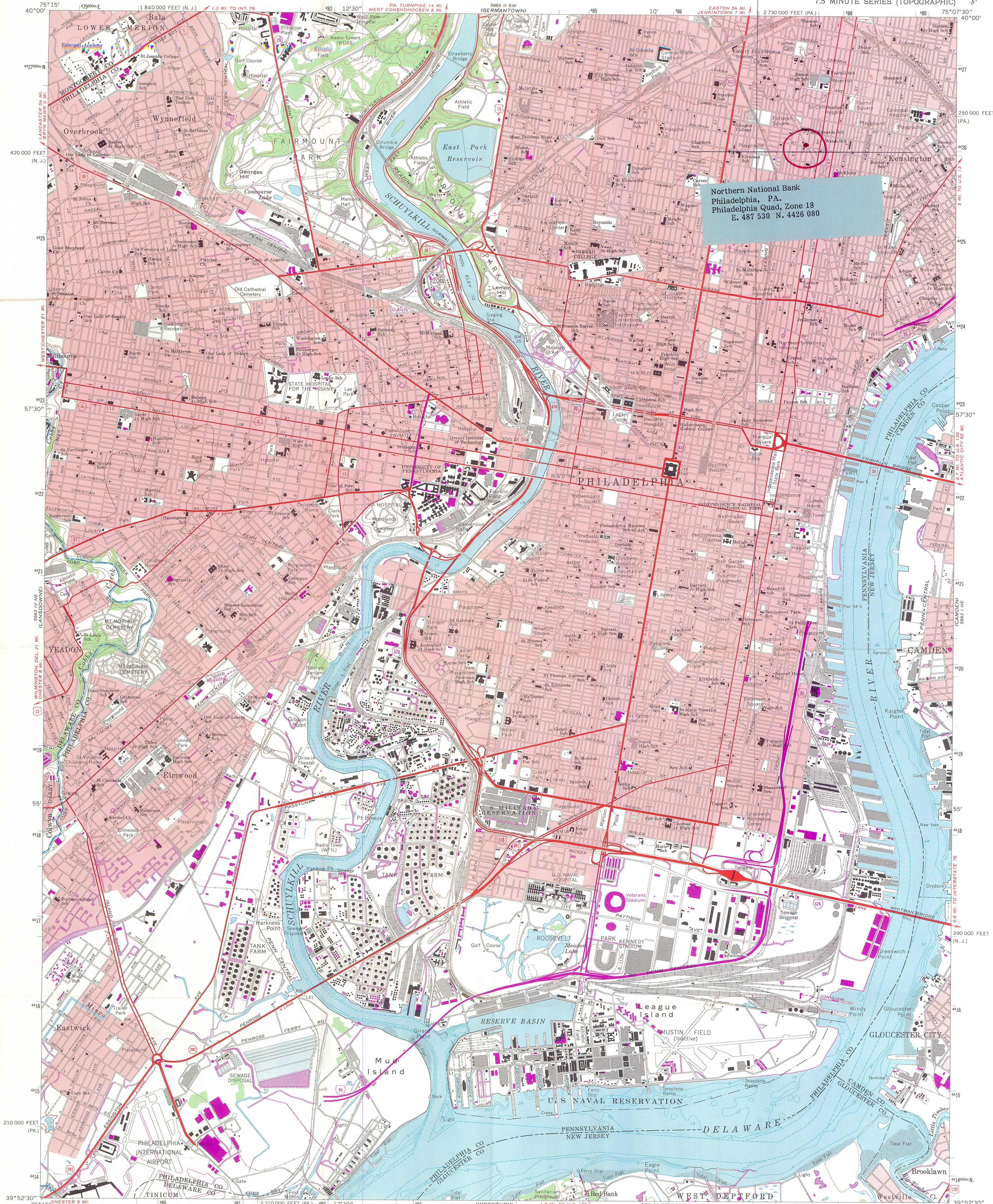
Northern National Bank  
Philadelphia County  
PD 1984 PC Obrafo  
NL ILE IFE Center

PV Detail: Decorative terra cotta



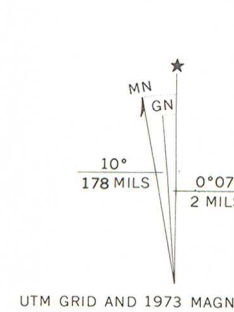
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

PHILADELPHIA QUADRANGLE  
PENNSYLVANIA—NEW JERSEY  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Northern National Bank  
Philadelphia, PA.  
Philadelphia Quad, Zone 18  
E. 487 530 N. 4426 080

Mapped by the U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey  
Edited and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and USCE  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1946. Topography by planimetric surveys 1947. Revised by the  
Geological Survey from aerial photographs taken 1965. Field  
checked 1967  
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Chart 280 (1967)  
This information is not intended for navigational purposes  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grids based on Pennsylvania coordinate system, south zone,  
and New Jersey coordinate system  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18,  
shown in blue  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



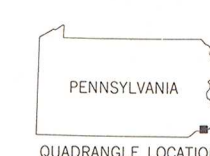
SCALE 1:24,000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 5.5 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from  
aerial photographs taken 1973. This information not field checked

ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———  
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———  
Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route



PHILADELPHIA, PA.—N. J.  
N3952.5—W7507.5/7.5  
1967  
PHOTOREVISED 1973  
AMS 5963 1 NW—SERIES V831