

Metropolitan Bank/North Star Center

1917, 1941, 1963, 2022



Hennepin County Library

Built in 1917, in the L'Art Nouveau style with Pink Tavernelle marble, English oak woodwork, bronze grilles, and PrimaVera mahogany, the Metropolitan Bank building was, according to the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* on June 10, 1917, the “most modern . . . quarters for a financial institution in the country and easily becomes one of the show places of Minneapolis.” The main banking room’s spacious lobby was sixty by ninety feet with a twenty-six-foot ceiling.

The Metropolitan Bank had been organized in 1910, and had outgrown its original space. It was designed by architect J.V. Vanderbilt and was advertised to prospective tenants as the most modern and up-to-date building in Minneapolis.



Mpls Star Tribune, June 10, 1917

On June 21, 1941, Pillsbury Company took over half the Metropolitan Bank building for its general headquarters. At the time, Pillsbury was the second largest flour milling company in the nation; and

Minneapolis was the headquarters of the four largest flour milling businesses in the United States.

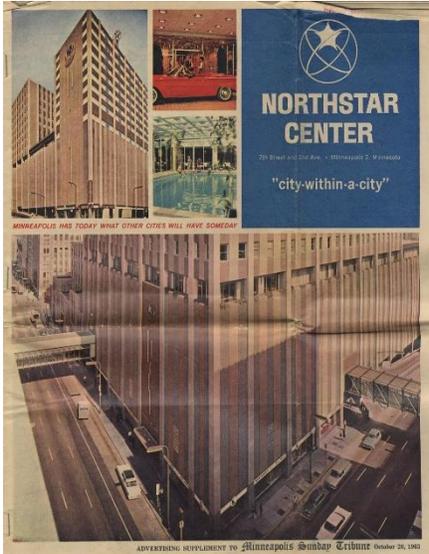
Four hundred Pillsbury employees moved into the building. As part of the agreement, the name of the structure was changed to the Pillsbury Building.



Mpls Sunday Tribune, January 22, 1941



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Beginning in 1961, a \$25 million transformation of nearly an entire city block took place, creating Northstar Center, a three-building project. A 180-unit Northstar Inn was constructed on a seven-level parking ramp, with a fifteen-story Cargill Building, and the Pillsbury Building rehabilitation.

To that date, the project was Minneapolis' largest private building project. The project was complete with the opening of the Northstar Inn in 1963.



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North Star Center was billed as a city within a city providing employment to 5,000 people and creating a core nucleus connecting three city blocks with skyways or tunnels. The project was said to be the beginning of the skyway system in downtown Minneapolis. There was an indoor garden with trees on the eighth floor. The seventh floor housed a popular restaurant, The Rosewood Room. In its early days, the Rosewood Room refused to seat women in pantsuits.

In 2016, the entire three building complex was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2022, work began on converting/rehabilitating the historic structures. Developers planned to spend \$200 million to revitalize the space into offices, a hotel including a restaurant and events facilities, and rental apartments (Pillsbury Building). The twelve-foot Sky Garden would be reopened to tenants and guests.