

United States Department of the Interior
National Park 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 NPS use only
received
date entered

1. Name

historic AMERICAN LEGATION, TANGIER, MOROCCO (NHL)

and/or common Old Legation-Museum Building

2. Location

street & number 8 Zankat America (Rue d'Amérique) not for publication

city, town Tangier, Morocco (Sovereign Property of the United States Government in Morocco)
vicinity of congressional district

state code county code

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Department of State

street & number Washington, D.C. 20520

Leasee: Tangier-American Legation Museum Society
city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520

street & number

city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☐ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated within the ancient city walls of Tangier in the quarter known as the "Mellah" or Ghetto, the American Legation building covers an area of 729 square meters and is bounded on all sides by other structures, many of which share common boundary walls with the Legation. As a result, exterior views of the property are not possible, with the exception of that portion of the structure visible from the rue d'American and from the internal courtyards.

The Legation building is, in reality, a group of buildings that evolved from the original stone building predating 1821. The complex as a whole is constructed of stuccoed masonry and varies from 1 to 3 stories in height. The attached floor plan divides the complex into the following four distinct units for discussion purposes:

Unit I: Approaching the legation from the south on rue d'Amérique (photographs 1 and 2) one sees the mid-19th century reception room which straddles the street and is supported on a series of masonry arches. On the outer wall of the reception room is a small plastered rococo gable containing the seal of the legation (photograph #3). Although indistinguishable from the surrounding structures, Unit I contains the original two story mud and stone building that was presented to Consul Malloway in 1821. This original building contains a small drawing room (photograph #4) that has an antique carved marble mantel (probably of French origin). The walls of the room are bordered by plaster moldings that simply, but eloquently, define the well proportioned space. A small landscaped courtyard (photograph #5) is included in this unit.

Unit II: This portion of the complex is apparently the most modern and has little architectural character. The street facade with its cantilivered balcony does play an important part in the Blake-Benasuli composition. The stuccoed brick and mortar construction is unremarkable.

Unit III: Constructed prior to 1891, this three story stuccoed structure was a private residence (House formerly of Garzon) that was purchased as an addition sometime between 1847-1891. The structure is not deemed to be architecturally significant.

Unit IV: This portion was constructed in 1927-31 and contains the most architecturally distinctive and significant features of the complex. The additions took place under Consul Maxwell Blake who employed Jonah Benasuli as the architect and Maalen Bukkori as the builder.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The American Legation building is a structure of architectural, diplomatic and military significance integrally associated with American-Moroccan relations for almost 160 years. The building is the first property ever acquired abroad by the U. S. Government and for 140 years housed the United States Legation and Consular offices in Tangier, the longest period any building abroad has ever been occupied as a diplomatic or consular post. (see enclosure 1) Architecturally, the Legation building is significant for the harmonious blending of the Moorish and Spanish traditions of architecture in a setting which has done much to inspire the selection of each. The result, as described by Miss Honor M. Bigelow, has been "perhaps the most artistic and interesting structure in the city of Tangier. Charles Peterson commented that "The whole architectural effect was a witness to the contemporary American taste called the 'Mediterranean Revival'....It reached its zenith at the Bocca Raton of Addison Mizner (1892-1933) and the San Simeon of William Randolph Hearst.

In 1821 the Sultan Moulay Suliman preented a small stone Building (date of construction unknown) located within the ancient city wall to John Mulloony, American Consul, as a gift to the American people. (see enclosure 2) This building served as the core of an enlarged complex which was completed in its current form during the period 1927-31 under the direction of Minister Maxwell Blake. From 1821 until 1956 when Morocco regained its independence and a U. S. Embassy was established at Rabat, The Legation building served as the residence and office of the United States principal diplomatic representative. The official life of the Legation came to a close when the new Consulate General and residence in Tangier opened in 1961. For the next fourteen years the Legation was used as an Arabic Language School for American diplomats and then as a training center for the Peace Corps. In 1976 the Department of State leased the building to the Tangier American Legation Museum Society (TALMS), a public non-profit organization, which is preserving this historic collection of engravings, maps, aquatints, paintings, and visual representations from the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries depicting events in U. S.-Moroccan relations. A rare book collection and the principal documents concerned with Moroccan-American diplomatic relations, acquired by TALMS from U. S. and Moroccan archives, form the nucleus of the study center.

Diplomatic relations between the United States and Morocco have been characterized by two centuries of unbroken amicability. The 1786 Moroccan-American Treaty of Friendship, with John Adams and Thomas Jefferson

9. Major Bibliographical Reference

Honor M. Bigelow, "The American Legation in Tangier", Morocco, pp 376-7 1934

Charles E. Peterson, "The Old American Legation at Tangier Considered as an Historical Museum", December, 1975.

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UMT References

A

3	0
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2	4	6	1	1	0
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3	9	6	3	8	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael J. McLaughlin

organization Department of State

date _____

street & number Room 319, SA-6, Washington, D.C. telephone 703-235-9499

city or town _____

state _____

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☒ national

☐ state

☐ local

Thomas M. Pracy by W.W.

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Department of State Historic Preservation Officer

date _____

For NPS use only

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

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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The Blake-Benasuli addition is centered around a patio called the "Great Courtyard," the centerpiece of which is a graceful fountain from Fez (photograph #6). Overlooking the small patio to the west is a loggia of 3 Moorish arches. A staircase with classical style balusters descends from the second story into the courtyard area. The South loggia is also composed of 3 Moorish arches, behind which an elaborate wooden screen is set, forming the main architectural focus of this portion of the complex. Petersen assessed the entrance to the guest suite from the second floor entrance to be the finest architectural detail in the legation complex. He stated, "On the carved wooden doors the ceramic tile floor and the rich, intricate, painted interior doors have been lavished a great deal of artistic skill." Blake incorporated into this Moorish style pavillion antique doors, ceilings, and mosaic floor tiles taken from old Moroccan buildings. He donated French marble mantels, a 18th Century Portuguese chandelier, and 18th Century Moorish lanterns. Beautiful Spanish grills in wrought iron bar the windows. (See photographs 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.)

Mr. Donald Angus, an American and former resident of Tangier has provided the Tangier American Legation Museum Society with his large collection of engravings, aquatints, etchings and other prints of Morocco on a permanent loan basis. Approximately one hundred of these artworks are on display throughout the complex.

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as the American signatories, was renegotiated by Consul John Mulloony in 1836. It is still in force today; thus it is one of the, if not the, longest-enduring treaty in American History. (See enclosure 3)

The Legation played a major role in the Barbary Wars (see 9 continuation sheet).

The Cape Spartel Lighthouse Treaty of 1860 is yet another illustration of the historic role played by U.S. Officers in the Tangier Legation. The Treaty committed the United States and nine other powers jointly to maintain and operate a lighthouse off Tangier. This Treaty, along with the Act of Algeciras (see 9 continuation sheet), is an early example of the sort of multi-national cooperation which culminated years later in the League of Nations (See enclosure 4).

World War II ushered in a new phase of Legation activity when it became the headquarters for a small complement of U. S. agents of the newly-formed Office of Strategic Services (OSS). As Kermit Roosevelt historian of the OSS said, "Col William Eddy was assigned, together with his colleagues working on Torch, to the Legation in Tangier. He and his team mates remained there until the Allied invasion later that year. (see Enclosure 6).

Anthony Cave Brown also documents this operation on page 138 of his "The Secret Report of the OSS"

"In the U. S. Legation at Tangier, the new COI recruits set themselves up as dispensers of U. S. information, assisting with public relations, discussions and distributing other forms of propaganda. They made almost immediately, key intelligence contacts with the main streams of Moroccan society..." This intelligence operation conducted from the Legation contributed significantly to the successful Allied landings in North Africa. These in turn formed the backbone for the first U. S. military expedition in the West, doomed the Axis in Africa and laid the groundwork for the landings in France. Further participation of the Legation in this key OSS operation are implied in Enclosure 5).

Other events of historical interest in which the Legation was involved are noted in Enclosure 7.

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Luella J. Hall, "The United States and Morocco, 1776-1956 Metuchen, N. J. 1971, page 989. Also pages 219-220 re S. R. Gummere, American Minister at Tangier, as negotiator at the Algeciras Conference on Morocco.

Office of Naval Research and Library, U. S. Navy, "Naval Documents Related to the U. S. Wars with the Barbary Powers: Naval Operations including Diplomatic Background from 1785 to 1807", U. S. Printing Office, Washington D. C., six volumes published from 1933 to 1944. References throughout all six volumes

Anthony Cave Brown, "The Secret War Report of the OSS", Berkley Publishing Corp., New York, N. Y., 1976

Kennith Pendar "Adventure in Diplomacy" Dodd, Meade & Co., New York, N. Y., 1945

Kermit Roosevelt, "War Report of the OSS With Introduction by Kermit Roosevelt", Walker and Co., New York, N. Y., Carrollton Press Inc., Washington, D. C.

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First Parcel North: Rue Alexandre Dumas
East: Rue du Four, Toulouts Oulad El Khatib C/O.
Mr. Abdeslam Laraichi, 20 Rue Ouad Ahardan, and
Mr. Ahmed El Ouahrani Zerouoli living on the
premises.
South: Mr. Ahmed Akalay, residing at 80 Rue dela Liberte.
West: Rue d'Amerique, and Toulouts Oulad El Khatib,
mentioned above.

Second Parcel North: Rue Alexandre Dumas
East: Rue d'Amerique, Toulouts Oulad El Khatib and
Mr. Simi Nahon, living at Avenue Hassan II.
South: A blind alley (cul de sac)
West: Heirs Abdeslam Zougari, resident at 2 Rue
Sidi Amar, Toulouts Oulad El Khatib, Rue Touzani,
and the heirs Ben Abdessadak Ahmed Ben Ali
resident at 4 Rue Sidi Amar