

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88000554 Date Listed: 5/16/88

<u>San Diego Civic Center</u>	<u>San Diego</u>	<u>CA</u>
Property Name	County	State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Carol D. Shall
Signature of the Keeper

5-16-88
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Because the nomination made a strong case for landscape architecture as an area of significance, one contributing site should be added to the count of contributing resources. Carol Shall confirmed this change with Cynthia Howse of the California SHPO during a 5/16/88 telephone conversation.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name San Diego Civic Center

other names/site number San Diego County Administration Center

2. Location

street & number 1600 Pacific Highway

N/A not for publication

city, town San Diego

N/A vicinity

state California code 06 county San Diego code 073 zip code 92101

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously

listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Kathryn Guadagni
Signature of certifying official

3/31/88
Date

California State Office of Historic Preservation

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.

Carol D. Shue

5-16-88

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/City CountyAdministrative Offices

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/County AdministrativeOffices

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

ModerneSpanish Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Concrete

roof Mission tileother Inlaid tile

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The San Diego Civic Center site, resting on 16.738 acres of reclaimed tidelands of San Diego's bayfront, consists presently of three buildings: the historic Civic Center structure, which originally contained both city and county offices, begun in 1936 and completed in 1938 with a million dollars contributed from Works Progress Administration funds; a non-historic public health facility (1700 Pacific Highway), erected in 1958, now vacated and slated for demolition; and a non-historic gardener's shed. The site is enclosed by Pacific Highway to the east, Ash Street to the south, Harbor Drive to the west, and Grape Street to the north. Located in a highly commercial area, the site features a historic sculpture, The Guardian of Water, created by noted American sculptor, Donal Hord, emplaced on the western entrance side facing the bay in June, 1939. Financed mostly by W.P.A. funds, the statue and fountain took three years to complete. The landscaping plan, designed by Roland Hoyt, noted landscape architect, and financed also by the W.P.A., provided trees, shrubs, grass, fountains on the eastern side of the site, and annual blooming plant varieties around the main structure and adjacent parking lots. The Civic Center retains a fairly high degree of integrity.

The Civic Center structure, Spanish-Revival with 1930s Streamline Moderne influences, also displays classical Beaux-Arts touches. Constructed of reinforced concrete with Franciscan pottery inlaid tile work on the east and west facades and wing domes, the main portion of the structure is capped with a Mission tile roof. The building was intended to compliment Balboa Park structures. As suggested by John Nolen, a noted Cambridge, Massachusetts landscape architect and planner, this building was placed on the waterfront with the hope that a mall extending eastward would ultimately link it and other civic structures which were to surround the center, with Balboa Park.

However noteworthy the exterior of the building, the interior and structural details prove to be equally as important. Beauty and perseverance were of tremendous concern to the architects and engineers. Quality was not spared in this building, despite the lean years of the Great Depression. The main and second floor lobbies display rich Tennessee Roseal and Vermont Verde antique marble-covered walls, bronze elevator doors and bronze detailing around entrance doors and the second floor lobby area. Original light fixtures of wood and glass remain in these areas. The floors in the lobby and corridor are terrazzo, employed for its durability, with office floor space incorporating brown, marbelized asphalt tile. Moveable partitions of wood and glass separate offices. All

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interior woodwork including staircases is of Philippine mahogany. Council and Supervisors' chamber doors are covered with cowhide and bronze studs. All ceilings are finished with a sound absorbent plaster which reduces office noise levels.

Engineering history was made with this building when steel piling was employed to bear lateral stresses 1-1/2 times more than any earthquake emergency would require for this basically four-storied structure with basement and ten-storied, 150 foot central tower, with extending north and south facing three and four-storied domed wings. It was a 544 foot frontage overall and a 244 foot overall depth. The building has a area of 276,668 square feet.

The west facade on Harbor Drive was to provide a welcome respite for seafaring travelers. Visitors and denizens alike would view from this entrance Roland Hoyt's magnificent landscaping surrounding Donal Hord's Guardian of Water sculpture and be enticed onward to the structure itself. The ten-foot tower rising about the entrance is faced with decorative tile as is the inlaid arch above the doors. Above the entrance is inscribed the adage, "The Noblest Motive is the Public Good", suggested by then City Councilman, John Seibert. The main building portions of the west facade, adorned with a Mission tile roof, have always been four-stories in height. The adjoining wings, the westernmost portions to the left and right of the entrance, were originally two-stories, but received additional stories in 1968. Another story was added to the portions of the wings immediately behind the two story sections also in 1968, and match the original four-storied building sections except for the tiled roof.

The south building facade on Ash Street, provides an additional entrance to the structure. This is one of the wing sections which added stories in 1968 to the left and right two-story building portion, and the three-storied almost center section. The east facade faces Pacific Highway, now a main city artery, and encourages one to imagine how beautiful the Civic Center site could have been if a tree-lined paseo would have linked this area with Balboa Park. This facade matches in many ways the west facade with the exception that the adjoining wings extend further out from the main building. (The western wings were to have been enlarged in the 1940s to match the eastern side, but this was never accomplished.) Another difference includes the matched domes atop the wings. As with the west facade, the two- and three-storied building sections have also received an extra story, added in 1968. Above the entrance, the motto, "Good Government Demands the Intelligent Interest of Every Citizen", also suggested by Councilman Seibert.

The northern facade on Grape Street reflects the same additions to the two- and three-storied portions of the wings as does the southern wing. An additional entrance is provided on this portion of the building.

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In the 1960s and 1970s, office remodeling was undertaken in many parts of the Civic Center. A cafeteria was added atop the third floor. Light fixtures in some of the corridors were modernized. Carpeting was added. On the first floor light fixtures were modernized and the concession stand in the lobby was renovated. In 1968, the third and fourth floor were added to portions of the north and south wings.

At the northwest corner of the site stands a three-story building constructed in 1958 as the Department of Health Services. Plans for the future indicate the public health department will move to larger quarters and this building will be demolished. This building is of no historic or architectural significance.

At the northeast corner of the site is the garden shop, a one story, concrete block structure with gable roof. It is a repository for the gardening utensils used by gardeners caring for the County Administration Center lawns, and provides through the lath house a refuge to plants needing extra assistance. The garden shop is a utilitarian building which supplements the gardening needs of the historic County Administration Center.

The Civic Center site encompasses 16.738 acres and is nearly flat at an elevation of six feet.

Early grounds landscaping was set out in a hodge-podge fashion, planting initially Washingtonia palms which generated much controversy because they appeared dead or dying. Japanese cherry trees were donated and planted as were Bird of Paradise plants and other varieties of plants. In 1938, it was determined that a landscape architect was needed to plan the ground cover. Roland S. Hoyt was employed that year and completed landscaping tasks on January 22, 1939, at a cost of \$129,944, of which the major portion of \$100,000 was borne by the W.P.A.

Various varieties of palm trees, varnish trees, Australian tee-trees, podocarpus, scarlet bottlebrush, and other types were planted. Shrubs such as natal plum and windmill jasmine were embedded. Annuals such as calendulas and jobelias surrounded east facing borders. Scotch and German marigolds filled the borders around the north parking lot. Flower beds of schizanthus, snapdragon, stock daisies, pansies, and petunias surrounded the building and when they died out, they were replaced with zinnias, carnations, gypsophila, asters and ornamental dahlias. All annuals, under the supervision of head gardener, Pietro Farina, were developed from seed in a county-owned lath house. In 1943, during World War II, Victory Garden beets were grown in the flower beds on the east side of the Civic Center for the Convalescent Children and Children's

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Aid Society in San Diego. Cabbages were planted for the same purpose on the west side. The deep rich color of the beet tops added highlights to the gardens which received wide praise from admirers. New palms and other varieties of trees, shrubs, and flowering plants have been added to the grounds since 1939, but the overall impressive beauty and layout design still prevail.

A 22'-3" granite sculpture and fountain enhance the Harbor Drive entry walkway. Created from Lakeside granite by Donal Hord, noted American sculptor, it exhibits a pioneer woman holding an olla filled with water, one of San Diego's most precious resources.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Art
Engineering
Landscape Architecture
Community Planning
Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1936-1939

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Gill, Louis J.
Hamill, Samuel W.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The San Diego Civic Center is significant for the following reasons: its association with Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal Works Progress Administration, its importance in John Nolen's 1926 Plan for San Diego, its architectural and structural quality, its symbolic public sculpture, and its landscaping scheme.

President Franklin Roosevelt personally approved the plan for the erection of San Diego's Civic Center and allocated \$1 million in funds in 1936 to begin construction of such an edifice. The building, financed predominantly by the Works Progress Administration, a New Deal Agency, was the first of such financed structures to be built within San Diego. The W.P.A. also contributed most of the funds necessary for Donal Hord's Guardian of Water sculpture facing the harbor, and Roland Hoyt's landscaping plan. Franklin Roosevelt dedicated the Civic Center to the people of San Diego in a ceremony on July 16, 1938, approximately five months before its completion.

The placement of the Civic Center on the harbor was suggested by John Nolen, nationally known landscape architect and planner, in his 1926 Plan for San Diego. It was the hope of Nolen and city leaders that other public buildings would be grouped around the Civic Center and a grand paseo extending eastward, would ultimately link the public structures with Balboa Park. However, rising land costs, and the outbreak of World War II, precluded the fulfillment of Nolen's ideas.

The Civic Center, hailed nationally as a splendid example of civic center architecture, was designed by four prominent San Diego architects: Louis J. Gill, F.A.I.A.; Samuel W. Hamill, F.A.I.A.; William T. Johnson, F.A.I.A.; and Richard S. Requa. Louis J. Gill designed the San Diego Zoo as well as many residences, churches and medical centers in the San Diego area. Samuel W. Hamill planned the San Diego Community Concourse, designed the W.P.A. financed War Memorial Building in Balboa Park, as well as the Del Mar Race Track. William T. Johnson created the La Valencia Hotel in La Jolla as well as the Serra Museum in Presidio Park and the Fine Arts and Natural History Museums in

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheet.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 16.738

UTM References

A

1	1	4	8	3	9	5	0	3	6	2	1	3	8	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

C

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

B

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

D

1	1	4	8	3	9	5	0	3	6	2	1	2	3	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Municipal tidelands subdivision tract #1 bordered on the west by Harbor Drive; Pacific Highway on the east; Grape Street on the north; and Ash Street on the south.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sylvia Kathleen Fianigan date Revised January 9, 1988
 organization Citizens Coordinate for Centurys telephone 619-464-0720
 street & number 5700 Baltimore Drive, #6 state California zip code 92042
 city or town La Mesa

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Balboa Park. Richard S. Requa was responsible for much of the design of the 1935 World's Fair buildings in Balboa Park. Spanish Revival/Streamline Moderne in style with Beaux-Arts classical touches such as long narrow halls and expansive wings, the building features a 10-story central tower and matched domes on the extending north and south wings. The architects included inlaid Franciscan pottery tile around the east and west entrances and on matched domes on the north and south wings. Interior first and second floor lobbies incorporate Tennessee Roseal and Vermont Verde antique-marble covered walls, bronze elevator doors and detailing around entrance doors and the second floor lobby area. Philippine mahogany was featured on staircases and office walls and partitions. Terrazzo was employed in lobby areas and on stairs. Elegant wood and glass light fixtures adorn the lobby areas. Of structural significance, over 1500 H-shaped steel pilings, incorporated for the first time in a major public building, were driven deep into tidelands soil to protect the structure and its inhabitants from earthquake damages. The Civic Center was constructed in five sections which would move independently in response to serious seismic motions.

The Guardian of Water sculpture and fountain, planned and created by noted Southern California sculptor, Donal Hord, considered one of the greatest American sculptors in 1936, took three years to complete. Hord chose San Diego granite from which he sculpted a pioneer woman holding an olla or water jar on her shoulder which symbolized the guardianship of water exemplifying San Diego's constant task of obtaining and guarding one its most precious resources - water. He also designed the fountain pedestal upon which the granite figure was placed.

Civic Center landscaping, begun in 1938 and completed in 1939, by Roland S. Hoyt, F.A.S.L.A., contributed greatly to the overall beauty and significance of the site. Hoyt's planting surrounded the main structure, as well as the adjacent parking lots. Incorporating various varieties of trees, shrubs, grass and annual flowering plants, Hoyt also created two fountains to beautify the eastern entrance. In 1943, during World War II, Victory Garden beets and cabbages were grown in the flower beds surrounding the fountains for the benefit of the Convalescent Children and Children's Aid Society in San Diego. New palms and other varieties of trees, shrubs, and flowering plants have been implanted on the grounds, but the original layout design is basically unaltered.

Architects of the San Diego County Administration Center:

Samuel Wood Hamill (1903-), a 1927 graduate of the University of California at Berkeley School of Architecture, began his architectural career in San Diego with Richard Requa and served as his partner during the construction of the San Diego Civic Center. Influenced by the 1915 Panama-California Exposition architects, Bertram Goodhue and Carleton Winslow Sr., Hamill incorporated the Spanish Colonial and Spanish Revival styles in many of his works in San Diego. He was the primary architect involved with the planning of the Civic Center. In addition, he coordinated the San Diego Community Concourse and designed the War Memorial Building in Balboa Park and the Del Mar Race

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Track. He also created the San Diego County Seal which is featured on the exterior of the San Diego County Administration Building. In 1957, he was elected a fellow of the A.I.A.

Richard S. Requa (1881-1941), attended Norfolk College in Nebraska where he majored in electrical engineering. In 1907, he entered the architectural offices of Irving Gill where he received architectural training which enabled him to start his own practice in 1910 in San Diego. Requa later formed partnerships with Frank Mead, Herbert Jackson, and Samuel Hamill. Influenced by Spanish-American, Indian and North African architectural styles, Requa's work exemplified a combination of these forms. Requa designed the civic centers of Ojai and Rancho Santa Fe in California. He wrote the specifications for the San Diego Civic Center, photographed and supervised much of its construction. He was the Chief Architect of the 1935 San Diego Exposition. In addition, he designed many schools, residences, businesses and civic structures within San Diego County.

William Templeton Johnson (1877-1957), graduated from Columbia University in 1907, then studied at the Beaux Arts in Paris from 1909-1911. He assisted with the design of the San Diego Civic Center. Best known in San Diego for his Mission Revival, Spanish Colonial and Spanish Revival designs, he planned numerous landmarks including the La Valencia Hotel in La Jolla, the Junipero Serra Museum in Presidio Park, the San Diego Trust and Savings Bank and the U.S. Post Office in downtown San Diego. Johnson also designed the Museum of Natural History and Fine Arts Gallery in Balboa Park for the 1935 Exposition. He was elected a fellow of the A.I.A. in 1939.

Louis J. Gill (1885-1969), a 1911 graduate of Syracuse University, came to San Diego that same year. Working in the office of his uncle, Irving J. Gill, he assisted with the plans for numerous San Diego buildings. That partnership dissolved in 1919. Gill was mainly responsible for the administrative duties connected with the erection of the San Diego Civic Center. He was also the designer of many residences, churches and medical centers in San Diego. Best remembered for his design of the San Diego Zoo, he planned the buildings, cages, animal grottos, research hospital and the largest bird cage in the world. Appointed to the California State Board of Architectural Examiners in 1929, Gill was chosen president in 1933. He was elected a fellow of the A.I.A. in 1942.

Landscape Architect of the San Diego County Administration Building:

Roland S. Hoyt (1896-1968), the landscape architect of the San Diego Civic Center, was a graduate of Iowa State College with post graduate work in landscaping at Harvard University. Appointed editor of California Garden, published in San Diego, he served in this position, heading the oldest newspaper of its kind in the U.S., for many years. Landscape architect for Presidio Park and the 1935 San Diego Exposition, he served as

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special consultant for the landscaping of Mission Bay Park. Elected in 1964 a fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects, he was the first San Diegan so honored and one of the first eight in the nation to achieve that status.

Sculptor for the San Diego County Administration Building:

Donal Hord (1902-1966), studied sculpture and art in San Diego, in Santa Barbara at the school of the Arts, and in Mexico where he was inspired by Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros. Considered one of the greatest of American sculptors in 1936, he was commissioned by the W.P.A. with the assistance of private funds to create a Civic Center fountain. He chose to create from San Diego County granite a pioneer woman holding an olla on her shoulder which symbolized the guardianship of water exemplifying San Diego's constant task of obtaining and guarding one of its most precious materials - water. Hord received many fellowships, awards and honors for his work, including the Award of Merit Medal of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Fine Arts Medal of the A.I.A. He was named Fellow of the American Sculpture Society, full Academician of the National Academy of Design and named a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

The period of significance extends into 1939 because in June of that year the statue and fountain, designed in 1936, were put in place. The exceptional importance qualifying the statue and fountain to be part of the nomination is that this work has strong intrinsic merit as a fine example of W.P.A. public art. It was designed by the noted American sculptor, Donal Hord, who was at his creative pinnacle when he designed this work in 1936. Most importantly though the work is an integral part of the resource's total environment and contributes greatly to the overall design which includes the art, architecture and landscaping. The resource is a significant example of the interaction of three disciplines. The overall significance of the Civic Center would be diminished without the inclusion of the statue and fountain.

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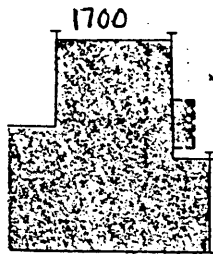
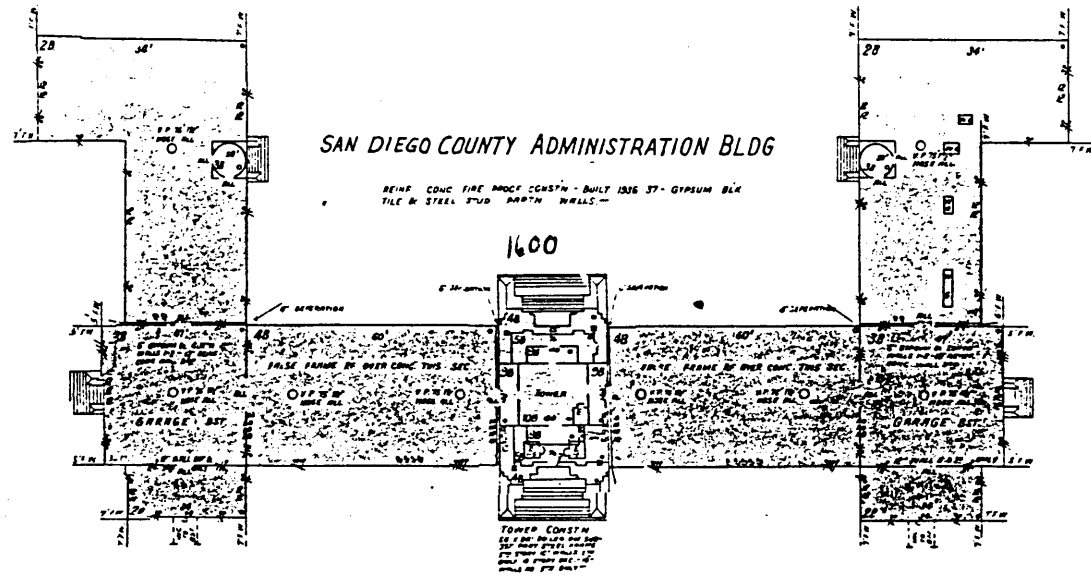
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Young, Laura. "The Silent Sentinel: Samuel Wood Hamill, F.A.I.A." Journal of San Diego History. Volume XXXI, No. 1, Winter 1985.

PACIFIC HWY.

GRAPE ST.

ASH ST.



San Diego Civic Center
 1600 Pacific Highway
 San Diego, San Diego Co.
 California

HARBOR DR.
 Scale 1/4" = 8'