

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

AUG 22 1994

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 Ramona Town Hall

other names/site number Town Hall of Nuevo, Ramona Town Hall, Barnett Hall

2. Location

street & number 729 Main Street not for publication
city, town Ramona vicinity
state California code CA county San Diego code 073 zip code 92065

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: [X] private, [] public-local, [] public-State, [] public-Federal
Category of Property: [X] building(s), [] district, [] site, [] structure, [] object
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing (1), Noncontributing (0 buildings, 0 sites, 0 structures, 0 objects, Total 1)

Name of related multiple property listing:
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official: [Signature] Date: 8/15/94
California 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:

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

- [] removed from the National Register.
[] other, (explain):

Edem H. Beall Entered in the National Register 9/26/94

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: Financial Institution

Work In Progress

Social: Meeting Hall

Government: Correctional Facility, courthouse

Education/ School, Library

Recreation/Culture: Auditorium

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

(enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque

foundation Granite

walls Brick Veneer

roof Asphalt

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Ramona Town Hall is a two story community meeting hall located on Highway 78 (Main Street) Ramona, San Diego County, California. Since its dedication in 1894, until it was closed for major restoration in 1986, the hall was in continuous use as a principal public gathering place for social, recreational and civic activities.

The floor plan is of "T" configuration. The top of the "T" is a two story Main street facade while the bottom of the "T" is a single story, 40' x 80' main hall. The street elevation consists of an arched central entrance leading through the outer lobby and a foyer into the main hall. On either side of the outer lobby are the east and west office rooms and the larger east and west wings.

The 22 inch thick exterior walls are made of local adobe and pressed brick veneer placed on cement and stone foundations. Interior walls and ceilings are wood lath and plaster. A 42 inch high wood wainscot of beaded tongue and groove paneling with chair rail and wide base board is typical in all rooms. One fireplace remains in the west wing, including an abandoned chimney in the main hall.

The floor level of the entire structure rises 20 inches above the side walk elevation, typical of the early period construction, affording a "front porch view" down onto Main street. The 16' x 20' outer lobby, opens to the street, providing a sheltered gathering place and a location for community bulletin board display. Doors within this lobby allow entrance to the east and west office rooms as well as the main hall and the second floor. All doors on the ground floor are designed with a transom window.

The east and west wings are 28' x 25' and 25' x 40' respectively and feature 15' high ceilings typical of all rooms on the first floor. A walk in vault with steel door remains in the east wing as a reminder of earlier times when this wing was occupied by the State Bank. Each wing has a rear window, a front and rear exit including a glass store front facade on Main street.

From a door in the outer lobby, a staircase leads to the second floor. The upstairs area is 40' x 90' and features six dormer windows, including three small arched windows visible on the street facade. A portion of the ceilings of the exposed hips and valleys and some walls are paneled with tongue and groove, beaded pattern paneling typical of the period. The upstairs area housed Ramona's first high school, a movie projection room, Volunteer Firemen's meeting quarters, museum and many other organizations.

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)

Social History

Politics/Government

Significant Person

Period of Significance

1894 - 1944

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Hebbard, William Sterling/Architect

Samuels, T. O./Builder

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

The Ramona Town Hall is historically significant for its long association with the development of civic and social life of the town of Ramona and surrounding back-country from 1894 until the latter part of the 20th century.

The town hall is the hub around which the town of Ramona grew and has been a most important gathering place used by residents of the region for over 90 years. It served as the first public library and remained in that location for forty-five years. It housed the first high school classes. It was the community dance hall, movie theatre, courthouse, community theatre, first banking facility, museum and town meeting hall. The Chamber of Commerce (first called The Ramona Improvement Society), the Masons, various church groups, the Grange and many service organizations first began meeting in the town hall.

The town hall continued to serve in this significant capacity until it was closed in 1986 in preparation for historic restoration and seismic retrofit.

Historical background and significance:

The unincorporated town of Ramona (called Nuevo until 1895) is located thirty five miles north east of the city of San Diego, situated in the Santa Maria Valley, San Diego County, California. The first white owners of this area were Jose joaquin Ortega and Edward Stokes who received this large tract as a land grant from Mexican governor, Manuel Micheltorena in 1843-44. This grant of approximately 17,700 acres, was known as Rancho Valle De Pamo, later renamed Rancho Santa Maria.

In 1872, Juan B. Arrambide purchased all but 1000 acres of this tract and transferred title to Bernard Etcheverry in 1874. Etcheverry in 1886, sold 3855 acres to The Santa Maria Land and Water Co. headed by Milton Santee, who proceeded to lay out the original township known as Nuevo.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 Less than one acre

UTM References

A

111	512750	3651601510
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

Zone	Easting	Northing

C

--	--	--

D

--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Darrell Beck
organization Ramona Town Hall, Inc. date 28 March 1994
street & number P.O. Box 845 telephone (619) 789-1898 or 789-2534
city or town Ramona state CA zip code 92065

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Ramona Town Hall
San Diego County, CA

Description

A pair of doors lead from the outer lobby into the foyer and then into the main hall. Restrooms and storage areas are accessed from both sides of the foyer (these were originally cloak rooms before inside plumbing existed.)

The Main hall is 40' x 80', including a stage on the north end of the room. Stage doors on both sides of the elevated stage lead to dressing rooms and exit doors backstage. Three tall, double hung windows, including an exit door are spaced evenly on each side wall. The coved ceiling, originally lath and plaster with a stencil design along walls, above the windows, is 23' high. The floor is maple over a redwood sub-floor. The attic over the main hall is ventilated by four dormer roof vents.

The roof is framed at a 7:12 pitch with hips at the east and west wings and at the north end of the main hall, including a gable at the entrance facade. The original roofing material was wood shingle. Currently the roof is asphalt shingle.

Physical evidence indicates the building suffered major damage due to heavy rainfall shortly after it was built (Town Hall records indicate 1895). The west wall of the main hall has a large outward bulge and reveals extensive attempt to repair; including heavy iron tie rods, using exterior "S" brackets being placed across the main hall in an attempt to hold the walls together. The rods were later removed when the hall was used as a basketball court.

Another tie rod was placed across the entire 90' facade through the attic and two other rods were installed to hold the street facade which had separated from the main structure.

The brick parapets on the east and west wings were removed and replaced with frame and stucco construction; the east wing being done in 1937, the west wing in 1925.

The west adobe wall in the west wing collapsed in 1983 and has been properly replaced to provide structural stability and historic integrity.

All of the past structural adobe damage seems to have resulted either from inadequate roof cover, rain water backing up around the parapet walls and seeping into the adobe, or due to settling of saturated soil.

It is recorded that four dormer windows were added to the upstairs loft, including other improvements in September of 1894 to accommodate the first high school classes. A major restoration occurred in 1948, including an exterior kitchen addition behind the west wing.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

Ramona Town Hall
San Diego County, CA

Description (continued)

Many other undocumented alterations and repairs have been made over the years, however much of the historic fabric remains.

The Ramona Town Hall Board of Trustees is now working with the State Historic Preservation Office of California, San Diego County General Services, County of San Diego Department of Planning and Land Use and other agencies in an effort to restore this most significant historic resource.

The board has contracted with architect Mark Lyon and Associates of La Jolla, CA, for structural and seismic plans for this project. Most notable, new seismic ordinances now require major additional seismic retrofit to the unreinforced adobe walls of this structure. All work has been approved through the State Historic Preservation Office in Sacramento, California.

The Ramona Town Hall Board contracted with The Augustine Co., of Encinitas, California in August 1993, to perform work to complete Phase One, including seismic retrofit of the front portion of the structure, restoration of historic facade, remove and replace roofing on entire building including plywood shear panel and completion of west wing, entry and restroom.

This project is funded by PLDO (County Park Land Dedication) and CDBG (Community Development Block Grant). The project commenced on September 20, 1993, and the first phase contract was completed on February 9, 1994.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Ramona Town Hall
San Diego County, CA

Statement of Significance (continued)

Soon the small community began to add all the necessary elements of a town. Santee built the Nuevo Hotel in 1887, the first township school house opened in 1888, Jerman's drug store in 1889, the Friends Church organized in 1892 and James A. Jasper brought his newspaper (The Sentinel) to Nuevo from Julian in 1893. along with these and other civic and business developments, families were moving into the area to settle the valleys, bringing their cattle, sheep and farming expertise with them. Soon a solid farming community was well established on the former mission and rancho lands.

Early pioneers, William Augustus Barnett and Martha Carleton Barnett settled on the southern edge of the Santa Maria Valley about 1877 and ultimately owned over 1300 acres in the area. Although Barnett made most of his fortune in the field of finance, he gained stature in the community as a progressive farmer and was one of the area's largest producers of honey.

Barnett aided greatly in the cultural and civic development of the town by donating The Town Hall to be used by the citizens of Nuevo (Ramona). It was due to a rather heated local controversy and difference of opinion concerning the "illmannered" nature of dances being held in the little district school houses at the time that prompted Barnett to provide a large hall for those community dances. It was also Barnett's desire to establish a public library, and in accordance with his wishes, the west wing of the building was set aside for that purpose.

San Diego architect, William Sterling Hebbard was hired by Barnett in 1893 to design the town hall structure. Hebbard selected native materials of adobe with brick veneer for the 22" thick exterior walls of the two story hall.

The hall was built by contractor T. O. Samuels on property donated by Milton Santee, consisting of two 50' x 150' town lots located on the north side of Main street (State Route 78) providing 100' of street frontage.

At the dedication ceremony on February 22, 1894, a Deed of Trust, providing specific instructions by its benefactor was presented by Mr. Barnett, to Irving F. Winnek, acting chairman of a five member, self perpetuating board of trustees and to each of their successors in interest hereafter provided.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8,9,10 Page 2

Ramona Town Hall
San Diego County, CA

Statement of Significance (continued)

With the new building now ready for occupancy, the hall quickly became the primary gathering place for community affairs of every nature. Many photographs, depicting life in the town of Ramona, often included a backdrop view of the prominent town hall. Newspaper accounts over the following years provide excellent documentation and attest to the significance of the town hall and its growing role in the civic and social life of a typical small American town during the latter part of the 19th century and much of the 20th century.

The Ramona Town Hall was incorporated in 1975 and declared tax exempt in 1976. The present board of trustees continue to conduct the affairs of the town hall as prescribed by Barnett in the original trust deed, filed March 7, 1894 and in accordance with the corporation guidelines of the State of California.

The Ramona Town Hall was approved as a Point of Historical Interest by the California Landmarks Advisory Committee January 26, 1973 and was assigned an Historic (H) Designator by the County of San Diego in 1991.

Bibliography

Flanigan, Kathleen. William Sterling Hebbard: Consummate San Diego Architect. The Journal of San Diego History. (Winter 1987)

Le Menager, Charles R. Ramona and Roundabout. Ramona, CA. Eagle Peak Publishing Co. 1989

Meyer, Ruth S., Editor with Bowen, Russell and Ransom, Leona B. Historic Buildings of the Ramona Area. Ramona, CA. Ramona Pioneer Historical Society, 1975.

Pierce, Rollin W. Story History of Ramona. (Ramona, Typescript Reprinted by Ramona Coordinating Council, August 1971).

The Ramona Sentinel 10 Sept., 1948.

The Sentinel (Nuevo) 22 Feb.; 27 Sept., 1894.

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 17-18, Block 40 Ramona, California

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the town hall.

SKETCH MAP

Map Drawn by D. Beck
FROM MAP 644 - RAMONA
BLKS 8, 26 & 40

SAN DIEGO COUNTY ASSESSOR'S MAP
BOOK 281 - PAGE 31

Ramona Town Hall
San Diego Co.
CA

