

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

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

For HCRS use only
received OCT 6 1980
date entered 10/7 1980

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Old Post Office

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 123 4th Street ___ not for publication

city, town Albuquerque, ___ vicinity of congressional district #1

state New Mexico code 35 county Bernalillo code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" 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 General Services Administration: Mr. Neal Crowley, Building Manager

street & number P. O. Box 1129

city, town Albuquerque ___ vicinity of state New Mexico 87103

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bernalillo County Clerk's Office

street & number 505 Central Avenue N.W.

city, town Albuquerque ___ vicinity of state New Mexico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

State Register of Cultural Properties
title Historic Landmarks Survey of Albuquerque is this property been determined eligible? yes no

date September 16, 1980 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Historic Landmarks Survey of Albuquerque, Planning Division

city, town Albuquerque ___ vicinity of state New Mexico

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Present and Original Physical Appearance:

At the corner of 4th Street and Gold Avenue, in the heart of Albuquerque's Central Business District, is the city's oldest remaining federally-built structure. The three-story Old Post Office was built in 1908, an elegantly restrained building for its time; according to the cornerstone the supervising architect was James Knox Taylor. It resembles a simple Tuscan country house with its flat-topped hipped red tile roof, symmetrical fenestration, arched first-story windows and doorways, deep bracketed roof overhang and plain cream-colored stucco facing. Set back from the northwest corner of 4th and Gold, its landscaping provides one of the few green and shaded spaces in downtown Albuquerque. Originally the building appeared to be a perfect square when viewed from the south or east, as clearly evidenced in the early 1920's photograph. Only at the northwest corner was the square broken by a narrow diagonal face joining the west and north facades. Two arched entrances into the original building, one facing Gold and one on Fourth, are flanked by ornate lanterns. Short gently curving stairs lead to the doors; a simple iron grille fills in the arch above each door.

Arched windows are evenly spaced at either side of each doorway. The second story windows are each underlain by a plain bracketed stone sill and above these a molding wraps around the entire building setting off the third story windows from the rest of the facade. A small simply ornamented iron balcony front each upper-story window. These windows are placed just under the Italianate bracketed overhang of the roof. A red tile roofed dormer with a small arched window breaks the roof line at the southeast corner, approximately where the 1920's photo seems to show a chimney. The dormer presumably was added later to house equipment for the building's first elevator (see below).

An addition to the original building, almost identical in style, was built on the west end of the Old Post Office, probably sometime in the late '20's. The fenestration, arched windows and doorway, window ornamentation and red tile roof match exactly. From Gold Avenue the only noticeable differences are a straight, rather than curved stairway to the door and a slight 1 foot setback of the entire addition. This newer building is basically an oblong extending to the alley on the north; in the space between the 1908 structure and the addition a one-story loading bay with a cooling tower above has been added in a much more functional style. The bay is completely hidden from the front by an extension of the addition connecting it to the Old Post Office.

The Fourth Street doorway is now the main entrance to the older building, the entrance on Gold having been blocked up. To the left of the Fourth Street entrance lobby is a marble staircase curving up three floors around an elaborate cast iron elevator shaft. The elevator appears to have been installed after the staircase was built since the shaft cuts into the stair handrail in several places. It has

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been replaced by a modern elevator on the west of the original building. Morning sunlight streams in the high arched windows of the lobby, illuminating the white painted classical mouldings around the office doorways and the grey and white marble floor. Artificial light is provided by lanterns hung from the 20-foot ceiling. When the new Dennis Chavez Federal Building at 5th and Gold was built to include a post office, the first floor interior of the 1908 Post Office was remodeled to include more office space. Ceilings on the upper floors were lowered, yet the oak woodwork on these floors retains its natural finish and is in excellent condition. Most of the office doors still have working transoms.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" 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)

Why Property is Important:

The Old Post Office building is important primarily for its architectural contribution to the historic core of Albuquerque's Central Business District. A handsome and finely-detailed building, it was constructed in an unusual style for Albuquerque, in 1908. Since then, it has been an important element of downtown life, and it remains one of the city's most attractive and interesting buildings. In heavy use by a number of federal agencies, the Old Post Office has seen some interior partitioning and remodelling, but could easily be restored.

The Old Post Office is the earliest of Albuquerque's federal buildings still standing. A 1908 city promotional pamphlet proudly notes that plans for a new Post Office building were approved since in 1907 Albuquerque went into the first post office class, having exceeded the \$40,000 turnover required. The expected cost of the building was \$100,000. A drawing of the proposed building in the pamphlet shows a simple 2-story structure with an extra 1/2 story at basement level. The only visible entrance is an elaborate arched doorway on the southeast corner crowned with a large ornamented pediment, resulting in a highly unbalanced facade. The present building is much more satisfying with its restrained details and welcoming symmetry.

The finished building, as is usually the case, cost much more than the projected figure; Twitchell's Leading Facts of New Mexican History (Vol. III, 1917) notes "a fine government Post Office Building erected at the cost of \$200,000." Twitchell goes on to say that the building already "is not adequate for the purposes to which it is given over - post office, court, and other tenants - and the general government is expected soon to make provision for another and larger structure in keeping with the city's demands." (p.10) Within the next 13 years an addition was built to the 1908 building and the grander 1930 Federal Building was erected.

The supervising architect for the Old Post Office was James Knox Taylor and the contractor was Anders Anson, who went bankrupt due to changes in construction plans. We have been unable to learn more about Mr. Taylor; a request for information from the General Services Administration Historic Officer in Fort Worth has not yet been answered.

The Old Post Office is a fine reminder of the care and human scale with which government buildings were once built, and a very important architectural element in the historic core of downtown Albuquerque.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Albuquerque, 1908, promotional pamphlet, Albuquerque Public Library
Leading Facts of New Mexican History, Vol. III. R. E. Twitchell, 1917
Form A, Anson Flats
Photograph, c. 1925, from collections of Museum of Albuquerque

10. Geographical Data **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Acreeage of nominated property $\frac{1}{2}$ acre

Quadrangle name Albuq. West NM

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

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

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 13-19, Block 18 of the Original Townsite of the City of Albuquerque; property is located at NW corner of Gold Avenue and Fourth Street.

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 Mary P. Davis, Historian

organization Historic Landmarks Survey of Albuquerque date June 16, 1980

street & number 419 Central Avenue N.W. telephone (505) 766-4720

city or town Albuquerque, NM state New Mexico

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

Thomas W. McEl

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9-24-80

For HCRS use only

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

Bob Groves
Keeper of the National Register

date 11/12/80

Attest:
Chief of Registration

date