



56-1218

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Federal Building  
Other names/site number F. Edward Hébert Federal Building

2. Location

Street & Number 600 S. Maestri Place Not for Publication N/A  
City or Town New Orleans Vicinity N/A  
State Louisiana Code LA County Orleans Code 071  
Zip Code 70130

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 5/3/2017  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Federal Preservation Officer, U.S. General Services Administration  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
[Signature] SHPO 3-1-17  
Signature of commenting official Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register [Signature] Signature of Keeper 6-19-2017 Date of Action  
 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):

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	0	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	___	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	___	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	___	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	<input type="checkbox"/> total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   1  

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
Upper Central Business District, Orleans Parish, LA

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Government</u> <u>Government</u> _____ _____	Sub: <u>Government Office</u> <u>Post Office</u> _____ _____
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Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Government</u> <u>Government</u> _____ _____	Sub: <u>Government Office</u> <u>Post Office</u> _____ _____
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**7. Description**

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement: Art Deco  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation <u>concrete</u> roof <u>tar and gravel</u> walls <u>stone/limestone</u> walls <u>stone/granite</u> other <u>(windows &amp; doors) metal/aluminum</u> <u>(windows &amp; doors) metal/bronze</u> <u>(windows &amp; doors) glass</u> <u>(structure) steel</u>	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
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**Summary**

The F. Edward Hébert Federal Building (Federal Building) is an Art Deco style eleven story structure that occupies almost an entire city block in New Orleans' Central Business District. Symmetrical in organization at each elevation, it forms an elongated rectangle in plan at the basement and ground floor levels, gradually transitioning to an elongated "U" shape above the third floor in order to frame a large open light well at the rear (south facade). It has a flat, tar-and-gravel roof surrounded by a parapet wall. Of steel-frame construction, the facade's key material is Alabama limestone ashlar. Red granite veneer clads the base of the

building, including its cheek walls and door surrounds at the first floor. Two fine examples of limestone bas-relief sculpture flank the two public entrances and four free-standing eagle sculptures sit atop the building's cheek walls.

Please see Section 7 Continuation Sheets.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.  
Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Politics/Government

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Period of Significance

1939-1941

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Dates

N/A

Architect/Builder

Cheney, Howard Lovewell (Consulting Architect)  
Lang, Karl Frederick (Sculptor)  
Scheler, Armin A. (Sculptor)  
S.N. Nielson Company, Chicago (Gen. Contractor)

**Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)**

The Federal Building is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C at the local level with a period of significance of 1939-1941.

The building is eligible under criterion A at the local level as a significant representation of the federal presence in New Orleans. It represents the culmination of a major, decade-long effort on the part of the New Orleans Association of Commerce, local and federally elected officials, and other New Orleans area stakeholders, to develop a new federal building in New Orleans.

The building is eligible under criterion C at the local level both as a well-executed example of the Art Deco style in New Orleans and as a significant work of architect Howard Lovewell Cheney while at the peak of his creative abilities, culminating in the seminal design for (Reagan) National Airport (1940-1941) in Washington, D.C.

Please see Section 8 Continuation Sheets.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Please see Section 9 Continuation Sheets.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

## Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of repository: U.S. GSA, Region 7

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property one (1) acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
1	15	782712	3316563	3	15	782801	3316585
2	15	782791	3316547	4	15	782716	3316609

See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Federal Building is located at 600 S. Maestri Place (formerly South Street), between Camp Street and St. Charles Avenue, adjacent to Lafayette Square, in Orleans Parish, New Orleans, Louisiana.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary is consistent with the historic boundary of the property.

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/Title	Carson Anderson, Senior Architectural Historian		
Organization	ICF Jones & Stokes	Date	07/30/2007, rev. 7/10/2009
Street & Number	811 W. 7 <sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 800	Telephone	(213) 627-5376
City or Town	Los Angeles	State	CA
		Zip Code	90017

Name	Sherry Frear		
Organization	U.S. General Services Administration	Date	02/06/2017
Street & Number	1800 F Street, NW	Telephone	(202) 297-0812
City or Town	Washington	State	DC
		Zip Code	20005

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**Additional Documentation**

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The following are included with this form:

Continuation sheets

Maps

USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

Sketch map indicating the building's footprint and location within the City of New Orleans.

Photographs

**LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

*Photographer:* Carson Anderson, ICF Jones & Stokes

*Date of photographs:* June 19, 2005\*

*Negatives:* GSA Headquarters, Office of the Chief Architect

1. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0001, exterior view, facing southwest, north (primary) facade
2. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0002, exterior view, facing southwest, northeast public entrance pavilion.
3. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0003, exterior view, facing northwest, south facade
4. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0004, exterior view, facing northeast, east facade
5. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0005, exterior view, facing east, northwest public entrance pavilion
6. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0006, exterior view, bas-relief sculpture at northwest public entrance
7. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0007, exterior view, detail, eagle sculpture at northeast entrance
8. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0008, exterior view, detail of northeast lobby entrance doors
9. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0009, interior view, main lobby vestibule, typical
10. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0010, interior detail, first floor, main lobby, bronze door
11. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0011, interior detail, first floor, main lobby bronze panel above bronze door
12. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0012, interior detail, first floor lobby, directory and clock
13. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0013, interior detail, first floor, typical wood door
14. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0014, interior detail, typical upper floor corridor, eighth floor
15. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0015, Interior detail, typical upper floor elevator lobby, tenth floor
16. LA\_Orleans\_Parish\_Federal\_Building\_0016, interior detail, typical upper floor elevator lobby flooring detail, tenth floor

\*Although the photographs date to 2005, they accurately reflect the current appearance of the building.

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

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Organization U.S. General Services Administration, Region 7 Telephone (817) 978-2871

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Street & Number 819 Taylor Street, Room 11A30

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City or Town Fort Worth State TX Zip Code 76102

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

*Federal Building  
Orleans Parish, LA*

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### Description

#### Overview

From the time of its completion in 1939, the F. Edward Hébert Federal Building (Federal Building) has been a visual landmark in its setting adjoining Lafayette Square in downtown New Orleans, Orleans Parish, Louisiana. Located at 600 S. Maestri Place (formerly South Street), between Camp Street and St. Charles Avenue, it is an excellent example of the work of Chicago-based architect Howard Lovewell Cheney, working under the supervision of the Office of Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department during the 1930s. The Federal Building is an excellent example of the Art Deco style, with its simple, planar treatment of wall surfaces, a block-like expression of the building massing, and limited, abstracted detailing. Two fine examples of limestone bas-relief sculpture adjoin each public entrance, and four free-standing, streamlined eagle sculptures top the building's cheek walls. Although some reversible alterations have occurred on the exterior, and more extensive alterations have been made on the interior, the Federal Building retains a high degree of integrity with respect to its setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The Federal Building is bordered by Camp Street on the east; S. Maestri Place on the north; and Girod Street on the south. At the west side of the building, Eagle Alley and the Lafayette Hotel separate the building from St. Charles Avenue. The building occupies almost an entire medium-sized city block in the city's Central Business District. It is a large, eleven story structure, with a full basement and a flat, tar-and-gravel roof surrounded by a parapet wall. Symmetrical in organization at each elevation, it forms an elongated rectangle in plan at the basement and ground floor levels, gradually transitioning to an elongated "U" shape above the third floor in order to frame a large open light well at the rear (south façade). The Federal Building contains a total of approximately 244,000 square feet of floor area. Of steel-frame construction, the facade is Alabama limestone ashlar with red granite veneer at the base, cheek walls, and first floor door surrounds.

#### EXTERIOR DESIGN

##### Principal Facade (North Elevation)

The north elevation of the Federal Building serves as its principal facade; it faces historic Lafayette Square and includes the public entrances through two separate portals. This facade consists of a wide center pavilion that is ten stories in height, ten bays in width, and set back at the tenth floor, flanked on both its east and west sides by eleven-story corner pavilions that step back from the center pavilion approximately fifteen feet, beginning at the third floor. These corner pavilions step back again approximately eighteen feet at the east and west ends of the building. This use of setbacks at the building corners and the upper stories, along with ribbon-like window bays in the central pavilion, subtly express the skyscraper imagery that characterized office tower design across the United States during the late 1920s and 1930s.

The roofline of the eleven-story corner pavilions is marked by a parapet which extends seamlessly above the eleventh floor. By contrast, the ten-story center pavilion has a cornice at the tenth floor comprised of an ovolo molding at the top, a small fascia band below, and a fillet band at the base.

Two public entrances are located at the principal facade: one at the northeast corner and the second at the northwest corner. The entrances are expressed as two-story pavilions, four bays wide, with three of the four bays projecting slightly beyond the face of the center pavilion, and the fourth bay stepping back past the face of the center pavilion.



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*Federal Building  
Orleans Parish, LA*

This fourth bay is distinguished from the other bays by groupings of square-shaped decorative openings which conceal the restroom windows, for privacy, from view. These openings are in groupings of ten and eight (first and second floors, respectively). Concrete steps clad with red granite provide access to the entrance pavilions. The staircases have an "L"-shaped plan, providing access from both the front and sides. Both entrance pavilions are flanked by cheek walls.

Each entrance pavilion contains three separate, deeply inset doorways with polished red granite reveals. Above each door is a two-story window of mullioned fixed sash with two-by-three-foot lights. The current sash and mullions are replacements; they are fabricated of anodized aluminum with a light bronze-colored finish that appears to match in color the building's original bronze features.

Above each entrance, the words "United States of America" appear in sans-serif capital letters carved into the limestone. At the east entrance, the lettering may be considered to be "left-justified," starting above the easternmost door; at the west entrance, the lettering is "right-justified," ending above the westernmost door. The building's current name, "F. Edward Hébert Federal Building," appears in brass serif capital letters centered above the first floor windows of the center pavilion. F. Edward Hébert (1901-1979) was a Democrat elected to the House of Representatives in 1940 and to the seventeen succeeding Congresses, serving from January 3, 1941 until January 3, 1977.<sup>1</sup>

Bas-relief sculptures of Alabama limestone appear on both the east side of the west entrance and on the west side of the east entrance. The bas-relief at the west entrance depicts three agricultural workers cutting and gathering sugar cane, an allusion to the significant role that sugar production played in Louisiana's economy. The bas-relief at the east entrance depicts construction workers engaged in flood control activities, alluding to the crucial role flood control efforts along the Mississippi River play in ensuring the survival and prosperity of the New Orleans and southern Louisiana region. The sculptures, which are approximately nineteen-feet tall and eight-feet wide, are excellent examples of a style of public art from the 1930s termed "American Regionalism."

The two cheek walls along Camp Street and the two inner cheek walls along S. Maestri Place are surmounted by four large, highly stylized eagle sculptures. The eagles, which are intended to symbolize the authority of the federal government, are carved of red granite and are depicted as standing with wings raised and drawn straight back as in preparation for flight. There are two eagle sculptures along S. Maestri Place and two along Camp Street. Each is approximately three-feet in height and four-feet in length, and placed facing one another along the two referenced streets.

The building's original steel window sash have been replaced with anodized aluminum vinyl-coated sash that match the originals in appearance in all key respects. These replacements consist of: two-over-two-light sash at the eleventh floor; four-over-four-light sash at the third through ninth floors; six-over-four-light sash at the second floor; and eight-over-six-light double-hung sash at the first floor. The windows feature square-shaped panes of glass and are detailed in such a way as to resemble operable casement sash. They are a blue-green color to evoke patinated bronze metal and contrast with the pale off-white color of the limestone cladding. The window detailing on the principal facade diverges slightly from that seen elsewhere on the building. Both the entrance pavilions and the windows in the center pavilion (floors three through nine only) are inset within long, ribbon-like, vertically aligned bays.

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<sup>1</sup> Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=H000437>, accessed February 6, 2017. General Services Administration, Asset Business Plan, August 23, 2016.

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*Federal Building  
Orleans Parish, LA*

In the spirit of skyscraper design during the late 1920s and 1930s, both the window size and the number of window lights are reduced from the base to the top of the building. For example, at the first floor level, the windows are very tall, narrow fourteen-light sash. These transition to shorter but similarly narrow ten-light sash at the second floor. On floors three through ten, the windows are less elongated in shape, with eight lights each. This design of decreasing both the window size and number of window lights subtly accentuates the verticality of the building's massing.

### **East and West Facades (Side Elevations)**

These facades are expressed as unrelieved expanses of wall. Limited articulation occurs with stepped-back corners and a setback of the eleventh floor (penthouse level). On the east facade (Camp Street side), the red-granite-clad cheek walls, cheek wall sculptures, and plant bed with red granite curbing provide interest at the pedestrian level. On the west facade there is no cheek wall, although a five-foot-high band of red granite cladding continues around from the front facade (S. Maestri Place). The west facade has been modified with a ramped entrance, with a dog-legged ramp running from S. Maestri Place, parallel to the building, and turning to connect to the building.

The windows on the side elevations of the building are vinyl-coated aluminum and consist of two-over-two-light sash at the eleventh floor, four-over-four-light sash at the third through ninth floors, six-over-four-light sash at the second floor, and eight-over-six-light sash at the first floor. All sash are a blue-green color with square-shaped panes of glass, and are detailed in such a way as to resemble the original operable casement sash.

At the west facade (Church Street/alley), the windows in the eighth (southernmost) bay at each floor have been replaced with slightly recessed limestone panels. At the rear of this elevation, overlooking the loading dock and service area (fronting the Girod Street/south side of the property), the seventh-bay (innermost) windows at each floor have been similarly altered with slightly inset limestone panels. Likewise, at the rear of the east facade (Camp Street), the first- (outermost) and seventh-bay (innermost) windows have been replaced with slightly inset limestone panels. Originally, these bays' windows lighted interior stairwells.

### **Rear Facade (South Elevation)**

The non-loading dock portions of the rear (south) facade are clad with limestone and have window details that match those on the building's other facades (second floor level and above); however, the portion of the building fronting Girod Street has a utilitarian character due to the presence at the first floor of the subterranean garage entrance/exit, loading dock, and drive-up-delivery parking bays. The building's heating and cooling equipment is partially visible above the third floor. Compositionally, this building elevation is comprised of a two-story center pavilion inset from the street. This center pavilion is twelve bays wide, and is flanked by eleven-story wings that extend forward to Girod Street. The western wing's first floor houses a two-vehicle parking area, while the eastern wing's former (matching) opening has been enclosed with polished red granite panels, two of which have square-cut openings patterned after the square-shaped decorative openings at the entrance pavilions.

The loading dock is the dominant visual element on this facade. It is comprised of a raised concrete deck edged with a yellow-painted wooden bumper. Centered on and extending perpendicular from the deck is a concrete ramp with yellow-painted curbing. Other elements include large cylindrical concrete and steel piers at roughly fifteen-foot intervals, off-white-colored brick cladding on the rear wall of the dock, paired and solitary metal doors with glass lights, and exposed-pipe fire sprinklers affixed to the ceiling. A thin, cantilevered concrete canopy extends out from the base of the building's second story over the deck and a portion of the asphalt-paved loading area. There appear to be numerous small unoriginal elements in the loading dock and its drive-up bays, including metal storage cages,

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*Federal Building  
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metal barriers, exposed electrical conduit affixed to the ceiling, a security monitoring booth, and surveillance cameras.

### Landscape

The Federal Building sits within an urban island of concrete. It is surrounded on all side by sidewalks, interrupted at the south by the driveways associated with the loading dock. Street trees are planted in grated tree pits along Camp Street. Landscape features directly associated with the Federal Building are limited to flagpoles at the principal facade's outer cheek walls and plant beds at S. Maestri Place and Camp Street. The center pavilion at S. Maestri Place is fronted by a plant bed with red granite curbing, which extends between and aligns with the inner cheek walls at the building's entrance pavilions. The plant bed at Camp Street likewise extends between and aligns with the cheek walls. The corners of the building at S. Maestri Place are wrapped by planting beds edged with red granite curbing which arcs from the outer cheek walls to align with the edges of the building, before turning back along the sides of the building. The beds are planted with a variety of woody and herbaceous plants.

### INTERIOR DESIGN

#### Lobby and First Floor

The formal pedestrian entrances to the building are located at the northeast and northwest corners of the principal (north) facade. The two separate portals, each with three sets of paired bronze doors, lead into two separate lobbies. Each set of doors is surmounted by a two-story tall expanse of windows comprised of two-by-three-foot panes of glass. Each doorsill is brass, while the doorframe and window mullions are bronze. Each door is inscribed on its bottom panel with a double, concentric circle pattern and features a distinctive door pull on the interior side comprised of horizontal bar that dips slightly on one end and curls under on the opposite end. These door pulls are supported below by two matching over-scaled quarter-round corbel-like brackets.

The entrance doors open into a shallow vestibule approximately six feet in depth. The space is enclosed by a grouping of three sets of bronze doors with a bronze-mullioned clear glass wall above. These doors are directly aligned with the exterior doors, and the window/door bays are identical in design to the exterior window/door bays. The vestibule wall is clad from floor-to-ceiling with buff-colored travertine marble. Passage through these inner bronze doors leads into a lobby. Vestibule and lobby floors are black terrazzo with brass strips in a grid of narrow, rectangular, and square-shaped panels (the panels being approximately two-by-four-feet, four-by-four-feet, and one-and-one-half-by-two-feet in dimension). Inset within this grid is additional brass stripping that forms abstract geometric patterns, including a Greek key pattern with intersecting wavy lines. By contrast, the postal station, which adjoins the building's west lobby, has a linoleum floor covering (probably not original to the building).

The two distinct, unconnected entrance lobbies are of very similar design, but reversed in plan. Each space has a floor-to-ceiling height of approximately twenty feet, with walls clad with buff-colored Montana travertine marble, and a ceiling of smooth plaster with bowl-shaped lighting fixture coves with bowl-shaped black metal pendant fixtures (possibly not original to the building). The elevators are the dominant feature in each lobby. They are grouped in a bank of three units on each lobby's south wall. Above each elevator is an internally-illuminated bronze elevator announcement sign reading "Next Elevator Up." A simple, bronze, rectangular-shaped elevator call button plate is located on the wall spandrel between the second and third elevators (it does not appear to be original). On the side wall adjoining each elevator bank is a tripartite grouping consisting of a bronze-framed dedication plaque flanked by directory boards with glass doors. Above the dedication plaque is a narrow bronze sign reading "Directory"; directly

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above this sign is a wall clock consisting of bronze hands and bronze tick marks (instead of numerals) affixed directly to the travertine cladding.

Other significant lobby elements include original panel-topped bronze doors opening from each of the lobbies (east and west walls, respectively), providing access to employee spaces. The door bays are slightly inset into the walls, with ten-inch-wide borders. Displayed on each door is a vertical array of three double, concentric disks, similar to the motif on the front entrance doors. A large panel over each door is adorned with a long bas-relief bronze laurel leaf frond, ribbon, and crosses, with a background of inset abstracted geometric shapes (circles, rectangles, and a Greek key).

The anodized aluminum doors on the east lobby interior walls leading into the center section of the building are replacement doors installed after postal operations were scaled back and this postal space was converted into offices, possibly in 1987. These replacement doors have a dark bronze-colored matte finish; a large, square-shaped, light; and contemporary panic (push) hardware. The postal station adjoining the west lobby features similar paired anodized aluminum replacement entrance doors with a dark bronze-colored matte finish. However, the postal station adjoining the west lobby has finishes that differ from the main lobby, including amber-glazed ceramic tile wainscoting (original building material) and replacement ceiling lighting with exposed wiring conduit connecting the light boxes.

Major renovation interventions to the building occurred in 1963, 1966, and 1987. Over the years, new features have been added to the lobby spaces to meet current communication, fire safety, and security requirements, including wall-mounted fire call-boxes, Braille signs on the bronze elevators' reveals, freestanding security screening machinery, a surveillance/visitor check-in desk (partially clad with travertine marble to match the interior wall surfaces), and approximately three-foot-tall bronze and glass barriers, affixed to the floors.

In addition, the center portion of the first floor has been converted from postal substation workspace into offices (previously used by the U.S. Department of the Treasury). Black terrazzo flooring appears to match the terrazzo in the public lobby spaces on the first floor. However, a majority of this space has been completely remodeled from floor to ceiling. Contemporary, black floor-to-ceiling anodized aluminum and glass walls (approximately five-feet wide) and suspended ceilings with removable, acoustical tile panels and flat light-boxes with translucent covers are found along the narrow corridor connecting the building's two entrance lobbies.

The east and west elevator lobby areas retain their integrity of use as public spaces. All alterations noted in the first floor lobbies are reversible in nature. Communications, fire safety, and security improvements have not materially diminished the integrity of the first floor lobby interiors with respect to location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

### **Eleventh Floor**

Extensive remodeling has changed the interior finishes over the years of floors two through ten, including office-demising walls, suspended ceilings with integral fluorescent lighting fixtures, new doors, and new flooring. By contrast, the eleventh floor interiors were less extensively modified; however, there were few significant architectural features, as it functioned as building storage and utilitarian space.

The key architectural materials on the eleventh floor are doors to the storage/utility rooms, custodian closets, restrooms, and stairwells. These are original metal-clad two-panel doors and metal-clad one-panel doors with integral vents. These doors retain their circa 1940 brass-plated doorknob hardware.

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### Tenth Floor

Both tenth floor elevator lobbies have retained many original elements, including beige-speckled terrazzo flooring with dark green terrazzo edging and integral base moldings, painted metal elevator door reveals, scored brass elevator door sill plates, bronze mail-drop-chutes, and bronze office directory boards with glass doors. However, these elevator lobbies are currently unenclosed spaces that open into the corridors. This condition reflects an alteration that is likely to have occurred as part of the building's extensive 1987 modernization. A majority of the other design elements appear to have been installed at a later date, including the suspended acoustical tile ceiling, appliqué wall coverings, elevator call buttons and back-plate, and Braille signs.

Offices are located along the building's outside walls. On the tenth floor, doors to utility closets, restrooms, and stairwells consist of many original metal-clad two-panel and metal-clad one-panel designs, the latter with integral vents. These doors retain their circa 1940 brass-plated doorknob hardware; a smaller number retain their original doorframe moldings. Non-paneled, fire-rated, wood replacement doors have been installed in the tenth floor office spaces that underwent renovation in 1987 or more recently. Original floor treatment, exclusive of the elevator lobby floors (terrazzo) and restrooms (ceramic tiles), was light gray-speckled linoleum. Much of this flooring material throughout the tenth floor, however, has been removed and replaced with wall-to-wall carpeting of recent date. Offices renovated in 2005 had original flooring materials removed down to the red-painted concrete sub-floors and feature steel-stud-and-drywall walls for intra-office partitions.

### Ninth Floor

Like the tenth floor elevator lobbies, the ninth floor elevator lobbies retain their original terrazzo flooring, elevator doors/doorsill plates, bronze mail-drop-chutes, and bronze office directory boards. Surviving, original doors (metal-clad with an integral vent) and metal-lath-and-plaster walls enclose the lobbies. A utility closet, restroom, and stairwell exit doors found in the adjoining corridors are original. However, the ninth floor office spaces were substantially remodeled during the 1990s, according to the building's facilities supervisor.<sup>2</sup> Original floor coverings have been removed and wall-to-wall carpeting has been installed over the concrete sub-flooring. Restrooms have also been updated with new tile flooring, toilets, and toilet doors; however, the original marble toilet stall partitions have been retained.

### Eighth Floor

As is the case for the ninth and tenth floors, the eighth floor elevator lobbies retain their original terrazzo flooring, elevator door/doorsill plates, bronze mail-drop-chutes, and bronze office directory boards. Original doors (metal-clad, with an integral vent) and metal-lath-and-plaster walls enclose the lobbies. These lobby doors and the metal-clad doors for adjoining corridor closets, restrooms, and exit stairwells appear to be original and retain their original brass-plated hardware. In some instances, e.g., doors along the corridor leading to the employee snack room, the doors retain their original trim and brass kick plates. However, as with the other upper floors, a majority of the door trim has been replaced with standard doorframes lacking decoration.

Suspended ceilings, wall finishes, and many intra-office demising walls are of recent date. Wallpaper dating from a recent modernization has been applied to the corridor's walls leading from the north elevator lobby, and light-colored, twelve-inch-square, gray-speckled linoleum, reminiscent of the original linoleum, covers the corridor floors. Restrooms retain marble toilet stall dividers but all other original features have been replaced.

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<sup>2</sup> Conversation with Mr. Ronnie Zitzmann, GSA New Orleans-area plant and facilities supervisor, June 13, 2005.

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### Sixth and Seventh Floors

The sixth and seventh floor elevator lobbies retain their original terrazzo flooring, elevator door/doorsill plates, bronze mail-drop-chutes, and bronze office directory boards. Original doors (metal-clad, with an integral vent) and metal-lath-and-plaster walls enclose the lobbies. These lobby doors and the doors to adjoining corridor closets, restrooms, and exit stairwells, appear to be original and retain their original brass-plated hardware. Most of the corridor flooring has new wall to-wall carpeting and dark gray vinyl baseboards. Suspended ceilings, wall finishes, and many of the intra-office demising walls appear to be of recent date. Restrooms retain marble toilet stall partitions but all other original features have been replaced.

### Third through Fifth Floors

As is the case for the sixth through tenth floors, the elevator lobbies retain their original terrazzo flooring, elevator door/doorsill plates, bronze mail-drop-chutes, and bronze office directory boards. However, the office spaces have undergone a nearly complete renovation, while scattered surviving corner offices and stairwell exits retain their original metal-clad doors and metal-lath-and-plaster walls.

### Second Floor

The second floor elevator lobbies retain their terrazzo flooring, elevator door/doorsill plates, bronze mail-drop-chutes, and bronze office directory boards. Original, metal-clad, integral-vent doors enclose the lobbies. The doors of corridor closets, restrooms, and exit stairwells appear to be original and retain their original brass-plated hardware. However, the office spaces were extensively remodeled in 2005.

### Basement

The basement is an unadorned space, utilitarian in design, and contains no significant architectural features. The space is comprised of a small staff parking area (center north chamber) and building utility and storage vaults. Massive reinforced concrete piers and columns compromise usable space. Floors are exposed reinforced concrete, walls are painted concrete block, and ceilings consist of concrete waffle-slab. The basement is accessed from the two (east and west) elevator lobbies; from five stairwells in the southeast, southwest, and northwest portions of the building (in which original metal-clad paneled doors featuring original brass-plated hardware have occasionally survived); and via a concrete vehicular ramp from the Girod Street parking garage entrance.

### ALTERATIONS

The first alterations to the building interior and exterior are believed to have occurred in 1955 and 1958 in connection with the initial occupancy and subsequent expansion of U.S. Weather Service monitoring offices and weather tracking equipment on the eleventh story.<sup>3</sup> A *New Orleans Times Picayune* October 19, 1958, article states that a forty-foot tower was proposed on the roof of the building, representing "the most modern equipment of its kind so far as weather research is concerned" and that it "replaced the pre-existing installation atop the building installed three years earlier." As part of the Weather Service-related alterations, a weather radar antenna and large-scale Raytheon electronic machinery was installed. Updating of office spaces, e.g., intra-office wall partition removal, new wall finishes, etc., likely occurred at this same time.

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<sup>3</sup> *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, October 19, 1958.

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Major conversions of office space first occurred in 1963 and 1966. In 1987, extensive structural and mechanical systems upgrade work was done, and the first large-scale effort to modernize the interiors may have occurred at that time.

Despite these alterations, the Federal Building retains a high degree of design integrity on its exterior. Replacement of the building's original steel casement windows with anodized aluminum vinyl-coated double-sash windows that replicate the look of casement-style windows represents the most significant alteration to the exterior. Replacement of the original windows has not significantly affected the building's integrity, however, because the new windows very closely match the original in design. The exterior therefore retains integrity of design, materials, location, workmanship, association, and feeling. Communications, fire safety, and security improvements, e.g., security surveillance cameras, lighting, and loading dock alterations, are reversible in nature and have not materially diminished the building's integrity with respect to location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Significant interior spaces include all first floor lobbies and the elevator lobbies above the first floor. These spaces retain integrity of use as public and semi-public spaces, as well as integrity of design, materials, location, workmanship, association, and feeling. Communications, fire safety, and security improvements to lobbies, e.g., security screening equipment, bronze and glass security partitions, and replacement elevator call buttons, are reversible in nature and have not diminished the building's integrity.

With the exception of the elevator lobbies, and retention of original doors to stairwell exits, restrooms, and utility/storage closets, interior changes have been fairly extensive above the first floor. Reconfiguration of office wall alignments, installation of suspended ceilings throughout the building, and removal of original flooring and wall finishes has been ongoing since 1987. The original office portions of the building were very simple in décor and were intended to be updated periodically to meet changing work needs and evolving mechanical technologies.

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### Significance

The Federal Building is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C at the local level with a period of significance of 1939-1941.

The building is eligible under criterion A as a significant representation of the federal presence in New Orleans. It represents the culmination of a major, decade-long effort on the part of the New Orleans Association of Commerce, local and federally elected officials, and other New Orleans area stakeholders, to develop a new federal building in New Orleans.

The building is eligible under criterion C both as a well-executed example of the Art Deco style in New Orleans and as a significant work of architect Howard Lovewell Cheney while at the peak of his creative abilities, culminating in the seminal design for (Reagan) National Airport (1940-1941) in Washington, D.C.

### New Orleans Political and Economic Context

The Great Depression had a pronounced impact on Louisiana residents. During the late 1920s, Louisiana had one of the highest levels of both poverty and unemployment in the United States.<sup>4</sup> By the start of the Great Depression in 1929, twelve percent of the state's population was receiving federal relief assistance.<sup>5</sup> As the agricultural and industrial sectors collapsed in the Gulf Region, families relocated from rural areas to cities such as New Orleans in search of employment. This placed a strain on already stretched relief resources and prompted local business leaders, elected officials, and other community stakeholders to vigorously lobby for an increased federal role in providing new employment opportunities. The population of New Orleans increased nearly eight percent during the 1930s.<sup>6</sup> Although this represented a drop from an 18 percent growth rate during the 1920s, this modest increase could not be absorbed by available employment opportunities and challenged local relief services.<sup>7</sup>

One of the key indications of how important the development of a new federal building in New Orleans was during the 1930s is the quantity of news coverage the issue received in the local press. For the period between May 1930 and July 1940, the subject index to the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, as well as the *Louisiana News Index*, lists approximately 100 references to the federal building's funding, siting, and construction issues.<sup>8</sup> This volume

<sup>4</sup> Edward H. Merrill, *Response to the Economic Collapse: The Great Depression of the 1930's*, Boston: Heath Publishers, 1964. Pamela Tyler, *Silk Stockings and Ballot Boxes: Women and Politics in New Orleans, 1920-1963*, Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996. Robert S. McElvaine, ed., "Encyclopedia of the Great Depression – An Electronic Resource," Independence, KY: Cengage Gale, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Table 16. Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1930," available at <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab16.txt>, and "Table 17. Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1940," available at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab17.txt>, accessed January 30, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Table 15. Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1920, <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab15.txt>, accessed January 30, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> This is the number of citations directly referencing the Federal Building project at Lafayette Square listed in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* Index, 1922-1944 card file, and the Louisiana News Index card files. The resource can be found at the New Orleans Public Library (Main), New Orleans City Archives – Louisiana History Division.



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of news coverage indicates that the business community, elected officials, and other local stakeholders viewed the enhanced federal government presence in New Orleans and the bolstering of local employment opportunities as a major community priority. In addition, a review of memoranda within and letters to and from the office of New Orleans Mayor Robert S. Maestri, between 1936 and 1940, indicates that while local stakeholders lobbied for construction of a new federal building in downtown New Orleans, a high-profile lobbying effort was also underway to retain all customs activities in New Orleans that were under consideration for relocation to Houston.<sup>9</sup> The building was thought to be the largest real estate transaction in New Orleans during the early years of the Great Depression.<sup>10</sup>

By 1932, property bids were being accepted for sites on which to erect the proposed federal building.<sup>11</sup> In this initial round of bids, some seventeen sites were offered for the consideration of the U.S. Treasury Department, including the site adjoining the south border of Lafayette Square that was ultimately selected.<sup>12</sup> Nearly all of these properties were initially rejected. The New Orleans Association of Commerce supported two sites, one at Poydras and Penn streets, the other at Canal and Claiborne streets.<sup>13</sup> On March 3, 1933, however, an article appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* reporting that the south-of-Lafayette location had been selected at an acquisition cost of \$390,000.<sup>14</sup>

For the design of the building, initial consideration was given to the local architectural firm of Weiss, Dreyfous & Seifert, Inc.; however, before the project could proceed, the U.S. Treasury Department ordered a new appraisal of the site. During the three year delay that ensued, the architects may have chosen to withdraw from consideration.<sup>15</sup> A subsequent dispute with certain sellers over the buying price further delayed acquisition and necessitated condemnation proceedings followed by litigation in 1937-1938.<sup>16</sup> Upon resolution of the legal disputes, demolitions occurred during the late spring and summer of 1938 of the buildings that occupied the building site along the south border of Lafayette Square, including the old Daily States Newspaper Publishing Company Building, Catholic Woman's Club, residential buildings, and First Presbyterian Church. Pile testing began in August 1938.<sup>17</sup>

In 1930s' New Orleans, the site chosen bordering Lafayette Square placed it in a venerable setting. The new federal building faced elegant Lafayette Square (1788) and was adjoined by the Lafayette Hotel (1908) at 628 St. Charles Avenue on the west; the John Minor Wisdom U.S. Court of Appeals (Old Post Office Building; 1914), at Lafayette and Camp streets on the east; the New Orleans City Hall (Gallier Hall; 1845-1850) at

<sup>9</sup> The Records of Mayor Robert Sidney Maestri, 1936-1945, Microfilm Reels 398B and 410B (of series AA 512), New Orleans Public Library (Main), New Orleans City Archives – Louisiana History Division.

<sup>10</sup> *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, December 11, 1932, Sunday edition, Section III.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, March 3 and 8, 1933.

<sup>14</sup> *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, December 23, 1932, 19.

<sup>15</sup> *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, March 3, 1933, 5; August 6, 1936, 1; and, May 21, 1937, 1.

<sup>16</sup> A series of articles appear in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, August 14, 1937, 11; November 22, 1937, 7; December 2, 1937, 28; December 3, 1937, 1; December 17, 1937, 8; December 18, 1937, 8; December 19, 1937, 1; December 25, 1937, 17;

December 30, 1937, 19; February 8, 1938, 14; February 19, 1938, 19. The story is also reported, though less extensively, in the *New Orleans (Morning) Tribune*, March 30, 1937, 3; November 27, 1937, 7; February 22, 1938, 5.

<sup>17</sup> *New Orleans (Morning) Tribune*, February 22, 1938, 5.

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545 St. Charles Avenue; the Federal Land Bank on the northwest; and the offices of the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* newspaper (demolished) to the north across Lafayette Square.<sup>18</sup>

As an indication of the project's significance to the New Orleans community, at each stage in the site selection, design preparation, and construction process, the local newspaper recorded the events. The August 24, 1938, *New Orleans Times-Picayune* reported that the first test pilings for the federal building were sunk at that time.<sup>19</sup> Two years later, the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* reported that the construction contract was awarded in February 1939 to the Chicago-based construction firm S.N. Nielson Company.<sup>20</sup> The project's groundbreaking in early March 1939, as well as the September 21, 1939, laying of the cornerstone, were also dutifully reported by the local press. The number of stories about the construction process and the long list of government and local civic leaders attending the ceremonies is an important measure of the building's significance within the New Orleans political and economic context.<sup>21</sup> Subsequent articles in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* discussed the building dedication in September 1940, as well as the sculpture design competition and installation in 1940-1941.<sup>22</sup>

### Federal Construction, 1934-1939

With the onset of the Great Depression, the architectural profession and construction trades were extremely hard hit by unemployment. On May 31, 1930, the U.S. Congress amended the Public Buildings Act of 1926, providing increased funding and further authorizing the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury to contract with private firms and individuals.<sup>23</sup> To meet the space requirements of the federal government, the Hoover administration and the U.S. Congress increased funding for the federal building program in 1928, 1930, and 1931, for a total of \$700 million.<sup>24</sup> The Federal Employment Stabilization Act of 1931 directed federal construction agencies to prepare six-year building plans and increased appropriations for that year by \$100 million. As a result, 133 architectural firms were commissioned to design federal buildings in 1931. This number increased to 301 by 1934.<sup>25</sup> This practice ended, however, on June 29, 1934, with an order that the Office of Supervising Architect design all remaining federal buildings.<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless, as with a number of federal building commissions during the 1930s, the U.S. Treasury Department chose a "consulting architect" to design the Federal Building. That architect was Howard Lovewell Cheney, FAIA (1889-1969). Educated in architecture at the Armour Institute of Technology (now the Illinois Institute of

<sup>18</sup> Sanborn Map Company, 1940 (updated to November, 1963) Fire Insurance Map of New Orleans, Louisiana, New York, Vol. 1, Sheet 10A.

<sup>19</sup> *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, August 24, 1938.

<sup>20</sup> *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, February 5, 1939, 1.

<sup>21</sup> *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, February 5, 1939, Sunday edition, 1.

<sup>22</sup> *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, March 10, 1939, section I, and September 22, 1939, section I. The sculpture design competition is discussed in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* in a series of articles including December 27, 1939; March 24, 1940, sec II; and July 20, 1941.

<sup>23</sup> Emily J. Harris, *History of Post Office Construction 1900-1940*, Washington, D.C.: USPS, 1982, and Craig, Lois, ed., et al., *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and Symbols in United States Government Building*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1979.

<sup>24</sup> Harris, *History of Post Office Construction*, 13,14.

<sup>25</sup> Craig, *The Federal Presence*, 281.

<sup>26</sup> Harris, *History of Post Office Construction*, 15, 17, 19.

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Technology) and the University of Illinois – Urbana, Cheney practiced in Chicago for most of his career.<sup>27</sup> However, his most noteworthy works appear to be commissions for five large buildings designed between 1937 and 1941 for the federal government. Along with the federal building in New Orleans (1939), his key works include the Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Peoria, Illinois (1938); Federal Building and U.S. Post Office in Gary, Indiana (1937); Federal Building and Court of Peace at the New York World's Fair (1939) (demolished); and the (Reagan) National Airport in Washington DC (1940-1941). The Federal Building is the only known example of Cheney's work in Louisiana and is a product of a period in which the architect produced, in serial fashion, the most significant works of his career, culminating within a year's time in the innovative and award-winning design for (Reagan) National Airport. In his application for nomination to the American Institute of Architects' Fellow (FAIA) status, Cheney lists the New Orleans Federal Building along with his U.S. post office and federal building commissions dating from 1935 through 1940 as examples of his best large-scale work.<sup>28</sup>

Louis A. Simon was Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury from 1933-1939 but had essentially directed the office since 1915, during the tenure of Judge James Wetmore (1915-1933), due to fact that Wetmore had no formal training in architecture.<sup>29</sup> Under Simon's direction, government architecture in the 1930s was designed in either the Colonial Revival style or a simplified Classical Revival style, identified by Lois Craig and the staff of the Federal Architecture Program, as "Starved Classicism." The need to provide government space but to save the cost of unnecessary ornament during the 1930s fit well with the principles of modern architecture which stressed functionality, open floor plans with interchangeable work areas, and exterior surfaces of uninterrupted simple planes and volumes.<sup>30</sup>

The Federal Building breaks from this style standard in its expression of the Art Deco style. Art Deco is characterized by a linear composition, with vertical emphasis and stylized decoration; facades are typically arranged in a series of sets back to emphasize the clean geometry of the form, with strip windows that further the sense of verticality.<sup>31</sup> The Federal Building's use of setbacks at the building corners and the upper stories, along with the ribbon-like window bays at its central pavilion, expresses these Art Deco principles. Still, the Federal Building has limited ornamentation—for example, the spandrel panels beneath the windows are plain—and may be considered, in keeping with Simon's intent to save the government the cost of unnecessary ornament. Ornamentation is essentially "aggregated" in the highly stylized sculptures flanking the two public entrances and the four free-standing eagle sculptures atop the building's cheek walls at Maestri Place and Camp Street.

### Art in Public Buildings in the 1930s

The Federal Building expresses the U.S. Treasury Department's commitment to artwork for public buildings. In the mid-1930s, one percent of each building's construction cost was reserved for art.<sup>32</sup> Social realism was promoted as the preferred form of artistic expression, with typical themes including key events in national and

<sup>27</sup> American Institute of Architects, *American Architects Directory*, New York: W.W. Bowker Company, 1955, 91-92.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>29</sup> Craig, *The Federal Presence*, 328.

<sup>30</sup> Harris, *History of Post Office Construction 1900-1940*, 20, 25.

<sup>31</sup> Blumenson, John J.G., *Identifying American Architecture*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1981 (2d ed.), 77.

<sup>32</sup> Craig, *The Federal Presence*, 372.

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local history, and scenes drawn from industry and agriculture.<sup>33</sup> Work was often commissioned in post offices, courthouses, and other federal facilities in smaller town settings across America where the building was generally in the center of town, and thus at the heart of local civic life. Few works of public art existed in these communities, and more traditional institutions such as art galleries and museums were often non-existent.<sup>34</sup>

The Federal Building includes two bas-relief sculptures on its front (north) facade. According to one of several articles appearing in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, this artwork was commissioned through a competition process in which some 215 artists competed.<sup>35</sup> The jury consisted of Duncan Ferguson, director of the Department of Fine Arts at Louisiana State University; Romauld Krauss, professor of sculpture, Cincinnati Academy of Art; sculptor Concetta Scaravaglione, New York; and the building's consulting architect, Howard L. Cheney. Cheney took the unusual step of calling for a final elimination competition between the two finalists, Armin Scheler and Karl Lang, after remarking that Mr. Scheler's design was "fresh in conception, interesting in composition, and modeled with vitality," and that Karl Lang's submittal "was fresh in conception with a fine architectural quality."<sup>36</sup> In the final submission, however, the deadlocked jury ultimately opted to award the contract to both artists as a shared design commission. They were then asked to work together to blend their design approach so that the final works would be better integrated visually with each other.<sup>37</sup> The carving of the approximately eight-by-nineteen-foot Alabama limestone panels was executed by transferring design details from half-scale plaster models prepared by the artists. The same Washington-based company that executed the bas-relief sculptures for the Evanston Illinois U.S. Post Office and Federal Courthouse (where Cheney was the consulting architect) carved the Federal Building's bas-reliefs.<sup>38</sup>

Karl Frederick Lang (1897?-1952) was born in Stuttgart, Germany, immigrated to the United States just after the end of World War I, and resided in Noroton, Connecticut, at the time of the New Orleans commission.<sup>39</sup> Lang was associated with the sculptor Gutzon Borglum in creating the Stone Mountain Georgia group at Atlanta, Georgia, one of America's most significant examples of colossal sculpture.<sup>40</sup> Lang worked with Borglum in carving the head of Robert E. Lee on Stone Mountain (completed 1924), which was Borglum's first work of colossal sculpture. (Gutzon Borglum (1867-1941) went on to sculpt the presidential portraits on Mount Rushmore, pioneering a form of colossal rock sculpture he thought appropriate to the American landscape.) Because Lang was primarily a teacher and creator of small-scaled works, there appear to be few documented examples of Lang's sculpture in the public art realm. The only identified examples include the bas-relief on the Federal Building in New Orleans, a garden piece at the Stamford Museum (Connecticut), and the Veterans' Monument, Spring Grove Cemetery, Darien, Connecticut.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, March 24, 1940, sec. II, 5, Sunday edition; July 20, 1941, sec. I, 14, Sunday edition.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> *New York Times*, September 24, 1952 (ob. sec.), 33.

<sup>40</sup> Peter Hastings Falk, ed., *Who Was Who in American Art 1564-1975: 400 Years of Artists in America*, Madison CT: Sound View Press, 1999.

<sup>41</sup> *New York Times*, September 24, 1952 (ob. sec.), 33.

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Armin A. Scheler (1901-1987) was born in Sonneberg, Germany, and studied at the State School of Applied Art and the State Academy of Fine Arts in Munich.<sup>42</sup> He was a medalist in international art competitions in Switzerland (1923), and the Paris Expo (1936), as well as the National Sculpture Competition (United States, 1939).<sup>43</sup> His sculpture was exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art (1940 and 1952). Along with his work at the Federal Building, he designed bas-relief sculptures for the Government Printing Office in Washington D.C. and the U.S. Post Office in Evanston Illinois. Scheler moved from New York City to New Rochelle, New York, in 1942, and later relocated to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, following the New Orleans commission, where he taught at Louisiana State University.<sup>44</sup>

The fact that both Lang and Scheler are referenced in mainstream biographical dictionaries of artists is an indication of their significance in the history of American art. Their limited output in the realm of public art, and the association of key examples of their work with federal building projects produced during the New Deal arts programs, associate both with a significant type, period, and style of artistic and architectural expression. The themes reflected in the two Federal Building bas-reliefs include the hard work associated both with agriculture and its implied significance in feeding the people of America, and with the construction efforts associated with flood control along the lower Mississippi River, something integral to the survival, development, and economic success of New Orleans. These works are expressions of "American Regionalism" and represent a specific, significant period of American art executed in a straight-forward style considered accessible to the general public lacking an extensive education in art history.

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<sup>42</sup> Peter Hastings Falk, ed., *Who Was Who in American Art, 1564-1975*, Madison, CT: Sound View Press, September 1999, 2917.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 819.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

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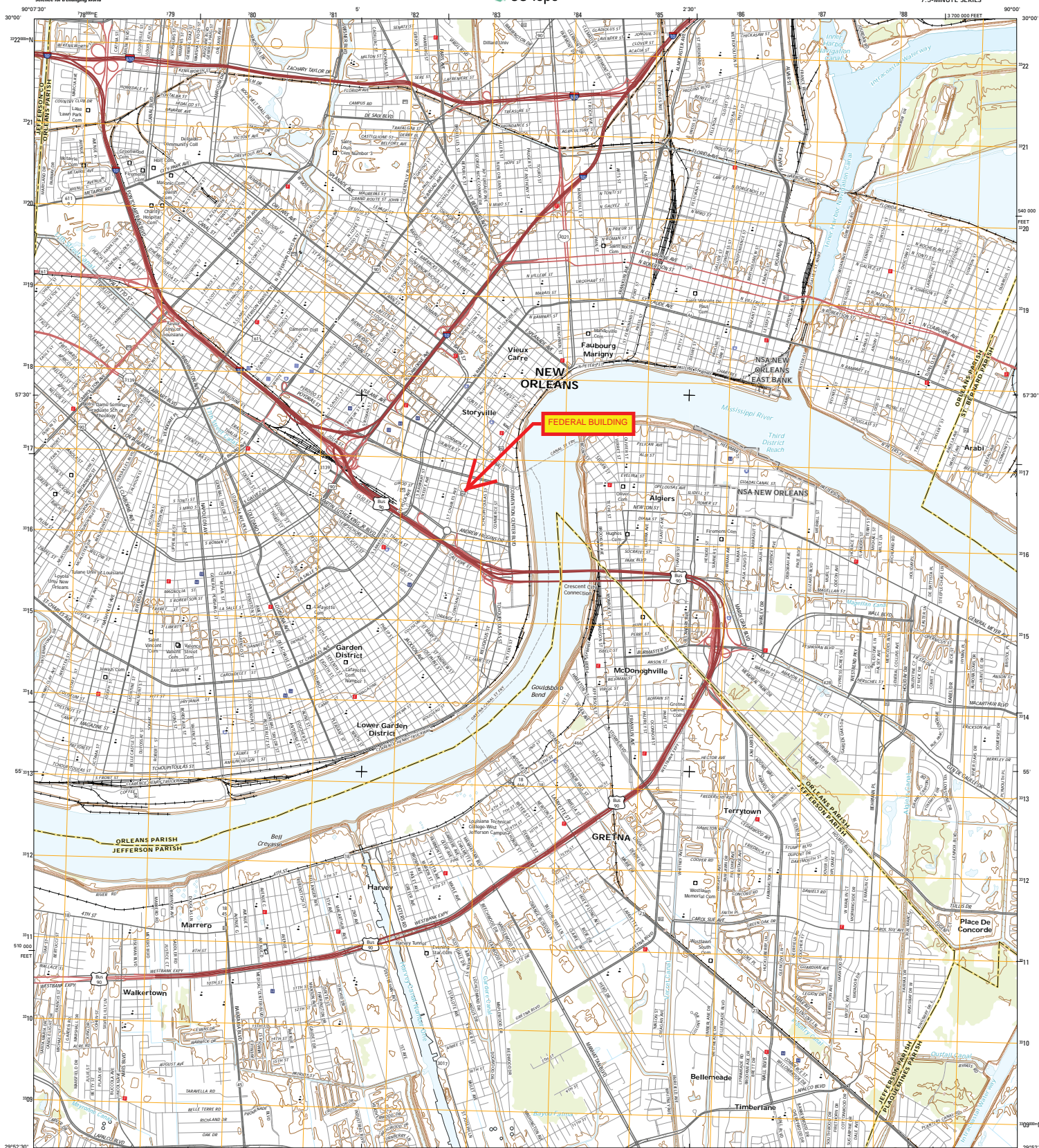
*New Orleans (Morning) Tribune*, March 30, 1937, 3; November 27, 1937, 7; February 22, 1938, 5.

*New Orleans Times-Picayune*, December 11, 1932, sec III, 7; December 23, 1932, 19; March 3, 1933, 5; March 8, 1933, 10; August 6, 1936, 1; May 21, 1937, 1; August 14, 1937, 11; November 22, 1937, 7; December 2, 1937, 7; December 2, 1937, 28; December 3, 1937, 1; December 17, 1937, 8; December 18, 1937, 8; December 19, 1937, 1; December 25, 1937, 17; December 30, 1937, 19; February 8, 1938, 14; February 19, 1938, 19.

*New York Times*, September 24, 1952 (obituary section), 33.

Sanborn Map Company. 1940 (updated to November, 1963) "Fire Insurance Map of New Orleans, Louisiana." New York, Vol. 1, sheet 10A.

Tyler, Pamela. *Silk Stockings and Ballot Boxes: Women and Politics in New Orleans, 1920-1963*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996.

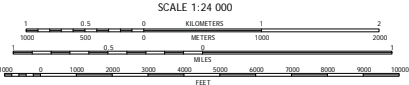
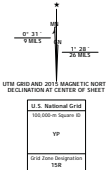


Produced by the United States Geological Survey

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84)
Projection and 1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 18E
10 000-foot ticks: Louisiana Coordinate System of 1983 (Louisiana zone)

This map is not a legal document. Boundaries may be generalized for this map scale. Private lands within government reservations may not be shown. Obtain permission before copying private lands.

Metadata table with columns: Imagery, Roads, Names, Hydrography, Boundaries, Public Land Survey System. Values include dates and sources like NADP, HERE, and National Hydrography Dataset.



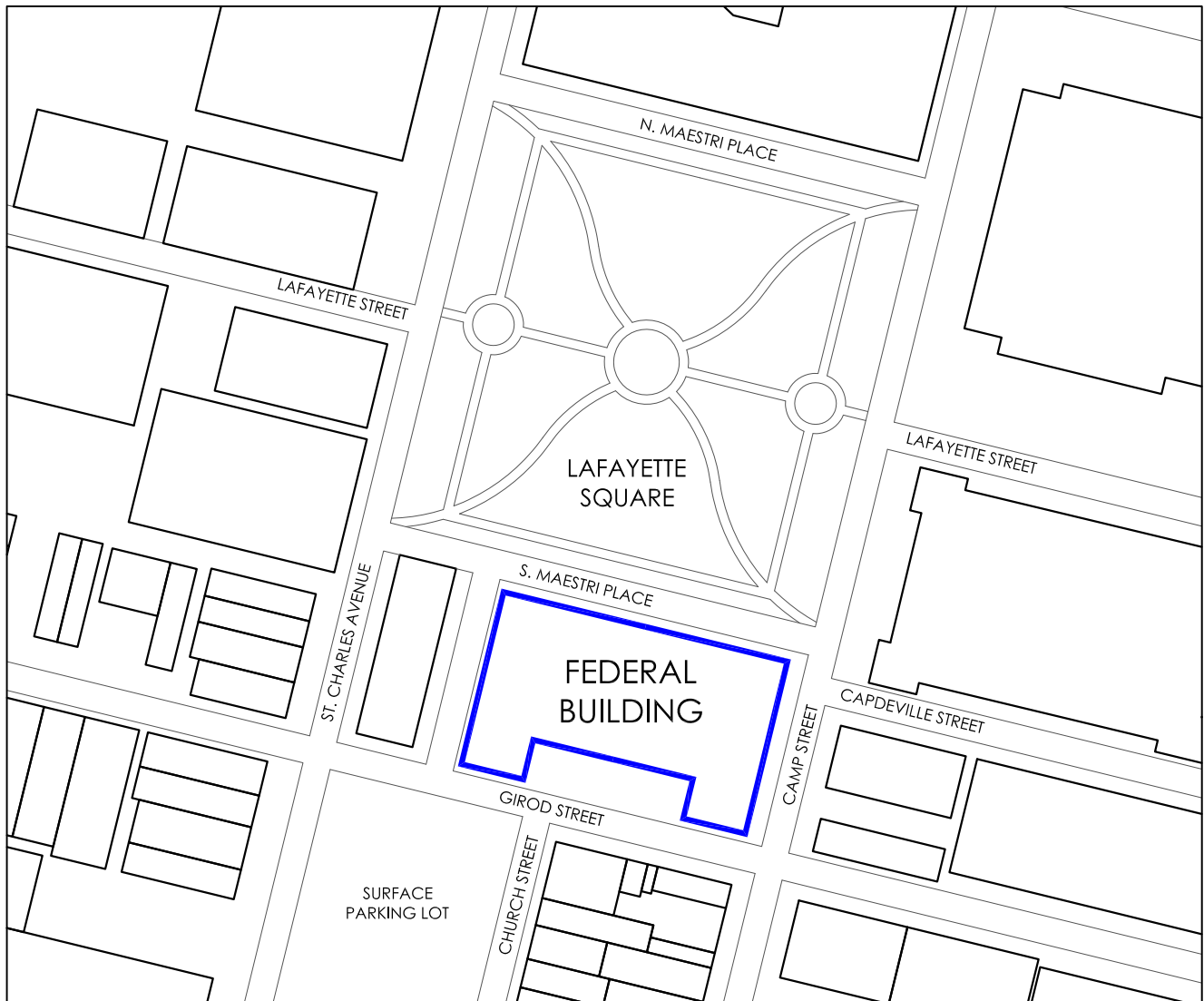
CONTOUR INTERVAL: 5 FEET
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988
This map was produced to conform with the National Geospatial Program US Topo Product Standard, 2011.
A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 0.8.18

ROAD CLASSIFICATION legend table. Columns: Road Type, Symbol, Name. Includes Expressway, Secondary Hwy, Ramp, Interstate Route, Local Connector, Local Road, AWD, US Route, and State Route.

ADJACENT QUADRANGLES table. Grid of numbers 1-9 with corresponding location names like Indian Beach, Spanish Fort, Little Woods, etc.







SCALE 1" = 150'  
SOURCE: GOOGLE MAPS 2017

FEDERAL BUILDING  
(F. EDWARD HÉBERT FEDERAL BUILDING)  
ORLEANS PARISH, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA  
SKETCH MAP  
Prepared 6 FEB 2017



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



DO NOT ENTER

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



NO PARKING  
PASSENGER  
ZONE

























DIRECTORY

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

APPEALS DIVISION NINTH FLOOR

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF COUNSEL NINTH FLOOR

TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION EIGHTH FLOOR

USDA EIGHTH FLOOR

THIS BUILDING WAS ERRECTED DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF

FRANKLIN D ROOSEVELT

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

HENRY MORGENTHAU JR  
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

JAMES A FABLEY  
POSTMASTER GENERAL

CHRISTIAN JOY PEOPLES  
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT

W ENGLEBERT REYNOLDS  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR PUBLIC BUILDINGS

SMITH W PURDUM  
FOURTH ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL

1939

130





EXIT







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination  
Property Name: Federal Building  
Multiple Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
State & County: LOUISIANA, Orleans

Date Received: 5/5/2017      Date of Pending List: \_\_\_\_\_      Date of 16th Day: \_\_\_\_\_      Date of 45th Day: 6/19/2017      Date of Weekly List: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference number: SG100001218  
Nominator: State Federal Agency  
Reason For Review: \_\_\_\_\_

X Accept       Return       Reject      6/19/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: This large scale Federal building is a good example of the style of design most popular for public institutions of the new Deal era. The bas relief sculptures are notable. The building also represents the often competitive Federal presence - where the location of such a facility is one of pride as well as utility

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / A & C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



GSA Public Buildings Service

May 3, 2017

Mr. Paul Loether  
Chief, NRHP & NHL Program  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20240



Dear Mr. Loether:

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is pleased to nominate the Federal Building (F. Edward Hébert Federal Building) located at 600 S. Maestri Place in New Orleans, Louisiana, for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

The following materials are enclosed for your review:

- A signed copy of the first page of the nomination
- "Disk 1" containing the true and correct copy of the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the Federal Building in New Orleans
- "Disk 2" containing the .tif image files for the above referenced nomination.

We look forward to the nomination of this historic property to the National Register. If for any reason these materials need to be returned to GSA, please do so by a delivery service as items returned to our offices via regular mail are irradiated and the materials severely damaged.

Should you need further information regarding the nomination package, please contact Ms. Sherry Frear at (202) 297-0812 or [sherry.frear@gsa.gov](mailto:sherry.frear@gsa.gov).

Sincerely,

Beth L. Savage  
Federal Preservation Officer  
Director, Center for Historic Buildings

Enclosures

cc: Hugo Gardea, Regional Historic Preservation Officer, Region 7  
Victoria Clow, Historic Preservation Specialist, Region 7