

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92001257 Date Listed: 9/23/92

California Building
Property Name

Washoe County NV State

N/A
Multiple Name

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

Autumnelle Glee
for Signature of the Keeper

9/29/92
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Statement of Significance: Under Architect/Builder, J. C. Stuart Co. is added.

This information was confirmed with Michelle McFadden of the Nevada State historic preservation office.

DISTRIBUTION:

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

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 an 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 California Building

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1000 Cowan Drive, Ildewild Park not for publication

city or town Reno vicinity

state Nevada code NV county Washoe code 031 zip code 89509

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.)

Ronald M. Jones 8/12/92
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

for Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Andrew H. Lee

9/23/92

California Building
Name of Property

Washoe County, Nevada
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

-0-

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/Music Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/
Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Not visible

walls Stucco

roof Clay tile

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more 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.
- 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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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

Transportation

Period of Significance

1927

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more 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:

City of Reno Planning Department

California Building
Name of Property

Washoe County, Nevada
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 0 |
Zone Easting Northing
2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
Zone Easting Northing
4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christine Fey, Junior Planner

organization City of Reno date April, 1992

street & number P.O. Box 1900 telephone 702-334-2303

city or town Reno, Nevada state Nevada zip code 89505

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name City of Reno

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

The California Building, completed in 1927, and dedicated March 12th of that year, was erected to house the exhibits of the cities and counties of the state of California for the Transcontinental Highway Exposition of 1927. The exposition was held in Idlewild Park, which was created for the purpose of hosting the Exposition. The Transcontinental Highway Exposition was held to celebrate the completion of the first transcontinental highway in the United States. The state of California provided the grandest exhibits, as the State spent \$100,000 and two years to construct the California Building, its "tent annex," and the exhibits within the structures.¹

Through a resolution of the Legislature in 1927, California dedicated the building "To the memory of those who gave the last full measure of devotion to this nation" (World War I). The dedication plaque still appears on the building at the main entry. The building was presented to the Darrel Dunkle Post No.1 American Legion. In 1938 the Post transferred ownership to the City of Reno. The building stands in the eastern portion of Idlewild Park and is used by the citizens of Reno for a wide range of activities.²

Site

As stated, the California Building occupies a site on the northeastern portion of Idlewild Park. There exists sports fields to the west and south. The Lions Club Kiddie Playground is across the street to the north. To the east is the City of Reno Municipal Rose Garden. The building is rectangular in plan, measuring 150' in the east-west direction and 50' in the north-south direction.³ A fenced barbecue area, which was added after the Exposition, run the length of the building on the south side.

Architectural Character

The California Building is constructed in the Mission Revival style, an architectural style prevalent during the 1920's when the building was constructed. This style is derived from the missions constructed in the 1700's along the Pacific Coast. The Revival buildings are characterized by simple stucco walls, tile roofs, arched openings to carry bells, and accentuated building entries. These elements are contained in the California Building.

The exterior finish is beige stucco applied to wood lath. The exterior walls appear to be double wood studs, creating a wall one foot thick.

The roof is a gable form with eaves at 18' and the ridge at 22'. Wood rafters are exposed under the eaves, but these are not a part of the main structural system. Rather, these are fastened to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

the end of the rafters just inside the exterior wall. Roof sheathing is wood planks with red-colored spanish-style clay tile as the roof material.

The most architecturally significant detailing is on the north elevation at the main entrance to the building. The entry is made up of three large arched openings, created by four piers,

The piers extend through the eave line and each terminates in a pyramidal roof form. Each pier has base moulding at the exterior slab and band moulding at an elevation of 8'6". This band moulding is also the spring line for each arch with the top of the arch at 14 feet above grade. The moulding extends inside the arch and terminates at the arched transom above each entry door.

The piers are white in color, with the inside face of the arch painted the same beige color as the body of the building. The north elevation also contains five simple rectangular window openings, two on the east end and three on the east portion.

The east elevation contains a fine example of a Mission-influenced bell tower. The base of the tower is at 13 feet above grade. The tower is 8 feet in the north-south direction by 4 feet in the east-west direction and is 18 feet tall. It has a large arched opening in which an artificial bell is hung. The tower terminates in a tile gable roof. There are also two vertical window openings on the east elevation.

The south elevation is highly symmetrical, with similar window bays on each side of a central brick fireplace chimney.

The 30-foot tall chimney has an arched opening near its top and has a gabled tile cap. Each side of the elevation has three large rectangular windows, each made up of 24 glass lites. The windows are flush with the outside surface of the wall, in contrast to the other openings which are recessed into the thick walls. The sills of these windows are at 7'6" with the heads at the underside of the eave. A large round window 5 feet in diameter is placed between the outermost of each side and its adjacent window. This window is divided into 16 lites and is recessed the full thickness of the wall. A wood-framed lean-to structure has been added to the building and is not of a character of the original construction.

The west elevation is highlighted by an 8-foot diameter circular window at the center of the wall at 12 feet above grade. The recessed opening is splayed outward so that the diameter is greater at the outside face of wall than at the window frame on the inside face. There are also two doors and 4-foot square windows on this elevation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Interiors

The interiors have probably changed significantly since the building was originally occupied. What was probably a single large exhibition space is now a multi-purpose space with ancillary spaces at each end. The main space is wonderfully daylit by the large expanse of glass on the south elevation. There is a large brick fireplace in the middle of the south wall. The biggest change has come with the addition of a suspended acoustical tile ceiling in the main room. This ceiling is covering a fine heavy timber truss system which runs the long dimension of the building. This truss system features steel tension members, and is a sophisticated system for the building's construction period. The building has a wood floor with a resilient covering--again added after original use. There is a very shallow crawlspace under the wood flooring.

Conclusion

The building is simple in form, in keeping with the Mission Revival style. Although simple, the building has some fine architectural detailing--especially at the entry and east elevations. The exterior finish is showing the effects of over 60 years of Reno's climate on the stucco with a fair amount of cracking. This damage would appear to be largely thermal in nature and not a reflection of structural problems. The roof tile does not appear to be in poor shape, but investigation of the roof sheathing does show water penetration into the interior of the building.

The windows are single pane glazing in wood frames. These are not effective thermally, and will probably require renovation in the future. Interior finishes are in good shape, although continued effort should be made to determine the original finishes and configuration of the building's interior spaces.

Given the historical significance of the Transcontinental Highway Exposition, and the fact that the building is the only remaining architectural product of the Exhibition since the demolition of the State Building in downtown Reno in 1965, the California Building has great architectural significance for the City. Given the building's apparently good condition it must be considered an excellent candidate for preservation and renovation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

1. Patricia Stewart; "California Building 'Busier Than Ever'";
Nevada State Journal; August 22, 1965; p.14.

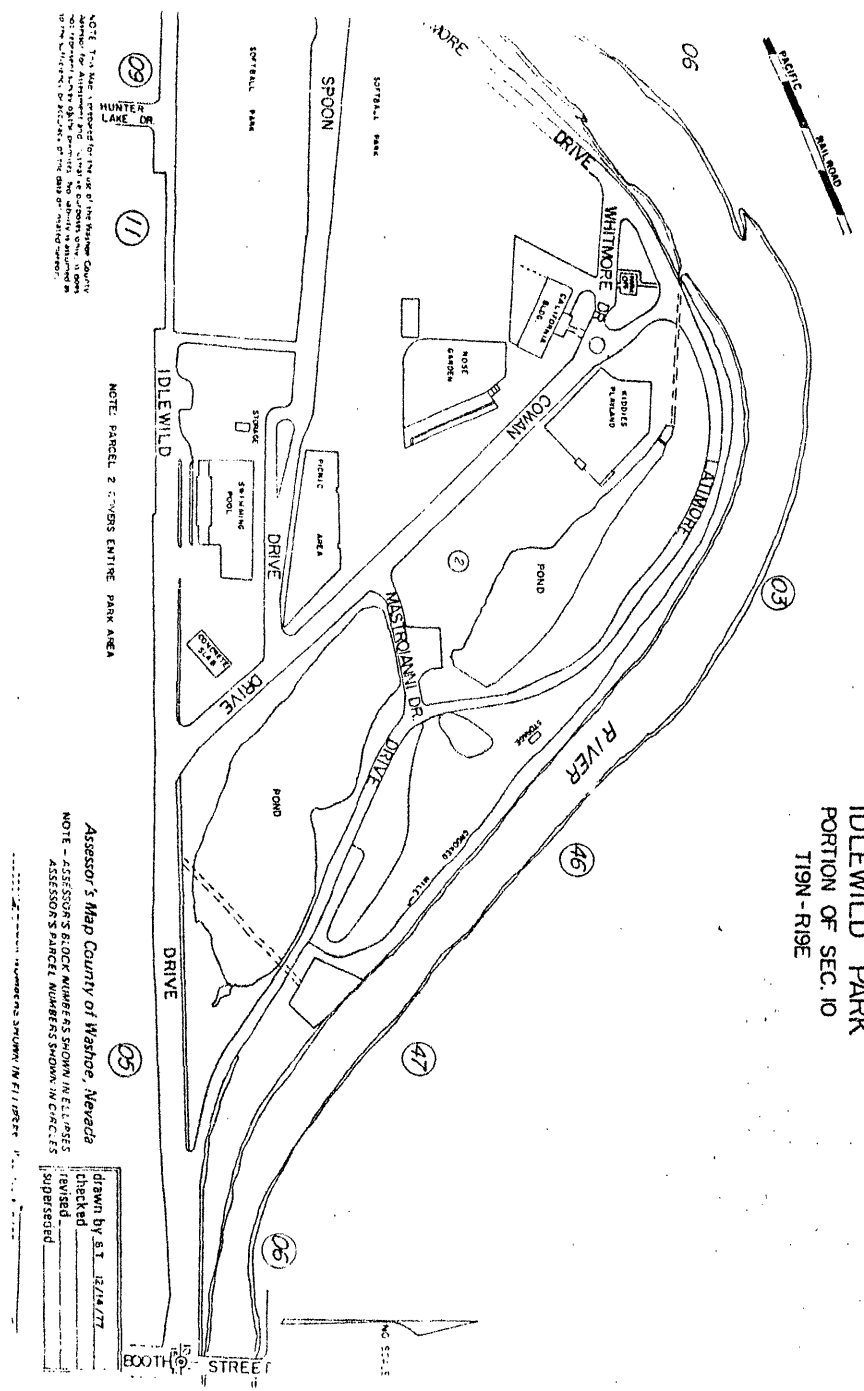
2. Ibid

3. Architectural drawings have not been obtained at the time of this writing. Dimensions noted throughout the report are approximate and were arrived at by either field visits or approximation from photographs.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5



NOTE: This map is prepared by the use of the National Geodetic Survey's Air Photograph and is subject to the same conditions of accuracy as the original photograph. It does not show buildings or structures of the 1930s or earlier.

NOTE: PANEL 2 COVERS ENTIRE PARK AREA

Assessor's Map County of Washoe, Nevada
NOTE - ASSESSOR'S BLOCK NUMBERS SHOWN IN ALL PAGES
ASSESSOR'S PANEL NUMBERS SHOWN IN CIRCLES

drawn by S.T. 12/14/77
checked
revised
superseped

IDLEWILD PARK
PORTION OF SEC. 10
T19N - R19E

10-480-102

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

The California Building is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A (transportation) and C (architecture).

During the 1890s, the good roads movement became a popular political issue as farmers grew discontented with the railroads and began to consider highway transportation as an alternative. Farmers complained about the lack of good "farm-to-market" roads. This coupled with the increasing number of automobile enthusiasts led to government and private programs to build good roads. (Note: Registrations of passenger cars in 1900 was 8,000; in 1910 was 458,377; in 1920 was 8,181,522.)

In 1913, Carl Fisher (creator of the Indianapolis Speedway), Henry Joy (President of the Packard Motor Car Company), and other members of the automobile industry decided to create a hard-surfaced highway capable of provided a good surface for traffic in all weather conditions, with accurate signs along its entire length. They originally called this idea "The coast-to-coast Rock Highway." The rapidly expanding automobile industry helped raise the contributions needed to begin the project. The name was changed, to the Lincoln Highway, to include the word "Lincoln" for its patriotic appeal.

The Lincoln Highway Association was formed in April of 1913 to build the first transcontinental highway and to carry out its goal to stimulate highway building all over American. The Lincoln Highway Association worked toward this end until the Federal Highway Aid Act of 1916 and 1921 offered the prospect of attaining an effective national highway system. In 1923, the completion of the first transcontinental highway, the Lincoln Highway, drew near and the citizens of Reno began planning a celebration to commemorate the completion of the Lincoln Highway (present day U.S. 50) and the Victory Highway (present day U.S. 40).

The Nevada Legislature authorized the erection of a building in Reno to house exhibits from various counties at what was to become known as "Reno's Transcontinental Highway Exposition," in the summer of 1927. The City of Reno acquired a 42-acre section

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

of land in the southwestern part of town from the Newlands Estate. The name, Ildewild Park, was selected in a newspaper contest in June of 1923. Donald McLauren, a San Francisco landscape architect who designed the grounds for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, was hired in October of 1924 to layout the Transcontinental Highway Exposition Grounds. When McLauren completed his work in October of 1925, the Exposition Commissioners hire the J.C. Stuart Company of San Francisco to construct five buildings on the Exposition grounds (Ildewild Park).

One of these buildings, through a resolution of the 1927 California Legislature, was dedicated "To the memory of those who gave the last full measure of devotion to this nation," (World War I) to house exhibits from communities and counties in the Golden State. The building became known as the California Building. The construction of the building, its "tent annex," and the exhibits took two years and cost \$100,000. A second Reno landmark was also built at this time. The original Reno Arch was designed and constructed for the Transcontinental Highway Exposition to invite travelers to visit the "Biggest Little City in the World."

After the Exposition ended, the California Building was taken over by officials of Reno's American Legion Post on November 25, 1927. Eleven years later, legion officials deeded the building to the City of Reno, which has maintained the building as a public facility in daily use to present. Another of the five original buildings, erected by the state of Nevada for the Exposition, was located in downtown Reno and housed the Nevada Historical Society until it was demolished in the 1960s to make way for the Pioneer Auditorium for Performing Arts. The three remaining buildings have also been demolished, except the California Building which continues to remind us of those early days of automobile transportation in American.

The California Building is architecturally significant because it is one of the few remaining examples in Northern Nevada of the Mission Revival Style and is the only remaining architectural product of the Transcontinental Highway Exposition.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

The California Building displays many of the characteristics of this architectural style including the clay tile roof, the stuccoed walls, the bell tower, and the arched openings. These design elements are skillfully combined to create an interesting execution of the Mission Revival style. There are two other Mission Revival style buildings in Reno of note. The McKinley Park School (1909), also owned by the city of Reno, is just a few blocks from the California Building at Riverside Drive and Keystone Avenue. The school was listed on September 16, 1985 on the National Register of Historic Places. The Humphrey House (1906) is located at 467 Ralston Street; this residence was listed on the National Register on March 7, 1983.

The California Building serves as a reminder to Nevada residents of the state's role in the completion of our first transcontinental highway, and of Nevada's unique architectural heritage.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

Fey, Christine A., "A Preservation Plan for the Lincoln Highway in Nevada" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Nevada, Reno, 1991).

Hokanson, Drake., Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America. (Ames: University of Iowa Press, 1988).

Lincoln Highway Association, Inc., A Brief for the Lincoln Highway in Utah and Nevada. (Nevada State Archives and Nevada Historical Society, March 15, 1923)

Lincoln Highway Association of Nevada., The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade the made Transportation History. (New York: Dodd Mead and Company, 1935).

The Lincoln Highway East and West Through Nevada: A Highway to the Nevada Transcontinental Highways Exposition, commencing July 1, 1927, Reno, Nevada. Pamphlet, Author and Publisher Unknown.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description:

The California Building is located within the boundaries of Ildewild Park, APN No. 10-480-02. The boundaries of this nominations include the building itself and 20 feet around the building.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary encompasses the building, adjacent sidewalks and landscaping. Ildewild Park is eligible for the National Register and the City of Reno plans to nominate the park within one year.