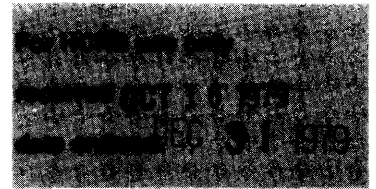


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



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

1. Name

historic Nicholai Fechin House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Paseo del Pueblo Norte (U.S. Highway 64) NM 3 not for publication

city, town Taos vicinity of 1st congressional district

state New Mexico code 35 county Taos code 055

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Eya Fechin Branham

street & number Box 20

city, town San Cristobal vicinity of New Mexico state 87564

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Taos County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Taos state New Mexico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Cultural Properties has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June 22, 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records New Mexico Historic Preservation Bureau

city, town Santa Fe state New Mexico

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Nicholai Fechin House nomination includes eight structures; the main house, the studio, a guest house, a workshop, and four storage buildings. The main house is the most significant structure, the studio, workshop, and guest house are contributing, and the four storage buildings are noncontributing. Also on the property is a concrete-lined fishing pond.

The main house is constructed of adobe, is two stories high, and has a flat roof. Articulation of the facades is accomplished simply with second story setbacks, a portal on the north facade, projecting vigas, decorative columns, and variously sized and shaped windows. The house is generally an example of the Pueblo Revival Style, though details such as the twisted columns reflect Fechin's European origins and the richness of the interior does so also.

The north and the west facades are the most elaborately detailed. The portal on the north side is supported by twisted columns and hand-carved corbels. The portal is in poor condition because the front wall is separating from the main portion due to water damage. The fenestration of this facade, as with the other facades, consists of small flat and round arch casement windows. Above the portal and at the corner are two large segmental arch windows filled with leaded glass. At the other end of this facade, also on the second story, is a door with a small iron-railed balcony.

At the northwest and southwest second-story corners are twisted columns with corbels, like those of the portal. Between the columns is a large segmental inch window filled with leaded glass. Below is a three-part window with leaded glass transoms. The other two facades are plainer and articulated with fenestration. At one time, the entire exterior was plastered with a pale-colored mud. During the time that Fechin's wife, Alexandra, lived on the property, she had the upper story plastered with concrete stucco. This has caused severe water damage at the junction of the two types of plaster and under the eaves.

Built in 1927 by Nicholai Fechin, an artist who had recently come to the United States from the Soviet Union, the house reflects a combination of traditional New Mexico architecture and Russian architectural details. The material, massing, vigas, and portal all reflect traditional New Mexico construction. The details of the exterior, the fenestration, hand-carved twisted columns, and furniture, were carved by Fechin himself. The furniture has the heaviness and intricacy common to hand made, folk furniture and these pieces are excellent examples. All the downstairs rooms have architectural elements and furniture carved by Fechin. The main hall, dining room and Eya's room are especially noteworthy. The stairway area in the main hall is typical of the care and labor he put into the house. The columns are hand-carved and support handcarved corbels and vigas. Between the main hall and dining room is an intricately carved gate, a feature common in Russian houses. The upstairs remains largely unfinished because Fechin left Taos after only five years. Despite this, it is a house created by and perfectly reflective of an outstanding Taos artist.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1927

Builder/Architect Nicholai Fechin

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Nicholai Fechin House is significant because it is the work of one of Taos' best known artists. Fechin was born in 1881, in Kazan, Russia. His father was a wood carver and icon maker. At an early age, Fechin showed a talent for art and began his schooling in 1894. In 1909, he won the Prix de Rome. Fechin's career was interrupted by the Bolshevik Revolution and in 1923, to escape its effects, he came to the U.S. Because of an illness, he moved to Taos in 1927 at the invitation of Mabel Dodge Luhan. Shortly after coming, he purchased property from the Bergmans and began constructing his house. The house reflects the traditional architecture of Taos, and Russian architectural details, two aspects of Fechin. In the main house are many pieces of hand-carved furniture, as well as handcarved architectural members, which illustrate Fechin's background and talent as a wood carver. In the studio, while constructing the house and carving furniture, he was having one of his most creative periods as a painter. This dream of Fechin's was shattered when his wife, Alexandra, asked for a divorce in 1933. At that time all the work stopped and Fechin moved to California. The house and entire property, however, remains a clear expression of Fechin, his talent and his linking of past and present.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Coke, Van Daren, Taos and Santa Fe: the Artist's Environment, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1963
 "Nicholai Fechin" Persimmon Hill, Vol. 3 (Summer 1978) pp. 8-39
 Interview with Eya Fechin Branham, July 16, 1979

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property 5.7

Quadrangle name Taos

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

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

B

Zone		Easting				Northing							

C

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D

Zone		Easting				Northing							

E

Zone		Easting				Northing							

F

Zone		Easting				Northing							

G

Zone		Easting				Northing							

H

Zone		Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at the southwest corner of the intersection of Paseo del Pueblo Norte and the drive, proceed south along the west edge of the drive for about 1212 feet; proceed east along the south property line for about 267 feet to the intersection with fence marking

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ellen Threinen, Architectural Historian

organization N.M. Historic Preservation Bureau

date 15 August 1979

street & number 505 Don Gaspar Avenue

telephone 505-827-2108

city or town Santa Fe

state New Mexico 87503

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Thomas W. Mulvaney

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 10-12-79

For HCRS use only

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

date 12-31-79

Keeper of the National Register Carol D. Shull

Attest: Kristen O'Connell

date 12/10/79

Chief of Registration

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED OCT 16 1979
DATE ENTERED 31

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

To the southeast of the main house is Fechin's studio. It is a one-story adobe structure with a central sky-lighted section on the east side. The remainder of the irregular-plan house is flat-roofed. The studio was the first structure Fechin built, though there was an older house on the property. Originally it consisted of the studio itself, a bedroom and a portal. The studio room is the most elaborate, with a loft in the gable of the skylight and some of the carving so prevalent in the main house. The large corner fireplace was Fechin's first attempt at building a fireplace. In 1946, Alexandra Fechin began converting the south-side portal into a kitchen and the remodeling was finally completed two years ago by Eya. Also added to the studio were a bedroom and bathroom. Alexandra Fechin lived in the studio after their divorce in 1933. The studio therefore has been kept in much better condition than the house.

The guest house consists of an adobe house and barn joined by a portal and remodeled into living quarters. The oldest part of the house dates to before 1917, the date Dr. and Mrs. Bergman purchased the property. It was from the Bergmans that the Fechin's bought the property in 1927. The one-story, flat-roofed structure maintains the material and scale of the main house and the studio.

The same is true of the workshop which is also of adobe, one-story, and flat-roofed. It has an ell-shape plan with a portal, and housed Fechin's wood-working equipment and a general storage room. The wood-working studio remains intact with Fechin's equipment. The windowless storage area has been converted into a large, well-equipped dark room. Three of the four storage buildings are located behind the other structures. All are of adobe and have flat roofs and served variously as chicken coops, carports, and storage sheds, a purpose they continue to serve. The fourth building is currently under construction and is located to the north of the main house. It will be a stuccoed, concrete block structure which will serve as a vault in which to store Fechin's paintings.

The Fechin property, especially the main house, illustrated well Fechin's talents and his dreams for living in America. That the house and property are unkempt is indicative of how his life was shattered by divorce in 1933. Fechin's daughter Eya has come back to the property and has begun the substantial task of cleaning and repairing the structure.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED OCT 16 1979

DATE ENTERED

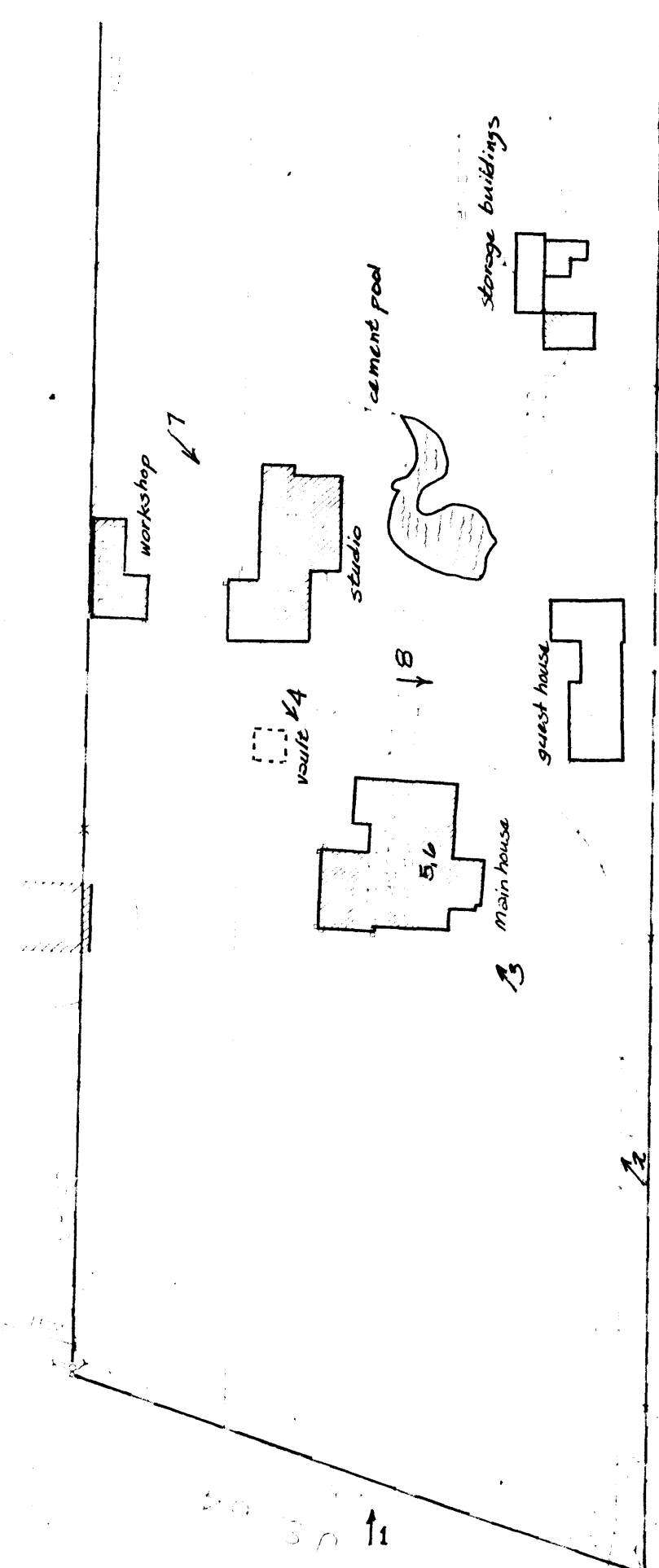
DEC 31 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

Verbal boundary description and justification (con't)

the east property line; proceed north along the east property line for 1128 feet to the intersection with the street; proceed west along the street for about 234 feet to the starting point.



Nicholai Fachin House

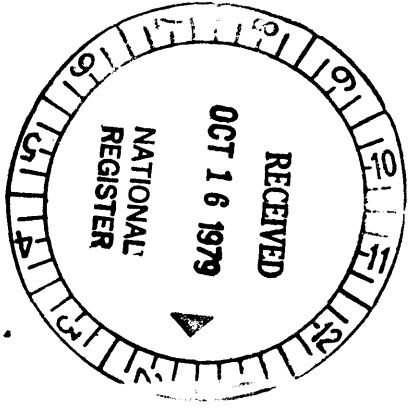
Scale 1" = 60'

— Boundary → Photo

sneeds



5.7227 across
Faint text below, possibly a reference number or date.



105

