Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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	lifornia	CODE 06	Fresno	019
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RO	BERT N. KLEIN, JR., GE	NERAL PARTNER		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
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	81 Tulare Street			
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REPRESEN	TATION IN EXIST	ING SURVEYS		
TITLE				
DATE				
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DEPOSITORY FOR				
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7' DESCRIPTION

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

At the time of its design and construction in 1926, the Physicians Building consisted of some twenty-eight rooms, grouped into separate office units which opened out onto a centrally built interior court. With an area of over a thousand square feet, the courtyard was an exceptionally large common space for a building with exterior dimensions of approximately 73 x 85 feet. An octagonal fountain and fish pond, some eight feet across and built of a beige-colored stone, was designed to provide a bench surface as well as atmospheric character for the central axis of the medical building. Rising some 18 feet above a floor surface of highly polished serpentine-green linoleum tile (at the time, a technological wonder which provided the rich tonal range of genuine marble), a superbly detailed skylight allowed natural light to filter into this large court-space through individually set panes of pebbled glass installed below a clerestory roof. Built of some 13 inches of milled and layered Cyma-Recta double curves, the finished woodwork which made up the ceiling's structural element was painted an off-white, in keeping with the intricacy of its classically Italianate appearance. Eight quarter columns with simple striped and banded crests at capital height, as well as four corner columns, completed the formal symmetry of this elegant medical reception area.

Originally located at the edge of town, adjacent to residential areas bordering to the east and west, Physicians Building offered a particularly handsome entrance elevation along its frontage on Fresno Street. Its clean, white stucco walls (over a brick substructure) contrasted brilliantly with a typically-Californian red-tile roof. Exterior details were markedly subtle, a factor contributing to the building having been mislabelled as simply "Spanish Style." Sash-type screened windows with full cast projecting sills; a recessed arched entrance positioned on the central axis, with a radial fan window over double french-style doors; a simple chamferred projecting base (Plinth) which banded the entire building; and the formal, engraved Roman Majuscules denoting <u>Physicians Building</u>; were all details more in keeping with the stricter tenets of the Italianate mode. Window trims and door casements were painted an electric thalo blue-green, and the front six paired windows were shielded by brilliantly striped canvas awnings -- additions of raw color reminiscent of the lively theatricality of mezzo-mediterranean cultures.

During the late 1960's, Physicians Building suffered an unfortunate aesthetic injustice when it was "modernized" by individuals insensitive to its architectural significance as a Mediterranean revival hybrid. The exterior was variously sheathed in adobe-colored slump stone, the sash-type screens were eliminated, and the walls and trim were painted in two shades of military drab green. Such primary details as the front french doors were replaced by "contemporary" sheer glass doors, and the interior court was subdivided into additional office space with a narrow hallway for access to the new rooms. The early magnificence of the central court was literally covered over with the addition of a suspended acoustical ceiling, with innocuous florescent light panels, and the fountain is reputed to have been jack-hammered into small chunks of stone and hauled Copies of two construction permits which document the major alterations made to away. Physicians Building over the years, are attached to this physical description of the property. It should be noted that these alterations, however misguided, were undertaken with economy in mind, and should be recognized as secondary structural additions only. With the exception of the missing screens, fountain, and french doors, the early

(continued)



PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW					
ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION		
ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE		
AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE		
X_ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	XSOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER		
COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION		
COMMUNICATIONS		POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	OTHER (SPECIFY)		
	_INVENTION				
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

<u>Physicians Building</u>, designed and built in 1926, for six Fresno physicians and surgeons, was the first such building in this part of the Central San Joaquin Valley conceived for the exclusive purpose of housing medical examination offices and laboratory facilities. -At the time of its construction (at the then "out-of-town" location of Fresno and "P" Streets), Physicians Building represented a major financial investment of some \$50,000 -a sizeable sum even by today's economic standards.

When the six physicians formed their partnership to share in the construction of a medical complex where they would ultimately locate their individual offices, they in no way established a clinic, or for that matter even a group practice--as the appearance of the association might suggest today. Rather, they entered into an even more intriguing alliance to participate in the creation of an architectural space which would singularly meet the needs of their collective patients. This space took the form of a central courtyard which was naturally illuminated by a full overhead skylight. Visually supported by a series of paired quarter columns on each wall, as well as four corner columns, this deeply coffered glass ceiling was divided into nine separate repetitive units, which diffused light over a serpentine-toned expanse of tiled flooring. Such a skylight is testimony to the almost lost art of the millworker, and prophetically predates a currently emerging architectural concern for the use of natural light, particularly as a humanizing design element in commercial structures.

An octagonal fountain, resplendent with fantail goldfish (a gift from local physician, Dr. G. K. Hashiba, at the time of the building's opening), offered the soothing tones of moving water, which harmonized with the songmaking of canaries in bronze bird cages. Classically sculpted benches and a variety of potted shrubs completed the architectural scheme of the inner court, which was truly an environment designed to ease the often times agonizing moments known to waiting patients.

As dedicated and innovative physicians, the practitioners in the Physician Building involved themselves in a variety of professional specialties, including general surgery, pediatrics, obstetries, and internal medicine: Such a mixture, no doubt, encouraged inter-office consultations and referrals at the time. As a group and as individuals, these practitioners made numerous distinguished contributions to the growing maturity of this Central Valley community, besides their common commitment to build the architecturally unique Physicians Building. Among these achievements, one should note Clinton Collins' service as County Physician from 1915-1920, Angus B. Cowan's position as both County Coroner and the leader of a community effort which secured accreditation for the county hospital by the American Medical Association and the American College of Surgeons in 1921, and Chester Vanderburgh's appointment as chief of the surgical staff at Fresno General Hospital.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Please see continuation sheet for listing of resource bibliography.
- Because of the significant amount of original research which was required to assemble information on the Physicians Building and architect Charles Butner, a complete list of those who were consulted is attached to this nomination form.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

.401 ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY UTM REFERENCES Fresno South quadrangle



VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Parcel 1: Lots 21 and 22 in Block 147 of the TOWN (now City) OF FRESNO, according to the map thereof recorded June 8, 1876, in Book 1 Page 2 of Plats, in the office of the County Recorder of said County.

Parcel 2: The Southwesterly 100 feet of Lots 17,18,19, and 20 in Block 147 of the TOWN (now City) OF FRESNO, according to the map thereof recorded June 8, 1876, in Book 1 Page 2 of Plats. in the office of the County Recorder of said County. LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	COD	E COUNTY	CODE	
STATE	COD	E COUNTY	CODE	

ITIFORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE JOHN EDWARD POWELL		
ART CONSULTANT AND I	RESEARCHER	13 MAY 1978
ORGANIZATION		DATE
THE KLEIN GROUP		
STREET & NUMBER		TELEPHONE
2881 Huntington Boulevard	Suite 161	209 264- 4621
CITY OR TOWN	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	STATE

Fresno, California 93721

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

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TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 7/12/78

LOCAL X

FUR NFS USE UNLT	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIO	INAL REGISTER
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integrity of the Physicians Building is intact, albeit behind the "modern" pasteon changes.

Although several early sources showed promise of turning up original plans and/or drawings of the building, at least two sets of records are known to have been permanently destroyed. A substantial visual record of historical photographs and images from personal interviews have been assembled, nonetheless, and this information will enable the new owner of the Physicians Building to restore the exterior to its original appearance, and to uncover the entire skylight over the expansive inner court. Upon completion of the project, Physicians Building will once again visually speak of the refined elegance of revival architecture unique to California in the 1920's, and in particular it will document the comparatively rare Italianate idiom which was a by-product of this regional architectural era.

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Although described at the time of its opening as being in the "Spanish style", Physicians Building may be more accurately defined as an elegantly refined blend of the various revival styles peculiar to California architecture during the 1920's. Beyond the red-tiled roof and the original, sheer white-washed walls. the Physicians Building resists strict comparison to the more common Spanish Revival Style. With its centralized Axial Plan, its dramatic and classically styled inner court, and its crisp angularity and characteristic precision detail, the design suggests a more conscious adaptation of Palladian ideals (Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio 1508-1580). The architect of the building. Charles E. Butner (1888-1957), is known to have been a proponent of the simple dignity of the Italianate manner, and his architectural training in the Beaux Arts tradition at the University of Pennsylvania would support this claim. Butner, who graduated from Penn with a Certificate of Proficiency in Architecture in 1911, studied under the influential hand of Paul Cret, whose instructional talent later produced such exceptional American architects as Louis Kahn and Joseph Esherick. Before emigrating to California in 1914, to begin his practice with former classmate and architectural engineer Edward Glass in Fresno, Charles Butner took a position with the prestigious New York architectural firm of McKim. Mead, and White, whose interpretations in Italian Renaissance design concept historically molded the traditional character of the "modern" central city of that era.

During the early depression years, Butner attempted to maintain both his original office in Fresno, and a branch office in Salinas. By 1935, however, Butner and his draftsman, and later partner John Waterman, permanently relocated to Salinas, where the firm weathered successive economic upheavals in a successful bid for survival. After Butner's death in 1957, the firm continued as Butner and Waterman, Architects, until John Waterman's retirement in 1972. Remarkably, the heirs to the firm which Charles Butner established in 1914, continue to manage a thriving practice in Salinas and the South Bay Region.

Time and the thundering movement of the wrecker's ball have brought "progress" to the community, with a corresponding loss of many of Fresno's most characterfull old structures. A troubling number of Charles Butner's more architecturally distinctive buildings have been similarly destroyed, such as his "Sullivanesque" McKinley and John Muir Schools (Butner's cafeteria at John Muir was luckily restructured and continues to be in use today). Of those significant Fresno projects designed by Charles Butner which still exist as a part of the Central Valley's architectural heritage, The Twining Laboratories Building (1930), The Republican Printery (1919), The Leon Camy residence (1935), and in particular, the Physicians Building (1926) are most notable.

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Architect Butner was a master of a refined sense of ornament and design, and his Physicians Building remains a handsome representative of an American architectural era which evolved remarkable, regional variations of Mediterranean Styles. Physicians Building, by virtue of its clarity of design, its enduring and restorable structural integrity, and its relationship to the community history as the first medical building of its kind, is one of the more distinguished small structures in the city -- and it should continue to survive as a visual and functional confirmation of the longevity of sound office planning.

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Physicians Building 2607 Fresno Street Fresno, California

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

- 1. Anonymous, "Building for Six Physicians is Completed," <u>The Fresno Morning</u> Republican, November 28, 1926, p. A.
- Anonymous, "Physicians Move into New Offices," <u>The Fresno Bee</u>, November 28, 1926, p. Four-C.
- 3. Anonymous, Review of Restaurant by Butner, Holm and Waterman, <u>Architect and</u> Engineer, Vol. 191, No. 2, November, 1952, pp. 19-21.
- Editorial, "True Spanish Colonial Architecture," <u>The Architect</u>, Volume IX, Number 6, San Francisco, June, 1915, pp. 217-218.
- 5. Exhibit, <u>Palladio in America</u>, University Museum, University of California, Berkeley, May 11, 1978.
- 6. Gebhard, David, <u>Architecture in California</u>, <u>1868-1968</u>, The Regents, University of California, 1968.
- 7. Gebhard, David, et. al., <u>A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern</u> <u>California Revised Edition</u>, Peregrine Smith, Inc., Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City, 1976 *
- 8. Gebhard, David, and Robert Winter, <u>A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and</u> <u>Southern California</u>, Peregrine Smith, Inc., Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City, 1977.
- 9. Heyer, Paul, <u>Architects on Architecture</u>, <u>New Directions in Architecture</u>, Walker and Company, New York, 1966.
- McCoy, Esther, <u>Five California Architects</u>, Praeger Publishers, Inc., New York, 1975.
- 11. Mendelowitz, Daniel M., <u>A History of American Art</u>, 2nd Edition, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., New York, 1970.
- 12. White, Theo B., Paul Cret, The Art Alliance Press, Philadelphia, 1973.
- 13. Whitehill, Walter Muir, and Frederick Doveton Nichols, <u>Palladio in America</u>, Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., New York, 1978.
 - * (Charles Butner listed for design work on the <u>Salinas Californian</u> <u>Building</u>, Salinas, 1948)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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INITIAL LISTING OF INDIVIDUALS, CORPORATIONS, AND AGENCIES CONSULTED FOR INFORMATION ON THE HISTORY OF THE PHYSICIANS BUILDING

- Mrs. Karney Hodge, Fresno RE: Dr. Cooper Collins
- Dr. Cooper Collins, Fresno (nephew of founding physician) RE: Dr. and Mrs. C. D. Vanderburgh Mrs. C. D. Collins
- Dr. and Mrs. C. D. Vanderburgh, Fresno (founding physician) RE: Mrs. Edna Biedermann Eddie Schober (Fresno Bee photographer)
- Mrs. Edna Biedermann, Fresno (Former nurse and original office manager) RE: Provided name of architect, Charles Butner, and the year of construction, 1926.
- H. Wayne Taul, Fresno (engineer)
- Mrs. C. D. Collins, Carmel (wife of founding physician) RE: Taylor-Wheeler Builders
- Taylor-Wheeler Builders, Fresno RE: Their records showed that they were not the builders
- Russell Schober, Fresno (photographer) RE: Jack Worsham
- Jack Worsham, Fresno (KFSN-TV Channel 30) RE: Jerry Laval
- Jerry Laval, Fresno (Graphic Technology) RE: Claude "Pop" Laval Historical Photo Collection Pacific-Portland cement (commissioned photo of Physicians Building)
- Pacific-Portland Cement Company, Redwood City RE: Ideal Cement Company
- Robert Chol, Denver (Ideal Cement Company) RE: Photographic files no longer exist

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California State Board of Architectural Examiners - Sacramento RE: Charles Butner, A.I.A. (License #B-809 - Biographical information destroyed) Northern California Chapter, American Institute of Architects, San Francisco RE: Verification of Butner's Salinas Office Fresno Bee Archive Library RE: Misc. Newspaper clippings, obituary notices indicating relatives of original physicians Ronald H. Noricks, Archivist, Fresno City and County Historical Society RE: Morning Republican photo (research at Library turned up corresponding article documenting construction information) R. Pedersen and Sons, Fresno (Original Builder) RE: John H. Waterman, Felton (Charles Butner's Associate in Salinas Area) Wesley J. Newman (B.A. Newman, original Mechanical Contractors) Fresno John H. Waterman, A.I.A., Felton * RE: George Kuska, A.I.A. Allen Lew, A.I.A. Edward Peterson, A.I.A. * (Later interviewed in person, May 12, 1978) George Kuska, A.I.A., Salinas (Heirs to the firm of Butner and Waterman) Allen Y. Lew, A.I.A., Fresno RE: Hans Graff Glass, A.I.A. (Father Edward Glass, Glass and Butner, Architects, Fresno, Circa 1920) Mrs. Edward Peterson (Mr. Peterson was Charles Butner's junior associate in 1926) Hans Graff Glass, A.I.A., San Francisco RE: Biographical Information on Charles Butner

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Bertram Cowan Wheeler, Courtland

RE: Biographical information on Dr. Angus Cowan, founding physician Pending: Possible source of original plans and photographs.

Frank Witherow, Safeco Title Insurance Company, Fresno
RE: Provided title search which unfortunately did not turn up
an original set of plans.

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ADDITIONAL LISTING OF INDIVIDUALS AND AGENCIES CONSULTED FOR INFORMATION RELATING TO THE PHYSICIANS BUILDING HISTORY

- Jeffrey Loring, Architect, Fresno (Provided valuable consultation during the research on Physicians Building)
- John Jewell, Science and Technology Librarian, Fresno County Library, Fresno (Arranged for duplication of historical newspapers)
- Bert Marsh, Odd Fellows Lodge No. 186, Fresno RE: Historical photograph of the original lodge building at Broadway and Merced showing entrance canopy by Charles Butner

William Camy, The Republican Printery, Fresno

RE: Biographical information on Charles Butner Camy Residence (1935), Glass and Butner, Architects The Printery Building (1919), Glass and Butner (Details taken of moldings and miscellaneous mill work)

George C. Hamparson, The Twining Laboratories, Inc., Fresno RE: Provided historical newspaper documenting that the design of the original laboratory was done by Charles Butner

- Francis James Dallet, University Archivist, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
 - RE: Biographical and Academic information on Charles Butner

Salinas Californian, Archive Library, Salinas RE: Biographical information on Charles Butner listing architectural

- projects in the Monterey-Salinas area.
- Planning and Inspection Department, City of Fresno, Microfilm Records Office (Miscellaneous verifications of construction dates on numerous Charles Butner projects)
- CALTRANS (California Department of Transportation, District 6) RE: Lloyd W. Rutherford Verified the inaccuraccy of a lead suggesting that the original California Highway Commission Office (District 6) was designed by Charles Butner in 1926. An original specification document listed the architect as W. D. Coates, Jr.

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ITEM NUMBER PAGE CONTINUATION SHEET 9 5 Richard Crow, Principal, McKinley School, Fresno RE: Original sign for school is all that remains of the Butner-designed school. Mrs. Walker, Principal, John Muir School, Fresno RE: Original cafeteria intact, although the rest of the physical plant has been completely replaced. Leaded-glass windows from the original Glass and Butner Kindergarten building were saved and remounted in the new kindergarten structure. Jospeh Collins, retired appraiser, Fresno RE: Biographical information on Edward Glass and general background on the old Huntington Boulevard residential district Bernard Barber and Associates, Fresno RE: Mrs. Bernard Barber Mrs. Bernard Barber (Elaine Camy), Fresno RE: Provided leads to several Butner-designed residences Building and Safety Department, County of Fresno (No building records exist prior to 1959) Fresno County Waterworks, Fresno (Charles McEwen) RE: Mr. Carl Gronlund Carl Gronlund, Fresno County Waterworks, Fresno RE: Verified original owner of suspected Butner-designed residence. Records do not show architect's name. Public Works Department, City of Fresno, Fresno RE: Records do not indicate the name of project architects at the time of water hook-up. Monterey Medical Society, Salinas RE: Verification of whereabouts of relatives of Charles Butner Assessor's Office, County of Fresno, Fresno RE: Verification of present owners of suspected Butner-designed residence.

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- Fresno County Schools Office, George Woosley (Finance) RE: Verified that all of their plan records had been destroyed three years ago.
- Harry V. White, Salinas Surviving grandson of Charles Butner. RE: Inquiry unanswered.
- Dr. Paul V. Turner, Professor of Architectural History, Stanford University (Reviewed the stylistic analysis of the Physicians Building and the general scope of the research as it was conducted)
- Art and Architecture Library, Department of Art, Stanford University (Specific readings on California's regional architectural variations and research to trace publications listing information on Charles Butner's practice and works.)
- Environmental Design Library, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley (Specific readings on California's regional architectural variations and research to trace publications listing information on Charles Butner's practice and works)
- Rare Documents Collection, Ms. Diane Favro, Research Assistant College of Environmental Design, University of California (Although nothing was found, this collection indexes plans and documents which find their way into the library by way of estates, donations, etc.)
- Mrs. Anthony Abbate, Fresno (Information on residence at 5415 Van Ness which is thought to have been designed by Charles Butner - A search for the original plans is underway.)
- Robert Sullivan, Rainbow Bakery (San Joaquin Bakery), Fresno (Information on the original bakery structure, thought to have been designed by Charles Butner. Little information survives the transition to the modern plant and the plans appear to have been lost.)

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Steffen Landauer, Columbia University, New York City, New York

RE: A preliminary check was made of the McKim, Mead, and White files which are held by the New York Historical Society for any indication which would verify Charles Butner's employment by the firm circa 1911-1914. Employee and wage records only indicate total numbers and/or total wages with no breakdown according to individuals. A more comprehensive manual search through the vast store of records may locate a record book or ledger with an appropriate listing. Such a search is to be undertaken at some future date.

