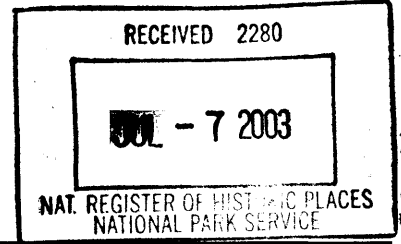


(Oct. 1990)

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**



1193

NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Fort Sumner Community House
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: SE corner of US 84 and Baker Avenue
CITY OR TOWN: Fort Sumner
STATE: New Mexico CODE: NM COUNTY: De Baca CODE: 011 ZIP CODE: 88119
NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A
VICINITY: N/A

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.)

Katherine Stich

Signature of certifying official

3 July 2003

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

State or 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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this 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
Garson H. Beall

Date of Action

8/21/03

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Public-local

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Building

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	1	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	0	0 STRUCTURES
	0	0 OBJECTS
	1	0 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: New Mexico Federation of Women's Club Buildings
In New Mexico

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: SOCIAL: meeting hall

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: SOCIAL: meeting hall

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: OTHER: Vernacular (with Bungalow/Craftsman influence)

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION CONCRETE
WALLS STUCCO
ROOF ASPHALT
OTHER WOOD

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-6).

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- 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 VALUE, 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: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Social History

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1939-1953

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1939

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: unknown

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-7 through 8-9).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-10).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- 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 (*Historic Preservation Division, Office of Cultural Affairs*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: Ft. Sumner Woman's Club

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES Zone Easting Northing
 1 13 0569370 3815267

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 10-11)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see continuation sheet 10-11)

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: David Kammer, Ph.D.

ORGANIZATION: Consulting historian

DATE: May 2003

STREET & NUMBER: 521 Aliso Dr. NE

TELEPHONE: (505) 266-0586

CITY OR TOWN: Albuquerque

STATE: NM

ZIP CODE: 87108

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS see attached Fort Sumner East Quadrangle U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute series map

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-12)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Village of Fort Sumner

STREET & NUMBER: P.O. Box 180

TELEPHONE: (505) 355-2401

CITY OR TOWN: Fort Sumner

STATE: NM

ZIP CODE: 88119

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Fort Sumner Community House
Fort Sumner, De Baca County, New Mexico

Section 7 Page 5

Description

The Fort Sumner Community House is a one-story pitched roof building facing U. S. 84 north of the railroad underpass on the north side of the village of Fort Sumner. Since its construction as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project in 1939-40, it has been in continuous use as a gathering place for many of the community's social and voluntary activities and is considered a landmark within the village. Typical of many of the public works projects undertaken during the New Deal in New Mexico, the building utilizes adobe brick, a common building material in the area. Atypical of many of those projects in New Mexico that employed regional designs, the building incorporates modest elements of the bungalow style. The building also includes two additions, a pitched roof addition along its south side, now the meeting room of the Fort Sumner Woman's Club, added in c.1942 when the building also served as a United Service Organizations (U.S.O.) facility, and a storage addition at the rear of the building. Hopper windows, incorrectly installed at the time of construction, have recently been replaced with double-hung metal windows. The building retains much of its original appearance and continues its historic function within the community.

The Community House is located at the southeast corner of U.S. 84 and Baker Avenue, immediately north of the Fort Sumner Underpass. Also a public works project dating to 1938, the grade separation with its sidewalks permitted both vehicular and pedestrian traffic an uninterrupted and safe passage to the Depot and Canal Addition north of the Santa Fe Railroad tracks. Located on a hill overlooking the highway, the building is surrounded by a parking lot on three sides with its front entry lined by a driveway (see Photo 1). A small plot landscaped with a lawn and deciduous trees set in large timber planters fronts the building. Reflecting the rise in contour above the highway, the plot is lined with a low, concrete-capped masonry retaining wall. A concrete sidewalk crosses the plot leading to the main entry. A similar low retaining wall also lines the 1942 addition at the southeast corner of the building (see Photo 2).

The building has a concrete foundation and its walls consist of adobe brick with a stucco facing. The roof has a moderate pitch with side gables. A more steeply pitched gable projects at the front entry (see Photo 1). Consistent with its use of bungalow details, the roof has an overhang with exposed rafters. Decorative brackets with knee braces appear periodically at both the side and front porch gables (see Photo 2). Reflective of its adobe construction, the porch's heavy supports have a slight molding at the base of the front entry. Two side arches with low walls flank the entry. The wall of the south-facing arch has been removed to permit a ramp access to the door. Double-hung six-light metal windows replaced the original hopper windows in the mid-1990s. Similarly a sidelight and transom have been added at the main entry. The roofline and gable details of the 1942 addition at the southeast corner mirror the original building (see Photo 2). A discreet entry with a metal door and an access ramp permits entry to the clubhouse addition. A storage area, also with an access ramp, has been added more recently to the rear of the building.

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Section 7 Page 6

Fort Sumner Community House
Fort Sumner, De Baca County, New Mexico

The plan of the original building is a rectangle with the 1942 addition, creating a second smaller rectangle adjoining it. Typical of many women's club buildings that serve as community houses, a large portion of the rectangle is dedicated to a hall that functions as a public space for dances, concerts, dinners, bazaars, and other public activities. A low stage with flanking risers extends along the northern side of the hall. Kitchen and washroom facilities are located at the southeast section of the building, and two doors connect the hall with the kitchen and the Fort Sumner Woman's Club meeting room in the south addition.

The Fort Sumner Community House retains a high degree of integrity as to location and setting. The construction of a public swimming pool sponsored by the Fort Sumner Woman's Club located north of the building has reinforced the site as a community center. Similarly, the relatively unaltered plan of the building as well as its materials and workmanship reflective of building practices in the area during its period of significance contribute to its feeling as both a community hall and woman's clubhouse. Intended to serve not only the women of the community but the community at large, the building continues to function as it was originally intended and is regarded as a notable public facility within the community.

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Section 8 Page 7

Fort Sumner Community House
Fort Sumner, De Baca County, New Mexico

Statement of Significance

The Fort Sumner Community House is historically significant for its long association with the civic life of Fort Sumner and the contributions the Fort Sumner Woman's Club has made to the community. Since its construction as a WPA project in 1939-40, the building has not only served the woman's club but the community at large, functioning as a U.S.O. center during World War II, as well as a gathering place for cultural, political and social events. The meeting place for activities that have benefited all of De Baca County, the building is well preserved and is recognized as a landmark by residents throughout the area. Associated with women's volunteerism in the community since its completion in 1940, the building is significant under Criterion A at the local level of significance.

Fort Sumner is popularly associated with the military installation four miles southeast of the present village, established in 1862 to oversee the internment of Navajo and Mescalero Apache Indians at Bosque Redondo. Deactivated in 1868, the name was also applied to the settlement that grew at the ranch of Lucien Maxwell, who purchased the former fort's lands in 1875 and in whose house William Bonney, also known as Billy the Kid, was killed in 1881. The modern village of Fort Sumner, however, was founded as a railroad settlement in 1905 with a second railroad community, Sunnyside, located north of the Santa Fe Railroad tracks. Following a tornado that destroyed the latter settlement in 1908, the communities merged as Fort Sumner, with development occurring along both sides of the tracks.

As the village attracted settlers, some of the women sought to establish a woman's club, realizing their goal in 1916 when the Fort Sumner Woman's Club was founded to promote the "civic improvement and intellectual betterment of women" (NMFWC 1991:29). Following a period in which it disbanded during World War I, while many members took part in Red Cross programs, the club reorganized and joined the New Mexico Federation of Women's Clubs (NMFWC) in 1919. Meeting in a downtown building known as the Guild House, the club undertook projects to benefit the village, raising money for hospital equipment, supporting the hiring of a county health nurse, undertaking a fly extermination program and sponsoring town-wide "clean-up" days. Similar to other federation clubs around the state, the women also undertook a milk distribution program for undernourished children in the village's public school ((NMFWC 1922:56).

By the early 1930s, the club had also undertaken a project to construct a library building to eliminate the frequent need to relocate the village's small library. At one point, the club met in the county courthouse, also using the building to house the library. So precarious was this arrangement, however, that during a period when the club was storing its library in the office of a lumber company, burned, losing the entire collection (Fort Sumner Woman's Club nd:5). To remedy this situation, the club began to envision the construction of a building that would house the library and also provide a meeting place for the public as well as the club. Even as the club conducted used clothing drives to aid needy families and sponsored the village's annual Christmas

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Section 8 Page 8

Fort Sumner Community House
Fort Sumner, De Baca County, New Mexico

tree to raise money to aid the fight against tuberculosis, members also undertook fund-raising dinners and dances to support a building fund.

As the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) got under way in the mid-1930s and local governments began to submit proposals to the WPA, the woman's club began to see a public works project as the means for meeting the needs of the community and the club. The first step occurred when a local businessman offered the club two lots north of the railroad for one dollar and \$6.47 of back taxes. Although WPA records indicate the approval of a \$4,700 grant in November 1936 for a community building, it wasn't until October 1939 with the approval of a second grant for \$7,400 superceding the first that the project got underway (Kammer 1994:B-21). In order to qualify as a WPA project, in February 1939, the club resolved to turn its building fund of \$800 over to the Village of Fort Sumner for the purpose of "building a Community House" which then would be available rent free to the club. As discussed in the Historic Context (*New Mexico Federation of Women's Club Buildings In New Mexico*), the idea of providing a community hall or "rest room" in the smaller towns of New Mexico represented a particularly compelling goal for the NMFWC, which sought to provide adequate public meeting spaces not only for clubwomen and townspeople but for rural ranch and farm women as well.

According to the undated written accounts of a longtime club member, the resolution sparked discussion among club members as to how the building should appear. Those favoring a "demure cottage type" prevailed with the selection of a bungalow-inspired building. Whereas WPA projects undertaken in other parts of New Mexico often employed regional building styles, the popularity in Fort Sumner of bungalow and hipped roof cottage style domestic architecture, no doubt, helped to determine local taste. Also reflective of local building practices, however, was an adobe brick tradition practiced by both Anglo and Hispano builders. With the village supplying building materials as its contribution to the federal government's furnishing the money to pay the project's workers selected from the county's work relief roles, the adobe bricks represented an easily fabricated building material with which crews were already familiar. With Aaron Brown Harris, a well-regarded local "adobero," likely overseeing the project, workers completed the construction in 1940 (Parsons 2002). Benefiting from the completion of the nearby railroad underpass, the citizens of Fort Sumner could now walk to their new Community House, as Fort Sumner historian, Robert Parsons stated, "on a sidewalk without having sand blow in your eye."

The woman's club, however, enjoyed only a brief tenure in the building. With the outbreak of World War II, it disbanded until 1946 as members volunteered to help the war effort. Many worked with the Red Cross and the U.S.O., which used the building to provide dances for servicemen stationed at the nearby glider training base that the Army Air Force established at a former Civilian Conservation Camp just northeast of the village. In order to meet the needs of the U.S.O., a pitched roof addition was constructed at the southeast corner of the building. Mirroring the roofline and bungalow details of the just completed Community House, the smaller space offered a more intimate clubroom that continues to serve the Fort Sumner Woman's Club as its clubhouse.

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Fort Sumner Community House
Fort Sumner, De Baca County, New Mexico

When it resumed its activities in 1946, the club continued its support of community projects, assuming responsibility for developing windmill-supplied irrigation at the cemetery, undertaking the landscaping of the village's public school grounds, and supporting expansion of the community hospital. In recent decades club members have continued their voluntary role within the community, promoting the construction of a municipal swimming pool located just north of the Community House and establishment of a nursing home for De Baca County. In addition, the club has continued its support of the public library and provides a speakers program for both the community and public schools. Over the past six decades, the Fort Sumner Woman's Club has continued to operate the Fort Sumner Community House. The club and the public at large regard the building as a community landmark and view register listing as a means of recognizing its historic and ongoing role in Fort Sumner.

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Fort Sumner Community House
Fort Sumner, De Baca County, New Mexico

Bibliography

Carter, Beverly. Interview with David Kammer, November, 2002. Mrs. Carter is a longtime member of the Fort Sumner Woman's Club.

Fort Sumner Review. Various issues, 1935-1938.

Fort Sumner Woman's Club. "A Reminiscence." Copy in the Fort Sumner Woman's Club Collection. No Date.

Kammer, David. *The Historical and Architectural Resources of the New Deal in New Mexico*. Prepared for the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, 1994.

_____. "New Mexico Federation of Women's Clubs in New Mexico." Multiple property listing prepared for the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, 2003

New Mexico Federation of Women's Clubs (NMFWC). Annual Yearbooks and Bulletins, 1911-1930. Housed in the Museum of New Mexico History Library.

_____. Reflections, 1991.

Parsons, Robert. Interview with David Kammer, November, 2002. Mr. Parsons is a retired history teacher and De Baca County historian.

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Section 10 Page 11

Fort Sumner Community House
Fort Sumner, De Baca County, New Mexico

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 15 and 16 of Block 41 of the Depot and Canal Addition located in Fort Sumner, De Baca County, New Mexico.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Fort Sumner Community House.

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Section Photo Page 12

Fort Sumner Community House
Fort Sumner, De Baca County, New Mexico

Photographs

The following information pertains to all photographs unless otherwise noted:

Fort Sumner Community House
SE corner of US 84 and Baker Avenue
Fort Sumner, De Baca County, New Mexico
Photographer: David Kammer
November 19, 2002
Location of Negatives: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division

Photo 1 of 2
Main façade and landscape
Camera facing southeast

Photo 2 of 2
Woman's Club Meeting Room (1942 U.S.O. Addition)
Camera facing north