National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91000917 Date Listed: 7/23/91

<u>King City Joint Union High School Auditorium Monterey</u> <u>CA</u> Property Name County State

<u>N/A</u> Multiple Name

m

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.

Putainette	16	u		
 Signature	ðf	the	Keeper	

<u>1/24/91</u> Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Description: The roof material is amended to read "other."

This information was confirmed with Marilyn Lortie of the California State Historic Preservation Office.

DISTRIBUTION: National Register property file Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

MAY 2 0 1991 ANTIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines* for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property						
	t Union High	School A	uditorium	······		
historic name King City Joint Union High School Auditorium other names/site number King City High School Auditorium,						
	Stanton Thea	ter				
2. Location	****					
street & number North Mildred	Ave., near	Broadway	Street	N/A not for pu	ublication	
city, town King City	*****			N/A vicinity		
	A county	Monterey	code	053 zi	p code 93930	
3. Classification						
Ownership of Property	Category of Property		Number of I	Resources within	Property	
private	X building(s)					
X public-local	district		1		uildings	
Dublic-State] site				ites	
public-Federal					tructures	
	object				bjects	
L			-1		otal	
Name of related multiple property listing:			Number of	contributing resou		
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A				National Register	· 🛆 · ·	
				National negister		
4. State/Federal Agency Certification	on					
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.						
Signature of commenting or other official Date State or Federal agency and bureau						
5. National Park Service Certification	~~					
1, hereby, certify that this property is:						
 Interedy, 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. 	<u>Mutouieet</u>	glie			23191	
removed from the National Register.						
	to	Signature of the	Keeper		Date of Action	

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OMB No. 1024-0018

6. Function or Use			
Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)		
Recreation and Culture:	Recr	reation and Culture:	
Auditorium	Auditorium		
7. Description			
Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (e	nter categories from instructions)	
X 1	foundation _	Concrete	
Moderne	walls	Concrete	
	roof	Copper	
	other	-	

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Constructed in 1939, the King City Joint Union High School Auditorium dominates the East side of the campus and remains essentially Standing five stories tall (80' unaltered to this day. plus basement), the building is prominent within its setting, both through sheer size, as well as unique W.P.A. Moderne style. Designed by noted architect Robert Stanton, the building is the best example in Monterey County of his early work within the W.P.A. Moderne style. Famed artist Joseph Jacinto Mora embellished the building with his singular bas-relief sculpture. Stanton's and Mora's work blend to create an impressive architectural statement. The building remains unaltered and in excellent condition. In 1988 roof drains were In 1989 the original copper roof was covered with felt and resealed. tar roofing material to correct leaks. Derbygum around the rain gutters helped seal the roof. This in no way altered the structure nor is it visible. The King City School Auditorium possesses a high of level integrity location, design, setting, materials, of workmanship, feeling, and association and therefore should qualify for listing on the National Register under Criteria C.

Originally, the auditorium stood to the left of the c. 1915 Spanish colonial style school. This was replaced with a contemporary one story building in the 1970s. Both structures are set in a wide expanse of lawn. The grand sweep of entrance way and arches of the current buildings are compatible with the design of the auditorium. Landscaping around the auditorium consists of cement walkways and grass, judiciously planted evergreen shrubbery of varying heights and small trees, none of which overwhelm the building. The original grassy area to the right of the auditorium has been converted to a parking area and is screened from the building by a privet hedge.

Robert Stanton was an eclectic architect who experimented with a variety of architectural styles. These ranged from Country French to residences for the famous, such as Mary and Douglas Fairbanks' Pickfair; from hospital designs for which he was considered an expert to the first use of an A-frame school building. In partnership with Wallace Neff, Stanton built the first prefabricated house in the United States in the 1930s. "Too far ahead of the times," he said.

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He studied the work of Bernard Maybeck and Frank Lloyd Wright and surrounded himself with the best engineers, one of whom worked on Boulder Dam. All the influences in Robert Stanton's life -- singing in opera, acting in theater, sound and lighting for movies, European travel -- came together in his design for the King City Auditorium. Easy maintenance, W.P.A. budgetary constraints, and the 1930s trend of utilizing the Moderne style in public buildings all united harmoniously. Stanton avoided the oft-repeated Greek theater formula by designing a building with principle mass in the shape of an ellipse. The smooth lines of the auditorium curve back to meet the rectangular bulk of the stage, which stands five stories tall and dominates the rear elevation.

The building's Moderne quality is emphasized by Stanton's construction material: reinforced concrete supplemented by steel framing. The concrete, tinted a subtle cream color, gives a smooth, streamlined surface to the walls, not only distinguishing them stylistically, but serving practicality as well. First, the material allowed Stanton to meet the earthquake resistance standards of the day. Second, the flexibility of poured concrete made the elliptical shape possible, which in turn allowed for sharper acoustics. Finally, the curved walls reduced cubic area costs. Although restricted by the W.P.A. budget and acoustical needs, Stanton still managed to produce a dignified, graceful structure on the cutting edge of 1930s style.

The front facade of the building is a prelude to the building as a whole. Like double parentheses, the expansive curved stairway of six semi-circular, shallow steps and the roof line bracket the monolithic entrance, foretelling the overall fluidity of the structure. A bas-relief triptych of heroic proportions is the focal point of the entrance. Divided into three levels, the triptych depicts on the <u>lower</u> level, left to right: Egyptian Harpist of antiquity with female contortionists, the Egyptian Scarab in a decorative panel; American aboriginal (Hopi Indian) Ceremonial Dance; Teuman Katchina and her twin sons, the Tunwhips. Jo Mora tells us that "at this gorgeous ceremony, the author was initiated into this tribe and received, nude, his flogging at the hands of the twins with yucca whips"; and the Greek drama showing a masked actor as a comedian in the role of a Satyr and a masked tragedian in his thick-soled buskins and high-crowned mask; Greek lyre in decorative panel. Middle: Malay actors performing; The Princess harassed by the masked tiger-clawed Demon; Musician, seated, beats the rhythm on a long narrow drum with his hand. The long-nosed Malay God, Aradjuna, in decorative panel; entertainment in the Middle Ages with Joust between mounted knights; the Troubador and the Jugglers; Indian temple dancers, musician with long flute; Indian sacred elephant in decorate panel. Upper: The old-time California Fandango; the modern Cinema; the Shakespearian drama of "Romeo and Juliet". The background for each bas-relief is a rusty coral or a faded vermilion color. Two

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massive striated piers topped with the heads of Comedy and Tragedy cut through the triptych, and divide the facade into three bays. Three oak and glass double doors are recessed between the piers below the bas-relief panels. Shadows created by the recessed doors not only draw audiences in, but allow some relief from the overwhelming planar surfaces of the sheer walls. The striations in the piers are repeated in the walls, emphasizing the building's verticality.

Games with light and shadow, introduced by the facade's recessed doors, come into full play in the identical side elevations. Three immense piers shoot up to a scalloped entablature, dividing the building into four recessed bays. Each pier is topped by a Mora bas-relief depicting "Midsummer Night's Dream", Tatiana, Queen of the Fairies, Puck, and Bottom with Jackass' head. Second capital: Musical instruments -- the Greek lyre, the Pipes of Pan and the Greek brass military horn. Once again, vertical striations are used on each recessed wall to emphasize verticality. Waffle patterned air vents are centered at the top of each wall. Both functional and decorative, these vents echo Stanton's overall approach to the building's design.

The stage makes up the rear facade. Here the smooth concrete surface is unbroken by bas-relief or shadow except for the set of huge stage doors.

Upon entering the auditorium, one is impressed with the handsome foyer and its true, primary blue wainscoting framed in oak. The ceiling is the same rich blue which contrasts with the pale cream walls. Wide curving stairways lead to the balcony from either side of the foyer. Six tall doors of oak feed the audience down three aisles. Figured aluminum (a metal which is part of the Moderne vocabulary) medallions were originally over each door. One medallion remains, crowning the central doors with the figure of the harpist, the lion, and the lamb. The auditorium seats 596 on the main floor. The balcony seats 387. The lobby, stairs, and the three aisles are covered with a composition cork flooring, state-of-the-art at that time for absorbing sound. The auditorium is 34 feet high at the stage and 73 feet wide, with a 34 foot wide stage opening.

Flanking the proscenium are two of Mora's bas-relief sculptures showing the right and left sides of Pegasus, the inspirational mount of the Greek Muses. These sculptures are the only decorative note on the walls, their background color repeating the rusty vermilion of his exterior sculptures. On either side of the proscenium arch are concave fluted piers. Art Deco Greek-style wine jars in deep blue porcelain, resting on wrought-iron stands, direct the eye to the curving concrete steps leading to the stage. The grande drape is blue velour, taking its cue from the blue ceiling. Originally, the seats were upholstered in blue. The cream, rich blue and vermilion continue to delight the eye as the perfect color choices for this stunning structure.

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Interior alterations have been reserved to raising the balcony railing 18" to conform to a change in State law. This occurred in 1988. The seat upholstery is now gold rather than the original blue, having been replaced in the early 1960s. The footlights have been disconnected and sealed as fashions in lighting and fire codes have changed. The first row of seats were removed in the 1940s to make more room for a pit orchestra.

The King City Auditorium is a marriage of opposites - line and curve, light and shadow, repetition and differentiation, simplicity and detail - but guided by Stanton's genius and embellished by Mora's distinctive artwork.

8. Statement of Significance	
Certifying official has considered the significance of this pro- nationally	roperty in relation to other properties:
Applicable National Register Criteria	C D
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	C D D F G
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance Significant Dates
Architecture	<u> </u>
Art	
	Cultural Affiliation
	N/A
Significant Person N/A	Architect/Builder Stanton, Robert, Architect
	Stolte, F.C. Co., Builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The significance of the King City High School Auditorium lies in its stunning Art Moderne design by architect Robert Stanton, and the magnificent sculptural ornamentation by artist Joseph Jacinto Mora. The building functions as a state-of-the-art cultural center with innovative style and incredibly perfect acoustics, architecturally representative of the era in which it was designed. Mora's bas-reliefs are fresh, vigorous, full of movement and action, dramatic and expressive of the purpose for which the building was designed.

In 1929 the stock market crashed, sending reverberations of ruin across the country. The prosperity enjoyed by Monterey County during the 1920s declined along with the fortunes of the nation. However, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's subsequent national recovery program helped ease the area out of its economic doldrums. In 1935 it was announced that California would receive four million dollars in Works Projects Administration funds. Projects could be sponsored by municipalities, counties, and other government entities. Monterey County received funds for 50 projects. Parks, sewers, storm drains, a golf course, and highway improvements were financed. In Salinas two public buildings were financed by Works Projects Administration monies: the U.S. Post Office and Federal Building, designed by Louis A. Simon in 1936, and the Monterey County Courthouse, designed by Robert Stanton in 1937. Both buildings were designed in what would become known as the Works Projects Administration Moderne style - "a Roman-Renaissance mode cleaned up with added elements of both zig-zag and Streamlined Moderne", according to David Gebhard. Designed in this futuristic style, these monumental buildings were symbols of hope, signaling the end of the Great Depression.

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The Monterey County Courthouse is considered "a perfect example, inside and out, of the Works Projects Administration Moderne style of the 1930s and also an excellent example of a concrete building whose surface is articulated by the pattern of form boards", Gebhard writes. Two years later, Stanton used the same formula - including style, embellishments, and materials - in the King City High School Auditorium. Although the courthouse is considered an excellent example of Stanton's early work in this genre, the auditorium surpasses it in clarity of design. Indeed, Stanton himself felt it was the better of the two buildings, as he mentioned in a speech to the A.I.A. when they honored him for his 40 years in architecture.

As the McAllesters describe in <u>A Field Guide to American Houses</u>, the Modernistic styles "received their first major impetus in 1922 when the <u>Chicago Tribune</u> held a worldwide competition for a headquarters building in Chicago. Although the first prize went to a Gothic design, the second prize went to an Art Deco design by a young Finnish Architect, Eliel Saarinen. His design was widely publicized and much of the architectural profession felt that he deserved the first prize; the style quickly became the latest architectural fashion." The curved corners, smooth surfaces, and flat roofs, created a streamlined or wind tunnel look which characterizes the Art Moderne style. Ornamentation consisted of cement panels, and bas-relief decoration around doorways. Metal or wooden doors might have circular windows or aluminum trim.

Architects, including Robert Stanton, adapted this futuristic style for their W.P.A. projects. The King City High School Auditorium reflects many of the features of the Moderne vocabulary -soft-rounded corners, flat roof, smooth wall finish, and horizontal walls to break-up the flat curved planes. Within the horizontal grooves, the surface is divided into blocks filled with striated lines creating an attractive play of light and shadow.

On September 14, 1936, Robert Stanton of Carmel was given a contract to design and draw plans for an auditorium to cost one hundred thousand dollars, of which 45% of the cost was to be borne by the Federal government. By October 22, 1936, a high school special election returned a vote of 246 to 111 in favor of applying for a W.P.A. grant. A low bid of \$133,150 was accepted on December 23, 1937, with a W.P.A. contribution of \$54,000.

Throughout the following months construction of the auditorium continued until by January 9, 1939, it was nearing completion. Heating, plumbing and electricity were 85% complete. Sand blasting of the concrete, installation of the copper roof, and daily burning of the furnace to facilitate the drying of the concrete were reported weekly in <u>The Rustler Herald</u>.

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The choice of Robert Stanton as architect was an excellent one. He consulted the experts of the day in Hollywood on lighting, sound, and acoustics and hired engineers specializing in working with concrete.

Robert Stanton, F.A.I.A., was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1900. His mother was a prima dona with the B.O. Whitney Opera Company. He, himself, had a beautiful baritone voice and sang in several operas with the San Francisco Opera, including a small part in Lily Pons Opera. After a brief stint in the United States Navy during World War I, he graduated from Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles. There he studied foundry casting in brass and iron, freehand and mechanical drawing, physics, chemistry and stagecraft. He completed his education at the University of California at Berkeley. His experience as stage manager for the University of California Little Theatre and a lead in a musical comedy at the Greek Theatre honed his theatrical skills. Following his studies in architecture and engineering, he traveled for several months in Europe observing the new stylistic influences beginning to have an impact on American architecture.

After his trip abroad, Stanton went to Pasadena where he was associated with renowned architect Wallace Neff. Neff was commissioned to design houses for famous people, among whom were King Vidor, Mary and Douglas Fairbanks and Frederic March. Stanton was in charge of all building supervision. A real estate broker and residential designer, he received his State Architectural License No. C-162 for the practice of architecture in the State of California. In 1935 he opened offices in the Del Monte Hotel. His commercial buildings include the Country-French Normandy Inn in Carmel, and later, numerous schools and hospitals.

One morning Stanton said, "I had a call from the Chairman of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, Andy Jacobsen. He said, Bob, I would like you to go over to Salinas with me as the Board is going to hire an architect to do a courthouse." Stanton got the job, but realized he had to put together a team of experienced architects and engineers, one of whom was an expert in concrete detailing. Stanton discussed the possibility of sculptor, Joseph Mora, doing the history of the County in concrete for ornamentation. Mora was very enthusiastic and later joined Stanton on the King City High School Auditorium project. The architecturally excellent Monterey County Courthouse in Salinas was Stanton's first use of poured concrete, the forerunner of the refined technique expressed in the King City High School Auditorium.

Joseph Jacinto Mora was born in Montevideo, Uruguay on October 22, 1876, the son of sculptor Domingo Mora. Jo and his brother Luis, two years his senior, spent their childhoods in the artistic atmosphere of their father's studio. Jo inherited his intensity and fire from his Spanish father. His French mother gave him a subtle mind and

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sophistication. Seeing no freedom for his sons in a country of revolutions, the family moved to New York where Mora shortened his first name to Jo to avoid afterschool fights over his Spanish ways and accent. Mora studied at the Art Student's League and Chase's School in New York City, and at Cowles Art School in Boston. Jo's sense of humor and imagination led him into cartooning, sketching and illustrating for the <u>Boston Herald</u>. All during this period, Mora wanted to see the Wild West.

At the age of 18, he began a migratory trip throughout the Southwest, arriving at Oraibe, New Mexico during the Hopi snake dance. Fascinated, Jo lived, worked, and hunted as one of the Hopi for three years and was made a member of the tribe. During this period, Mora did not neglect his art, making detailed notes of all he saw and did, working in charcoal, watercolors, pen and ink, even photography. He was joined by his father, Domingo Mora in San Jose, California, where he assisted his sculptor father with commissions that they signed D. and J.J. Mora. By now Mora's output reflected a variety of influences, including the classics, the Byzantine, the Romanesque, the Renaissance, the Western Indian, the cowboy, the pioneer, and the Spanish mission. He worked in marble, bronze, wood, and terracotta.

Jo Mora moved his studio to San Francisco in 1913 since most of his large commissions called for working in the Bay Area. Architect Julia Morgan asked him to do interior decorations in the Spanish Renaissance manner for the Los Angeles Examiner Building she was designing. In 1915 Mora executed the Cervantes memorial commemorating the great Spanish writer. This bronze statue stands near the De Young Museum in Golden Gate Park. The Bret Harte memorial in bronze bas-relief was executed for an exterior wall of the Bohemian Club in San Francisco.

Moving to Carmel in 1920, Jo worked for two years on what he called "the supreme professional effort of my life," the bronze and travertine sarcophagus of Father Junipero Serra. This legacy of a creative and talented artist reposes in the reception room of the San Carlos Boromeo de Carmelo Mission in Carmel. He designed the half dollar coin to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of California Statehood. On one side is a California grizzly bear. The reverse side depicts a miner kneeling over his gold pan. His diversified talents created the first animated California maps, a North American Indian reference chart, a sundial for the Arlington Elementary School in San Jose, architectural sculpture for the Portland, Oregon Post Office and Courthouse, the Doughboy statue in San Rafael, pediments for the Stock Exchange and State Chamber of Commerce building in San Francisco, figures for the Scottish Rite Temple in San Jose, and "La Novia" for the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey.

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Robert Stanton and Jo Mora had already been an architect-sculptor team for the Monterey County Courthouse in Salinas where Mora's capitals of aboriginal, Mission and American period topped 40 foot square columns. In addition, Mora created 23 heroic heads representing the "dramatis personae" of Monterey County history. Detailing the history of entertainment throughout the ages, Mora's low-relief sculptures on the facade of the King City High School Auditorium are done in a polished manner so appropriate to the sleek Art Moderne building. Mies Van der Rohe's "form follows function" is truly exemplified by both Mora and Stanton in this structure. Jo Mora was a tremendous worker, a perfectionist, a clever craftsman who drew on place and activity for his motifs, creating in a style appropriate to each commission. He has been recognized as Monterey's most versatile artist, a veritable "Benvenuto Cellini". His most enduring value as a California artist was his ability to capture the California ambiance in any of his chosen media.

The King City High School Auditorium is considered such an outstanding building that the nonprofit Southern Monterey County Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., was organized in 1987 to restore the worn-out stage equipment. The group also realized that the structure met the 50 year requirement to apply for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Home to grammar school graduations, community concert series, Little Theater groups, dance recitals, annual school concerts and plays, educational events and South County meetings, this architecturally significant building continues to fulfill the purposes for which it was designed. It also represents some of the finest work of two splendid California treasures: architect Stanton and artist/sculptor Mora.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Blumenson, John J.G. "Identifying American Architecture" ASLAH, 1942 <u>Historic Preservation</u> "What Style Is It? Art Deco." January-March, 1977 King Hi-Ways "Auditorium Facade - Interesting Story" Spring 1949. Vol. 24 Monterey Peninsula Herald	Gebhard, David et al., "A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California", 2nd edition, Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1973 Verardo, Jennie and Denzil, "The Salinas Valley. An Illustrated History". Windsor Publications, 1989
"Robert Stanton, Architect and Civic Leader, Die September 3, 1983	s at 83"
	X See continuation sheet
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 Specify repository:
10. Geographical Data Acreage of propertyLess than one acre	
UTM References A [1,0] [6] 6,7 [9,3 3] [4, 0 0,8 6,9,3] B Zone Easting Northing C [] [1,1,1,1,1] D	Zone Easting Northing
Verbal Boundary Description	
The property is a rectangular parcel measuring 7 King City High School campus in King City, Calif 360 feet north of Broadway and 64 feet west of M building is 449 feet west of Mildred. Building Avenue iwth the west end of the building located parcels 026-061-01 and 026-061-02B make up the school campus.	fornia. Southeast corner of the building is Mildred Avenue. Northeast corner of the runs east-west, perpendicular to Mildred
Boundary Justification	
The boundary is based on a small parcel which er	ncompasses the immediate building.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Catherine Whitney, National Register of Historic Places Chairperson	
organization Southern Monterey County Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.,	8/18/90
street & number 720 Broadway telephone (408) 385-335	8 - C. Whitney
city or town King City state California z	ip code <u>93930</u>

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