

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

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

For HCRS use only
received **OCT 20 1980**
date entered **NOV 22 1980**

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

1. Name

historic 1930 Federal Building

and/or common Old Courthouse Building

2. Location

street & number 421 Gold Avenue S.W. ___ not for publication

city, town Albuquerque ___ vicinity of congressional district #1

state New Mexico code 35 county Bernalillo code 001

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name General Services Administration: Mr. Neal Crowley, Building Manager

street & number P.O. Box 1129

city, town Albuquerque ___ vicinity of state New Mexico 87103

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bernalillo County Clerk's Office

street & number 505 Central Avenue N.W.

city, town Albuquerque ___ vicinity of state New Mexico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

State Register of Cultural Properties
title Historic Landmarks Survey of Albuquerque has this property been determined eligible? yes ___ no

date September 16, 1980 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Historic Landmarks Survey of Albuquerque, Planning Division

city, town Albuquerque ___ vicinity of state New Mexico

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Present and Original Physical Appearance:

The 1930 Federal Building at the corner of 5th and Gold in downtown Albuquerque, New Mexico, is a striking combination of Mediterranean style and symmetry and decorative Indian design motifs. Built to be seen from all sides, the six-story building stands alone on the northeast corner of 5th and Gold, separated by a wide service drive from its companion building on the east, the Old Post Office, which it echoes in its arched doorway and tile bracketed roof. The exterior of the building is divided between a pale matte-glazed terra cotta base above a stone foundation and upper stories of glazed brick in varied shades of tan. The top story is set off by a course of white tile and marked by arched windows. The flat-topped hipped roof is covered by variegated red tile. Its 1-2 foot overhang is supported by simple brackets which alternate with a circular or diamond shaped design, the whole eave being painted a dark gray. Topping the roof is an octagonal cupola crowned with a gilded lantern.

The building is decoratively much richer than the Old Post Office (see National Register Nomination). Patterned tile courses with motifs taken from Indian decorative art wrap around the building just above the foundation and above and below the third story windows. Patterned tiles are also set intermittently into three courses of the base. Indian bird designs predominate, with at least five variations appearing somewhere on the exterior of the building. Other patterns are geometric. Black marble panels separate the arched windows on the sixth story and carved medallions showing turtlelike birds are centered above the panels.

The focal point of the building is the approximately 25 foot high entrance on the south (another modern entrance is on the west, facing 5th Street). The main entrance is surrounded by a stone arch surmounted by a medallion showing an elongated thunderbird resembling the federal eagle and overlain with the letters USA. The words United States of America are centered above the doorway in the top patterned course of the terra cotta base. Just above this are two large medallions also displaying an Indian Bird pattern. The inner sides of the arch are plain tan terra cotta tiles surrounded by smaller patterned tiles. Brass doors lead to a 25-30 foot high foyer, also lined with tan tile. Radiators set in each wall of the foyer are hidden by brass grilles in a swastika design.

A second set of brass doors leads to the entrance hall which extends back to the elevators. The walls above the elevator doors are covered by a mural of the 1680 Pueblo Revolt painted by Loren Mozley in 1936. Just to the left of the front entrance is a modernized office, but the upstairs hallways and office entrances as well as those at the rear of the first floor appear to be little changed. The sixth floor courtroom, until recently in use as a civil service examination room, is now being restored and will be used as a court once more. The dropped ceiling is being removed to expose the original carved wood ceiling, original pottery light

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

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fixtures and furniture will be returned to the room and new court furnishings, compatible with the building's character have been designed. The elevators are modern; behind them is a fine marble stairway, much more spacious and open than the usual pedestrian access to the upper floors.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1930

Builder/Architect James A. Wetmore

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Why Property is Important:

The 1930 Federal Building, the second still standing national government building to be built in Albuquerque, is the only downtown government structure which salutes the southwestern heritage. Its use of Indian designs as a decorative motif both on its exterior and interior restrainedly echo the Indian fantasies on the nearby KiMo Theater (National Register, 5-2-77), which was built just three years earlier. The building is significant for its architectural style, for its fine mural of the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, for its courtroom which is being restored, and for its notable contribution to the character of downtown Albuquerque.

According to the cornerstone, the supervising architect for the building was James A. Wetmore. Local inquiries have not uncovered more information about Mr. Wetmore and a request for information from the General Services Administration Historic Officer has not yet been answered. The building has always been used for government offices; until 1966 it served as the federal courthouse, housing judicial offices, a law library, and the federal courtroom (now being restored).

Now used to house a number of federal agencies, the building forms a most distinguished part of the complex of four federal office buildings grouped on Gold Avenue between 4th and 5th Streets. Its handsome proportions and southwestern decorative motifs make it a particularly significant building in Albuquerque.

9. Major Bibliographical References

E.H. Bergman, "The Fate of Architectural Theory in Albuquerque, New Mexico: Buildings of Four Decades, 1920-1960," University of New Mexico Master's Thesis, 1979.
Ellen Threinen, Historic Architecture of Albuquerque's Central Corridor, 1977.
Albuquerque Tribune, June 30, 1978.

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property 1/5 acre
Quadrangle name Albuquerque West, New Mexico

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	3	3	4	9	3	8	0	3	8	8	3	4	0	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

Lots 21 through 24, Block 18 of the Original Townsite of the City of Albuquerque; property is located at the NE corner of the intersection of Gold Avenue and 5th St. N.W.

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 Mary P. Davis, Historian

organization Historic Landmarks Survey of Albuquerque date June 16, 1980

street & number 419 Central Avenue N.W.

telephone (505) 766-4720

city or town Albuquerque

state New Mexico

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. Marlar

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9-24-80

For HCERS use only

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

Beth Grosvenor
Keeper of the National Register

date 1/22/80

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration