

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



11

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Washoe County Library

other names/site number Downtown Library or Downtown Reno Library

2. Location

street & number 301 South Center Street

<input type="checkbox"/>	not for publication
<input type="checkbox"/>	vicinity

city or town Reno

state Nevada code NV county Washoe code 031 zip code 89501

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Raul M. Gomez, SHPO 21 December 2012
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Apr Edison R. Beall 2-13-13
 Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
 (Check only one box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION / library

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION / library

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete
 walls: Concrete faced with brick

 roof:
 other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Washoe County Library, known to Reno residents and hereafter referred to as the Downtown Library, is an early example of thought-provoking Modern architecture in Reno, Nevada. Built in 1965, the library was preceded by two other buildings in slightly different locations but outdid them both in space and design. At the time of construction, the Downtown Library took on the role of its predecessor as the only library in the city. Today, the Downtown Library is the only extant library in downtown and remains in continuous use. The library's front façade displays angled glass, geometric-patterned copper panels around the entry doors, and clean lines inside and out. The outside of the building is square, brick, and devoid of windows with the exception of those around the front door and the clerestory windows below the roofline. Upon passing through the entrance, the large atrium immediately unfolds and a bridge spans the center, around which the library is constructed. There is an unexpected contrast between the interior and exterior of the Downtown Library as the building is turned entirely inwards on itself, with the landscaping and creative design on the inside.

Narrative Description

The Modern Movement represented a turn to less ornamentation and more appreciation of all things natural, from natural lighting to landscaping. Modern buildings quickly came into favor following World War II in the United States, as compared to Europe which embraced Modernism before World War II but reverted to the familiar and traditional when rebuilding after the War. In the postwar decades, Nevada's growing population increased from 162,000 people in 1950 to approximately 300,000 in 1960 and 500,000 in 1970. This increase created a demand for more buildings and resources, including a new library. The proposed library would be three times the size of its predecessor, would occupy one third of a city block, and would contain over 58,000 square feet. Once constructed, however, even this building would not meet the needs of the growing community for long. Within the next two decades, six additional libraries would be constructed throughout Washoe County and by 2005 there would be twelve.¹ Nevertheless, the population increase allowed for building a new library in the midst of the Modern Movement, a style which the Downtown Library strongly represents.

The Downtown Library was designed by Hewitt Campau Wells (1915-1989), who completed his education with a degree in architecture from Princeton University in New Jersey and began his career with a job under Albert Kahn in Detroit, Michigan.² Before relocating to Nevada, Wells went to California and designed San Francisco's Franciscan Restaurant, a building greeted with gusto by the *Architect & Engineer* magazine (a Bay Area publication compiled by Engineering Index, Inc. and Art Index) in 1957.³ The Downtown Library itself, would later be recognized by *The Architecture of the United States*, a several-volume set designed to introduce readers and travelers to distinguished buildings representing a cross section of "each state's

¹ The city of Sparks did boast a library as early as 1932 that still falls within Washoe County but is not in the city of Reno. This library, a Mediterranean style by local architect Frederick DeLongchamps, is listed on the National Register. The community was also served by the "Book Bus" beginning in the 1950s, which used the Downtown Reno Library as a home base beginning in 1966. Source: Washoe County Library System, "Washoe County Library History." <http://www.washoecounty.us/library> (Accessed July 2, 2012).

² Mella Rothwell Harmon, "The Extraordinary Career of Frederic J. DeLongchamps," in *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* (July 2006).

³ Beneath the contents in its January 1958 edition, *Architect & Engineer* proudly states that it is the oldest professional monthly business magazine of the eleven western states. It was established in 1905 and published by Architect and Engineer, Inc. Source: (No author), *Architect and Engineer* (1958), Vol 212, No 1, intro pages.

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architectural resources from earliest times to the present."⁴ Following in the steps of his first employer, Hewitt Wells designed several strikingly Modern buildings, among them, the Downtown Library.

Within the Modern Movement, the Downtown Library falls within the Contemporary style, having a flat roof, little decorative detailing, and exterior walls of concrete faced with brick. While the preceding International style of buildings were meant as sculptures set upon the landscape, the Contemporary style of buildings were meant to fit into the landscape. With the library, this landscaping would be primarily within the interior of the building, an unusual interpretation.⁵

The library's exterior reflects a preference for minimal decoration. The massing is rectangular and rises two stories above street level. The façade is faced with dark brown brick and the roof is flat with a slight overhang. The façade faces to the northeast and visually appears to be divided into three equal vertical segments. The middle segment, with the main entrance, is slightly recessed from the corresponding end segments. The library displays some thought to decoration at the main entrance: a subtle suggestion of the interior. The glass entry doors are flanked by tall, vertical window panels rising from the street level to the height of the doors. If one could look at the glass panels from directly above, they would form a zigzag pattern. Above the glass panels are copper panels embossed with geometric patterns. The copper panels follow the same zigzag pattern but alternate with the glass panels below. This more decorative front façade is slightly recessed to draw the passerby towards the doors and to provide a covered overhang, which shades the windows and protects the interior from direct sunlight. The building is set back from the street to accommodate a sidewalk and regularly spaced trees.

Upon passing through the entrance, the large atrium immediately unfolds and a bridge spans the center of the atrium around which the library is constructed. The atrium's bottom floor is located below street level and the top floor is two floors above. The most remarkable aspect of the atrium is the assortment of circular reading areas that hover above the second and third floors. Each reading area is supported by a square pedestal base rising from the atrium's floor. The circular reading areas, as well as the entry bridge, are lined with extensive, mature foliage. Short sets of stairs, working as bridges, provide access to the reading areas. All floors have balconies open to the atrium and are accessed by a large spiral staircase located in the southern corner. The northern side of the atrium lacks a third and fourth floor but boasts an expansive two-story ceiling. The ceiling is paneled with wood. The front wall is faced with brick around the perimeter and painted white around the entrance. This front interior wall follows the same zigzag pattern of the glass and copper panels of the front facade. The remaining wall surfaces are painted white except for those that have wood paneling and for those low walls around bottom floor which have a pebble surface. The edging on the spiral staircase is pebble, matching the low walls on the bottom floor. The floor is primarily covered in white linoleum except for in the circular reading areas and on the bridge, where it is covered with neutral-colored carpet.

Notable decorative elements include mosaic artwork and a water-filled pond on the atrium's floor. The mosaic artwork is a study in blues and greens, composed of floor-to-ceiling vertical stripes on the central third of the southwest wall (facing a reading area, the children's section, and a reference desk). Behind the mosaic artwork is the 100-seat auditorium complete with grand piano. The auditorium is visible from the vertical windows to the right of the mosaic artwork, which allows natural light from the atrium into the auditorium. A similar though smaller mosaic design is installed behind the water fountain to the left of the larger mosaic and adjacent to the spiral staircase and the auditorium entrance. The auditorium doors are located at the back of the room so that one enters facing the stage. The pond, located on the northern side of the atrium's floor, features a mature tree and decorative stonework. The floor around the pond emulates inlaid stone paths.

Ten sets of four square, domed, frosted skylights are centrally located above the atrium and ten singular skylights are located at the north end above the second-floor reading area. These skylights provide natural

⁴ George Everard Kidder Smith, *The Architecture of the United States: The Plains States and Far West*. (New York: Anchor Press, 1981), vi.

⁵ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 482.

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lighting, which is easier on the eyes and aids in the growth of the foliage within the atrium. A row of clerestory windows under the eaves adds to the supply of natural, yet indirect, sunlight.

The exterior and interior integrity of the Downtown Library is excellent. Changes to the original fabric are limited to the replacement of bookshelves, replacement of carpet in a similar neutral color, and to the removal of some plants in the 1980s.⁶ The replacement bookshelves economized space, the new carpeting eliminated wear and the pruning maintained the ever-growing foliage.

⁶ Paul M. Huss, *Project Manual for Washoe County Library Addition and Remodel, Reno Central Library, Sparks Branch Library: for Washoe County Public Works and Washoe County Library System*. (Reno, Nevada: Washoe County Library, 1986).

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B. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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 values, 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

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture _____

Social History _____

Period of Significance

1965 _____

Significant Dates

N/A _____

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/BUILDER

Hewitt Campau Wells _____

Period of Significance (justification)

The Washoe County Library, known as the Downtown Library, was constructed in 1965.

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Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The Washoe County Library, known as the Downtown Library, was built in 1965, thus falling three years short of the 50-years category. It was, however, the home of an institution that was much older. It was built during a major growth period in the state of Nevada and by a member of a well-known architectural firm in the state. Hewitt C. Wells' elder partner, Frederic DeLongchamps, has many times been regaled as the most important architect in the state and his choice of taking on Wells shortly before the construction of the library shows an appreciation of Wells' architectural skill by a prominent member of the Nevada community. DeLongchamps and the third partner, George O'Brien, retired in 1965. The firm was carried on by Wells. Since its date of construction, the Downtown Reno Library has been a "unique architectural gem serving as the urban hub of the Library System."⁷ The interior landscaping, with its hundreds of plants, several full grown trees, and a pond with a fountain, has earned the library national recognition along with appreciation of locals who come to read in its circular reading areas that float amongst the layers of plants.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

When the Washoe County Library, known as the Downtown Library, officially opened in 1966, it was home to Reno's only library. The first public library building in Reno had been a Carnegie library that opened in 1904. The current Downtown Library, the third home of Washoe County's first public library, provided three times the space of the library before it and included an auditorium, not to mention a lot of room for readers as well as books. The location of the Downtown Library is within three blocks of both its predecessors and is in the center of Reno. Its location has been functional; for over a decade the Downtown Library operated successfully as Reno's only library.⁸ The Downtown Library is emblematic of a significant change in the community's social history: it was built during the rise of Reno as an arts community, tying it to the movement of the city from a gambling and divorce town to the thriving cultural community it is, today. The formative decade of the 1960s saw the construction of the Library as well as the Pioneer Theater-Auditorium (NRHP listed 2004) and the Fleischmann Atmospherium Planetarium (NRHP listed 1994). All three buildings are notable examples of Modern architecture. The Downtown Library, like its sister buildings the concert hall and the planetarium, not only represents Reno's growing interest in arts by its use, but also by its own construction. The Downtown Library's significant association with this local movement makes the library eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level.

A clear product of the Modern Movement, the Downtown Library shows elements of its era before one even enters the door. Angled glass windows and geometrically patterned copper panels precede the entrance. A step through the front doors leaves the newcomer standing on a bridge that goes across the center of an atrium. The atrium drops dramatically a full floor below the entry-level and is raised two floors above. In a nod to the Modern Movement and the period's considerations of making spaces useful and comfortable, the atrium showcases hundreds of plants and several circular reading areas that jut out over the atrium in between several floors. Due to its prominent exhibition of Modern architecture, the library is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C at the local level.

⁷ Washoe County Library History. <http://washoecounty.us/library/history.html> (Accessed July 2, 2012).

⁸ The next library to open in Reno proper was the Senior Center Library in 1979. The Downtown Library was, however, one of two in the county starting in 1932: a library had opened in Sparks in 1932. A North Valleys branch opened in 1973 and an Incline Village branch opened in 1978. Source: Washoe County Library System, "Washoe County Library History." <http://www.washoecounty.us/library> (Accessed July 2, 2012).

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The Downtown Library was constructed in 1965, thus falling short of the 50-year designation. Under Criterion Consideration G, the library must exhibit exceptional significance in order to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The library not only represents the significant growth of Reno during the 1960s, it also represents the city's interest in and appreciation for art and architecture.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

History of Washoe County Libraries

Reno's Downtown Library has long been integral to the Washoe County Library System. The original facility was the first public library in the state. It occupied two buildings before its current location. The current Downtown Library, as the descendent of the public library that opened three blocks away in 1904, is the oldest in Nevada.⁹ The first building to house the Reno library was a Carnegie library building that opened in May 31, 1904 and provided sixteen hundred books to a town of only seven thousand residents.¹⁰ The library soon outgrew its walls and moved into the old State Building where it found more space (across Mill Street from its first location) in 1931. The collection continued to expand and in 1958, an out-of-state consultant provided a document outlining what the library staff and users probably already knew: there was extreme crowding and the State building was no longer adequate to provide full scale service.¹¹ The new, Modern Downtown Library of 1965 was more than adequate and would meet Reno's needs as well as the needs of communities served by the "book buses," which stocked up on books at the Reno library to take to the residents of Wadsworth, Gerlach, and Empire. Since 1932, the Reno Library was aided in the county by a library in Sparks. The Downtown Library served as the sole library in Reno proper, however, until 1979 when the Senior Center Library opened, offering books by local delivery to Seniors. The library services in Washoe County continued to expand with the population. Within two decades of the Downtown Library's construction, there were six libraries in the county. By 2005 there were twelve. The Downtown Library, an example of community interest on its own, opened on the verge of a huge expansion in local library needs.

The Downtown Reno Library and the Community

The growth of the library echoed a larger growth pattern: the population not just in Reno, but in the state of Nevada, was booming. In 1900, Washoe County had approximately 9,000 residents compared to 42,000 in the state. By 1960, Washoe County had nearly 85,000 residents and the state of Nevada had 285,278.¹² It was clear by this time that Reno was no longer a town defined by mining, the railroad, or communities of people looking to get divorces. All of these groups had contributed to the gambling part of the community. But there were now more residents in the Reno area that were not interested in the things that had made Reno famous. Instead, they were interested in arts and culture.

The interest in arts and culture can be seen immediately in the buildings that were constructed in the same decade as the Downtown Library, and not just in their uses but their architecture. The Downtown Library is one of three notable Modern buildings built in Reno in the 1960s. In 1967, two years after the Downtown

⁹ Source: Washoe County Library System, "Washoe County Library History." <http://www.washoecounty.us/library> (Accessed July 2, 2012) and James W. Hulse, *Oasis of Culture: a History of Public and Academic Libraries in Nevada*. (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 2003), 43.

¹⁰ James W. Hulse, *Oasis of Culture: a History of Public and Academic Libraries in Nevada*. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2003), 44.

¹¹ Hulse, *Oasis of Culture*, 47.

¹² Richard L. Forstall, "Nevada Population of Counties by Decennial Census: 1900 to 1990" (Population Division, US Bureau of the Census, 1995) www.census.gov/population/cencounts/nv190090.txt (Accessed July 2, 2012.)

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Library and just two blocks away, the Pioneer Theater-Auditorium was completed (NRHP listed 2004). The Theater, with its gold-anodized geodesic dome roof, sits on the former home of the "old State Building," which had housed the library immediately previous to its current location.¹³ The State Building was demolished two years after the Library moved. The Downtown Library's other Modern arts-and-culture counterpart is the Fleischmann Atmospherium Planetarium, constructed in 1963 at the north end of the University of Nevada Campus (NRHP listed 1994). This planetarium, whose eye-catching roof line is a concrete-shelled hyperbolic paraboloid, is named for the same Max C. Fleischmann whose foundation funded the Library.¹⁴

Washoe County Library and the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation

The need for arts and culture in the growing community was echoed and answered by the locally-based Max C. Fleischmann Foundation. Funding for the 1.2 million-dollar public library was generously supplied by this group, who aimed to aid the greater region in arts, science, and education.

Max C. Fleischmann's family became wealthy in the previous decades with the sale of yeast. In 1866, Charles Fleischmann, Max Fleischmann's father, noticed that there was no commercial yeast production in the United States and concluded that this was contributing to the poor taste of American bread. He thought American bread to be far inferior to that of his native Vienna, Austria, and saw yeast as the necessary and lacking ingredient. Charles Fleischmann supervised yeast production while living in Hungary and, with the help of his brother Maximillian Fleischmann (assumed to be Max C. Fleischmann's namesake) and a prominent distiller named James W. Gaff, created the first yeast manufacturing plant in America, located outside of Cincinnati, Ohio. The compressed style of yeast they sold was soon patented by the family, and the Fleischmann Company is still a top seller in yeast, today.¹⁵

Max C. Fleischmann created the Fleischmann Foundation in 1951, the year of his death. It commenced operation immediately, under the guidance of a board he created. It was to continue operation until twenty years after the death of his wife, Sarah Hamilton Fleischmann (who stood as a member of the Foundation's board until she died in 1960). Max C. Fleischmann slated the Foundation to end because he was of the firm opinion that each generation needed to learn to care for itself. During its existence of 29 years, the Fleischman Foundation made 1,962 grants totaling \$192,037,457.82 to 790 grantees. These grants funded significant local projects, including Reno's Fleischmann Atmospherium Planetarium (NRHP listed 1994), the first planetarium in the world to project full-dome movies of weather phenomena, as well as the Home Economics and Agriculture buildings on the University of Nevada campus, and the Desert Research Institute.¹⁶ The Foundation did not exclusively grant funds locally. Grants were awarded to national non-profit organizations such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America, as well as the American Red Cross. Grants were also awarded to local groups from other areas, such as Friends of Tryon Creek, a group that continues to promote education, recreation, and conservation at Tryon Creek in Portland, Oregon.¹⁷ Max C. Fleischmann was born in Ohio but

¹³ The State Building was also home to the Nevada Historical Society, which moved to its current location at the same time the Library moved. The Historical Society incorporated the State Building's old doors into its new building. The State Building was demolished immediately after its occupants moved out. This made way for the Theater. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Pioneer Theater-Auditorium. 2004. Prepared by Mella Rothwell Harmon.

¹⁴ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Fleischmann Atmospherium Planetarium. 1994. Prepared by Harold Housley and Julie Nicoletta.

¹⁵ Sessions S. Wheeler, *Gentleman in the Outdoors: a Portrait of Max C. Fleischmann*. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1985), 9-11.

¹⁶ Fleischmann Planetarium and Science Center at the University of Nevada, Reno. http://planetarium.unr.edu/About_Us.html (Accessed July 2, 2012) and University of Nevada Special Collections, "A Guide to the Records of the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation Collection No. 90-36." <http://knowledgecenter.unr.edu/speccoll/mss/90-36.html> (Accessed July 2, 2012).

¹⁷ University of Nevada Special Collections: Guide to the Records of the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation. <http://knowledgecenter.unr.edu/speccoll/mss/90-36.html> (Accessed July 2, 2012) and Friends of Tryon Creek, "Mission and Values." <http://www.tryonfriends.org/mission-and-values.html> (Accessed July 2, 2012).

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spent much of his adult life in Santa Barbara. He spent his later life living near Lake Tahoe. He contributed significantly to both communities.¹⁸

The Fleischmann Foundation honored the use of art and modern day design: the library remains an architecturally unique building, with its large plant-filled atrium and circular reading pods that seem to hover amongst the foliage. The library also features and makes art possible. A mosaic of blue and green vertical stripes covers the west wall of the bottom floor, the auditorium houses a grand piano and is a free venue, and art exhibits often circulate. Being funded by donation, the building could have been designed merely for function and held a lower cost. Quality of building seems to have been important to the donating foundation, however, who also funded the architecturally unique, and aforementioned Fleischmann Planetarium.

The Fleischmann Foundation did not solely see a need for artistic structures in the community, but also recognized a need for library resources in Nevada. In its several decades of existence, the Foundation provided grants that helped the construction of eighteen libraries in the state.¹⁹

The Downtown Library: the Architect, Awards, and Recognition

The architect of the downtown Washoe County Library was Hewitt Campau Wells (1915-1989). Wells became partners with Frederic DeLongchamps and George O'Brien in 1962. The latter two, ages 80 and 75 respectively in that year, were much older than their new partner who was 47; in fact, they both retired just a few years later, in 1965. The library building is credited entirely to Hewitt Wells, though having such esteemed colleagues could not have hurt, either for name recognition or architectural experience.²⁰

When Wells designed the Reno library, he was a newcomer to Reno. He received a degree in architecture in 1938 from Princeton University, after which he worked with Albert Kahn in Detroit.²¹ He had been living in San Francisco through 1957 where he designed the Fisherman's Wharf Franciscan Restaurant, which was notable for its wide, outwardly-slanted windows, hanging staircases, and styling reminiscent of a steam ship or tug boat. DeLongchamps and O'Brien, however, had both been living and designing in Reno much longer.²² George O'Brien was born in 1887 in San Francisco. He attended school San Francisco as well, after which he moved to Reno to practice architecture in 1916. He partnered with DeLongchamps starting in 1939.²³ Frederic DeLongchamps was born in Reno in 1882 and had a long and successful local architectural career. He was cited in 1935 as having, "to his credit more distinctive work as an architect than any other member of his profession in the state."²⁴

¹⁸ Max C. Fleischmann's contributions in Santa Barbara were extensive. He helped restore the Santa Barbara Mission after the 1925 earthquake, he donated lights to the high school football stadium for night games, and he funded a breakwater, making Santa Barbara's long-desired harbor possible. He also donated large amounts to the Cottage Hospital and the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. He helped inaugurate a civic band and created the Santa Barbara Foundation to fund it (a foundation that continues to put money back into the community). Max C. Fleischmann was clearly fond of Santa Barbara, but as an avid fisherman and hunter, it is of little surprise that he ended up living in Nevada, a state still known for its vast amounts of wilderness. Santa Barbara Foundation, "Major Max C. Fleischmann Founder of the Santa Barbara Foundation." <http://www.sbfoundation.org/page.aspx?pid=752> (Accessed July 23, 2012).

¹⁹ Nevada library grants made by the Fleischmann Foundation totaled around \$8 million. Hulse, *Oasis of Culture*, 145.

²⁰ Harmon, "The Extraordinary Career of Frederic J. DeLongchamps."

²¹ Albert Kahn is often recognized as America's most influential industrial architect. Kahn pioneered the use of reinforced concrete (among other things) and his new industrial architecture helped inspire European Modernism (led by architects like Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier). University of Michigan, Bentley Historical Library. "Accompanying biography to the Albert Kahn papers 1896-2008." <http://quod.lib.umich.edu> (Accessed July 2, 2012).

²² No author, "Fisherman's Wharf Franciscan Restaurant," in *Architect & Engineer* (Vol 209, No2, 1957), 18-19. And no author, "Hewitt Campau Wells '38," in *Princeton Alumni Weekly*. (January 24, 1990).

²³ No author, *Capitol's Who's Who for Nevada 1949-1950*, 364.

²⁴ James G. Scrugham, editor, *Nevada: A Narrative of the Conquest of a Frontier Land*. (Chicago: The American Historical Society, Inc. Vol II: Nevada Biographies, 1935), 233-234.

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Hewitt Wells started his career in Nevada in a grand way: the Washoe County Downtown Library won several national awards for its design according to historian James W. Hulse.²⁵ Notably, the library received the Industrial Landscape Award in 1968 for the interior use of plants, shrubs, and trees. This award was given by the American Association of Nurserymen, who worked with First Lady of the time, Lady Bird Johnson. The First Lady presented the awards in Washington, DC. The credit for this one would be given to Hewitt Wells, the architect, Mitchell Serven, landscape architect, and Purdy and Fitzpatrick Nursery.

Lady Bird Johnson believed better-designed highways, fewer junkyards, more playgrounds and parks, cleaner streets, and other points of landscape improvement would produce better living conditions, which, in turn, would bring about a reduction in the need for antagonism and protest. Her landscape improvement efforts began with the Committee for a More Beautiful Capital and included the passage of a bill on highway beautification. After the passage of this bill, however, she shifted her focus to public appeals; Mrs. Johnson's press secretary, Liz Carpenter, later recalled that Mrs. Johnson "just wasn't comfortable with the arm-twisting" that had been involved in the political maneuver. Furthermore, as the wife of the president, her presence on the bill was met with skepticism by some.²⁶ The Industrial Landscape Award was one of many efforts begun in the mid-1900s to improve the United States in an aesthetic way. Thus, the Washoe County Downtown Library was not only noticed for its design elements locally, but was recognized on a national stage for its interior landscaping.

The Washoe County Downtown Library also received recognition in George Everard Kidder Smith's *The Architecture of the United States*. Smith's volumes were "intended to serve as a commentary on a cross section of each state's architectural resources from earliest times to the present." Smith continues that, "by pinpointing excellence and introducing the reader and traveler to distinguished building, it is hoped the book will encourage interest in the heritage of this country's architecture."²⁷ The number of properties listed varies by state and the Washoe County Downtown Library is one of a prestigious eight representing the state of Nevada. The other seven are Hoover Dam (NHL listed 1985), the State Capitol (NRHP listed 1975), The Las Vegas Strip, Coucher Nevada Vocational Center in Southern Nevada, Rhyolite Ghost Town, Virginia City (NHL listed 1961), and Bowers Mansion (NRHP listed 1975). Smith begins his description by saying that "it is difficult to know whether to classify this building as a library or as a botanical garden," noting also that the plants and fountains are "doubly appreciated in this semi-desert region."²⁸ The fountain can be found on the bottom floor, north-central in the atrium.

Conclusion

The Washoe County Downtown Library, constructed in 1965, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The Library was built during the rise of Reno as an arts community, tying it to the movement of the city from a gambling and divorce town to the thriving cultural community it is today. The formative decade of the 1960s saw the construction of the Library as well as the Pioneer Theater-Auditorium (NRHP listed 2004) and the Fleischmann Atmospherium Planetarium (NRHP listed 1994). Its significant association with this local movement makes the library eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. The Library, like its sister buildings the concert hall and planetarium, not only represents Reno's growing interest in arts via its use, but also by its own construction. All three buildings are notable Modern designs. The library is a unique local representation of Modern architecture and displays many design concepts that are still revolutionary. The implementation of interior landscaping

²⁵ James W. Hulse, *Oasis of Culture*, 47.

²⁶ Jan Jarboe Russell, *Lady Bird: A Biography of Mrs. Johnson* (New York: Scribner, 1999), 279.

²⁷ George Everard Kidder Smith, *The Architecture of the United States: The Plains States and Far West* (New York: Anchor Press, 1981), vi. The Washoe County Downtown Library can be found on pages 498-499.

²⁸ Smith, *The Architecture of the United States*, 498-499.

Washoe County Library

Name of Property

Washoe, Nevada

County and State

enabled by the large, central atrium represents a larger movement towards carefully planned, open interiors in public spaces including indoor malls and large office buildings. Its notable construction makes the Library eligible under Criterion C.

This nomination calls for an exception under Criterion Consideration G. The building was constructed during a significant growth period in the Reno area (as well as the wider state of Nevada), though it falls three years short of the 50-year designation. However, it not only represents the growth of Reno during the 1960s, it also represents the city's growing interest in and appreciation for the arts. Reno had long been a gambling and railroad town, popularized by its simple marital laws that allowed for quick marriages and divorces. By the 1960s, however, Reno was growing culturally and beginning to show glimpses of what was to come: a well-recognized university town that offers a variety of arts and culture festivals throughout the year, all with a backdrop of the Sierra Nevada and its recreational potential. The attention and interest given to the Washoe County Library System by the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation showed that Reno wanted and could afford some of the architectural best.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Books

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(No author listed.) *Architect & Engineer*. Vol 212, No 1, 1958, intro pages.

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Washoe County Library
Name of Property

Washoe, Nevada
County and State

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Harmon, Mella Rothwell. 2006. "The Extraordinary Career of Ferderic J. DeLongchamps," in *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, July, 2006.

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October 30, 1966, p10. Library honored.
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November 1, 1965, p8, col4.
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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 # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: **University of Nevada, Reno AND Washoe County Library**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0.6660009

Washoe County Library
Name of Property

Washoe, Nevada
County and State

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	11	258435	4378550	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Washoe County Library, known as the Downtown Library, is located on Assessor's Parcel Number 011-172-09, Washoe County, Nevada.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire parcel associated with the Downtown Library.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susie Trexler (NV SHPO Intern) with additional information provided by Sara Fogelquist (NV SHPO Staff)
organization Nevada State Historic Preservation Office date August 14, 2012
street & number 901 South Stewart Street telephone 775.684.3448
city or town Carson City State NV zip code 89701
e-mail sfogelquist@shpo.nv.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Washoe County Library
Name of Property

Washoe, Nevada
County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Representative Photographs

Name of Property: Washoe County Library

City or Vicinity: Reno

County: Washoe State: NV

Photographer: Sara Fogelquist

Date Photographed: December 2012

Photograph 1 of 7.

Front elevation. Facing south.

NV_Washoe County_Washoe County Library_0001.

Photograph 2 of 7.

Front elevation. Facing south.

NV_Washoe County_Washoe County Library_0002.

Photographer: Susie Trexler

Date Photographed: May 2012

Photograph 3 of 7.

Front elevation. Facing southwest.

NV_Washoe County_Washoe County Library_0003.

Photograph 4 of 7.

Interior wall (east). Facing northeast.

NV_Washoe County_Washoe County Library_0004.

Photograph 5 of 7.

Interior wall (east) with bridge detail. Facing east.

NV_Washoe County_Washoe County Library_0005.

Photograph 6 of 7.

Interior wall (south) with detail of circular reading areas and spiral staircase. Facing southeast.

NV_Washoe County_Washoe County Library_0006.

Photograph 7 of 7.

Interior wall (west) with detail of mosaic artwork. Facing west.

NV_Washoe County_Washoe County Library_0007.

Historic Images

Image 1 of 1.

Historic Postcard, date unknown.

NV_Washoe County_Washoe County Library_Historic Image 1.

Washoe County Library
Name of Property

Washoe, Nevada
County and State

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Reno c/o Property Management
street & number PO Box 1900 telephone _____
city or town Reno state NV zip code 89505

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

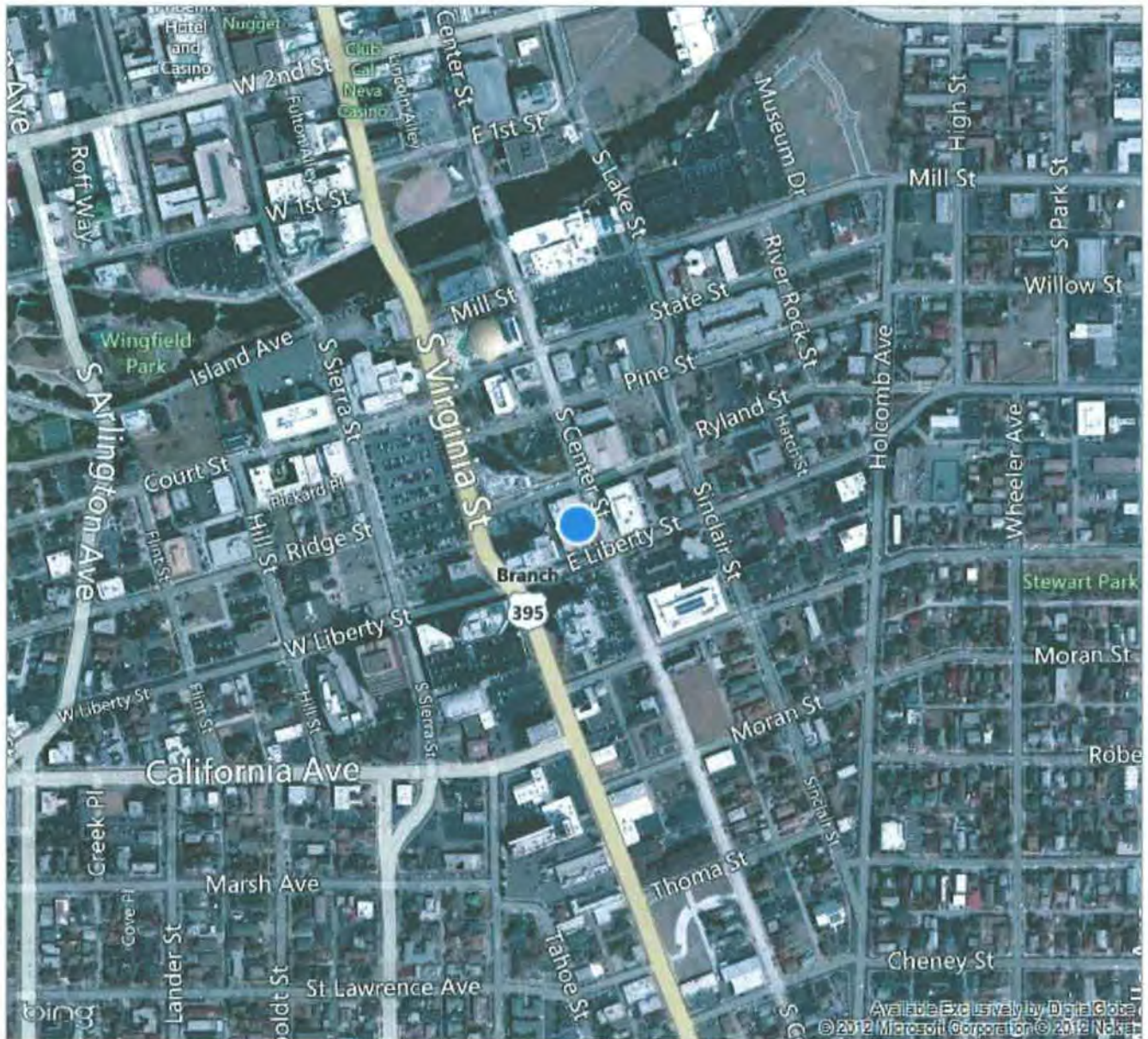
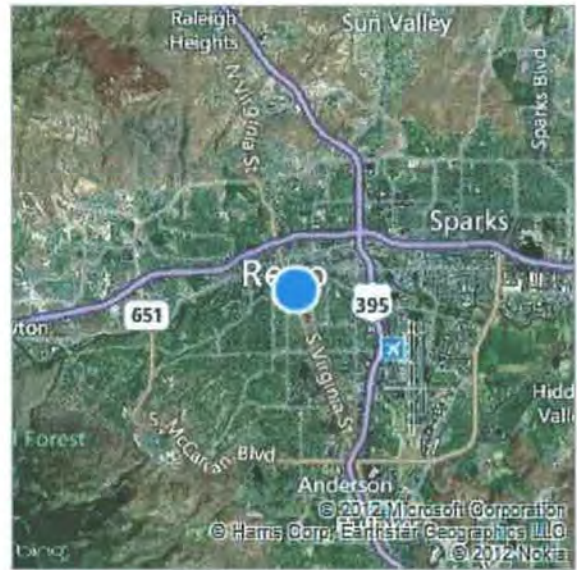
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

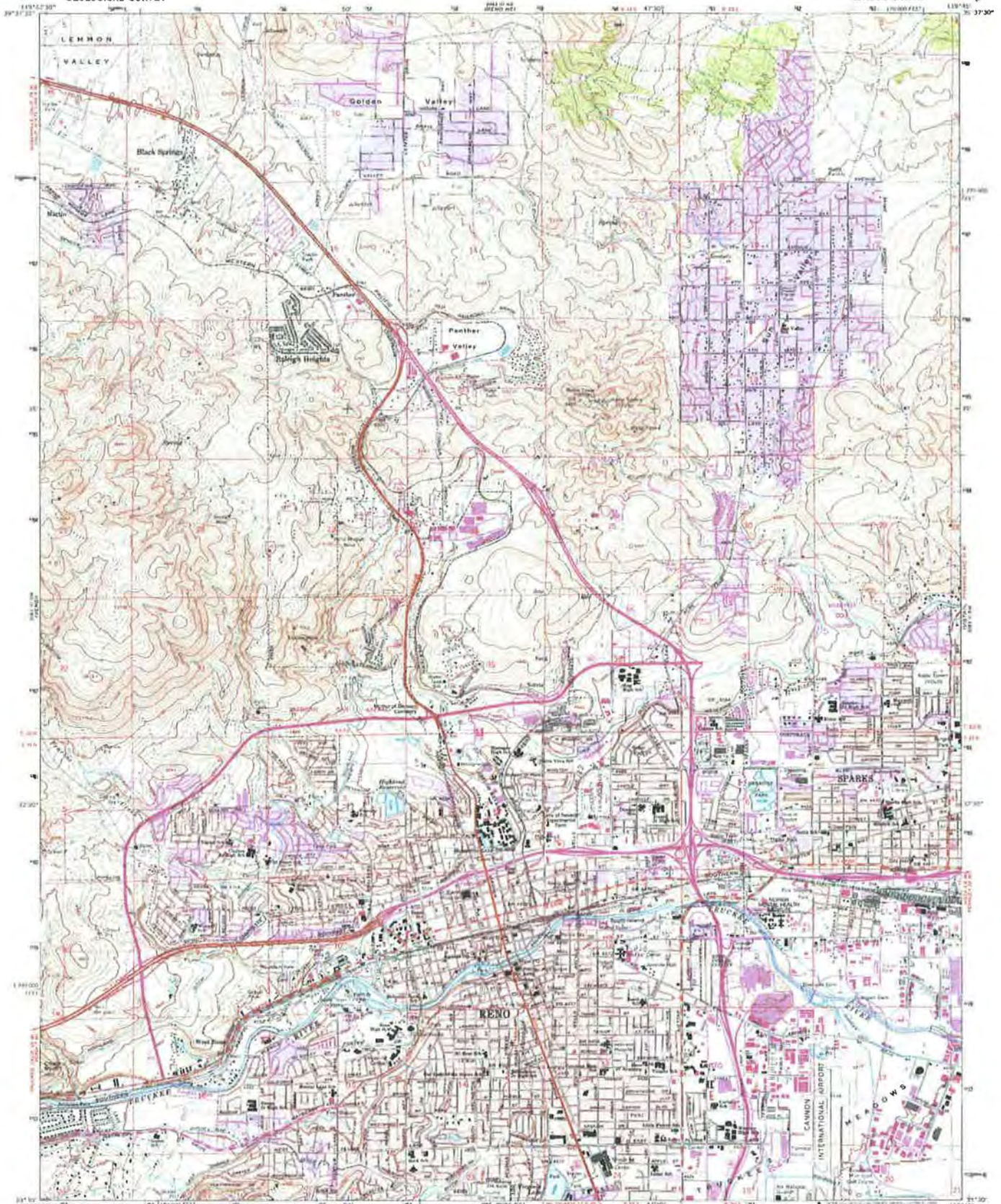


301 S Center St, Reno, NV 89501

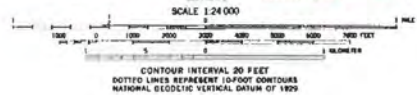
NV_Washoe County_Washoe County Library

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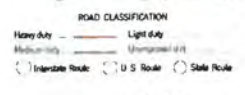


Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NGS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1966. Field check 1967
Polyconic projection on 1927 North American datum
20,000-foot grid based on Nevada coordinate system, west zone
1,000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid lines,
zone 11, shown in blue
To place on the projected North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 14 meters north and
87 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
Red 4 m tick marks areas to which only landmark by Meran are shown
Areas not detailed in this map (shown by feature lines)
Areas covered by dashed light blue pattern
are subject to controlled flooding



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 10-FOOT CONTOURS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



RENO, NEV.
SEA LEVEL OF BATHYMETRY
N3930-W11945/7.5
1967
PHOTOGRAPHED 1962
DMA 1948 10 16-SERIES 1966

RETURN TO
USGS AND HISTORICAL MAP ARCHIVE

3500

UN - Washoe County - Washoe County Library

The image shows the exterior of the Washtoe County Library. On the right, a brick wall features the text "WASHTOE COUNTY LIBRARY" in raised, dark letters. To the left, a large wall of windows is composed of dark, rectangular panels. A bare tree stands in the foreground on the left, and a person is visible near the base of the building. The sky is bright and overcast.

WASHTOE COUNTY
LIBRARY



us bank

ONE WAY
→

WRONG WAY



WELLS

301

RT







Young Adult

LEVEL 3

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 1





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Washoe County Library
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEVADA, Washoe

DATE RECEIVED: 12/28/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/13/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000011

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 2-13-13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

LEO M. DROZDOFF, P.E.
Director
Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources

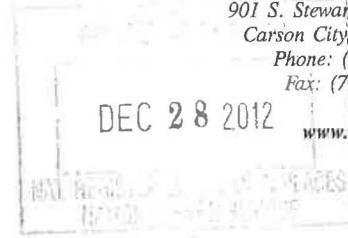
RONALD M. JAMES
State Historic Preservation Officer

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA



Address Reply to:
901 S. Stewart Street, Suite 5004
Carson City, NV 89701-5248
Phone: (775) 684-3448
Fax: (775) 684-3442



www.nvshpo.org

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

December 21, 2012

Barbara Wyatt, Historian
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Wyatt,

Enclosed please find the following nominations for review for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places:

El Cortez Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada
Washoe County Library, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have questions regarding this correspondence please contact me by telephone at 775.684.3427 or by email at sfogelquist@shpo.nv.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sara Fogelquist". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Sara Fogelquist
Architectural Historian