



108 E. Proctor Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701
(775) 887-2180
Hearing Impaired: 711

MEMORANDUM

Historic Resource Commission meeting of October 14, 2021

To: Historic Resource Commission **Item 5.A**

From: Heather Ferris, Planning Manager

Date: October 6, 2021

Subject: HRC-2021-0378 For Possible Action: Discussion and possible action regarding a Determination of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places for the Federal Building in Carson City, on property zoned Public Regional ("PR") and located at 705 N Plaza Street, APN 004-262-02.

This item is before the Historic Resource Commission as a consulting agency. The U.S. General Services Administration, as part of their responsibilities under Section 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 ("NHPA") has completed a Determination of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places ("NRHP"). The determination was prepared due to the building becoming 50 years old. This report concludes that the Federal Building in Carson City is not eligible for the NRHP. The Commission will review the report (attached) and provide comment as a consulting agency.

Section 110 NHPA requires federal agencies to develop and implement a historic preservation program that identifies historic properties under their ownership, including those listed or considered eligible for listing in the NRHP.



Pacific Rim Region

September 13, 2021

Ms. Rebecca L. Palmer
State Historic Preservation Officer
Nevada State Historic Preservation Office
901 South Stewart Street, Suite 5004
Carson City, NV 89701

Re: Determination of Eligibility for the Federal Building
705 N Plaza Street, Carson City, NV

Dear Ms. Palmer,

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), as part of its responsibilities under Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, has contracted with Stantec to complete a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for the Federal Building in Carson City, NV. This determination was prepared because the building has become 50 years old.

Designed by architect Hewitt C. Wells, the Federal Building was constructed in downtown Carson City, Nevada in 1970. Composed as a blend of the New Formalist and International styles, the building does not appear to be a particularly noteworthy or high style example of either style in the national, state, or local context, nor does it to be a masterwork of Hewitt C. Wells. It is not associated with any significant events at the national, state, or local level, and it does not have any association with significant individuals. GSA has reviewed the DOE document and determined that Federal Building is not eligible for listing in the NRHP.

We are enclosing a copy of the DOE for your review and comment. If we do not receive a reply from you within 45-days, in accordance with the terms of the Programmatic Agreement under stipulation I.B.2, we will assume that you concur with the determination that the Federal Building in Carson City is not eligible for the NRHP. We ask that the parties cc'd on this letter also reply to us with any comments within that same timeframe. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at jane.lehman@gsa.gov or (415) 522-3098.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Jane Lehman
AB4A0980FBDD498...

Jane Lehman
Regional Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures

JL:NL

US General Services Administration
50 United Nations Plaza
Mailbox 9, Room 3411
San Francisco, CA 94102
www.gsa.gov

Rebecca Palmer
September 13, 2021
Page 2 of 2

CC: Ms. Laura Lavernia VIA EMAIL
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
National Building Museum
401 F Street NW, Suite 308
Washington DC 20001-2637

Ms. Beth L. Savage VIA EMAIL
Federal Preservation Officer
Center for Historic Buildings
General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW, Room 3344
Washington, DC 20405

Carson City Planning Division VIA EMAIL
108 E Proctor St.
Carson City, NV 89701

**Determination of Eligibility
– Federal Building, Carson
City, Nevada**

Determination of Eligibility
Report



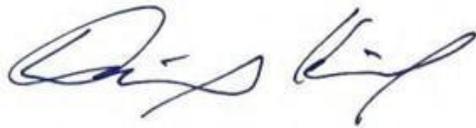
Prepared for:
Line and Space, LLC

U.S. General Services
Administration

Prepared by:
Stantec Consulting Services
555 Capitol Mall, Suite 650
Sacramento, CA 95814

July 20, 2021

This document entitled Determination of Eligibility – Carson City Federal Building, Carson City, Nevada was prepared by Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (“Stantec”) for the account of Line and Space, LLC (the “Client”). Any reliance on this document by any third party is strictly prohibited. The material in it reflects Stantec’s professional judgment in light of the scope, schedule and other limitations stated in the document and in the contract between Stantec and the Client. The opinions in the document are based on conditions and information existing at the time the document was published and do not take into account any subsequent changes. In preparing the document, Stantec did not verify information supplied to it by others. Any use which a third party makes of this document is the responsibility of such third party. Such third party agrees that Stantec shall not be responsible for costs or damages of any kind, if any, suffered by it or any other third party as a result of decisions made or actions taken based on this document.



Prepared by _____

(signature)

Daniel Herrick, MHC



Reviewed by _____

(signature)

Garret Root, MA

Table of Contents

Abbreviations	iii
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Methodology	1
2.0 Property Description	2
2.1 Exterior	2
2.1.1 Primary Façade	4
2.1.2 South Façade	6
2.1.3 North Façade	7
2.1.4 Rear Façade	10
2.2 Interior	12
2.3 Landscape	16
3.0 Historic Background	18
3.1 Carson City, Nevada	18
3.1.1 Government Buildings in Carson City	19
3.2 General Services Administration	21
3.2.1 Post-War Federal Architecture Initiatives	22
3.3 Property History	23
3.3.1 Planning & Design	23
3.3.2 Construction	27
3.3.3 Operations & Use	28
3.3.4 Construction Chronology	29
3.4 Architecture	31
3.4.1 Late Modernism	31
3.4.2 Hewitt C. Wells, Architect	34
4.0 Determination of Eligibility	35
4.1 Evaluation Frameworks	35
4.1.1 National Register of Historic Places Significance Criteria	35
4.1.2 GSA Modernism Eligibility Assessment Tool	36
4.2 National Register of Historic Places Evaluation	38
4.2.1 Criterion A	38
4.2.2 Criterion B	40

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

4.2.3 Criterion C	43
4.2.4 Criterion D	43
5.0 Conclusion	45
6.0 Bibliography	46

List of Figures

Figure 1: Contemporary Satellite Image of Carson City with Federal Building Identified in Downtown; north is up.	3
Figure 2: Contemporary Satellite Image of Federal Building property (outlined); north is up.	3
Figure 3: First floor plan of Federal Building with proposed courthouse wing circled in red.	26
Figure 4: North and west elevations of Federal Building with proposed courthouse wing circled in red.	27
Figure 5: Photograph of the primary Façade of the Federal Building, presumably in the late 1970s. Note the simple landscaping plan and decorative sun screens set within all of the window openings.	28
Figure 6: Pioneer Theater, ca.1975.	33
Figure 7: C. Clifton Young Federal Building.	33
Figure 8: 600 East Williams Street, Carson City.	35
Figure 9: 211 North Stewart Street, Carson City.	35
Figure 10: Exterior of the Washoe County Library, ca.1966.	35
Figure 11: Interior of the Washoe County Library, 1977.	35



Abbreviations

DOE	Determination of Eligibility
Federal Building	Federal Building, Carson City, Nevada
GSA	U.S. General Services Administration
Line and Space	Line and Space, LLC
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
SOI Qualifications	Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards
Stantec	Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.

Introduction

July 20, 2021

1.0 Introduction

This Determination of Eligibility (DOE) report has been prepared at the request of Line & Space, LLC (Line & Space) and General Services Administration (GSA) to address the historical significance of the Federal Building located in Carson City, Nevada (Federal Building), and its potential eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). GSA owns and operates the Federal Building, a New Formalist style three-story office building with a post office wing, designed by Reno-based architect Hewitt C. Wells and completed in 1970. As such, the subject property now meets the 50-year age threshold for listing in the NRHP and consideration as a potential historic property.

Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), requires federal agencies to develop and implement a historic preservation program that identifies historic properties under their ownership, including those listed or considered eligible for listing in the NRHP. Federal agencies must protect those properties through the development of management and maintenance plans, which often requires consultation with the Secretary of the Interior via the National Park Service. In accordance with Section 110, this DOE will identify whether the subject property qualifies as a historic property, which will in turn inform future planning and management activities for the Federal Building.

At the time of authorship, no previous evaluation or historical study of the Federal Building appears to have been conducted. This DOE includes a physical description of the property, a comprehensive property history and construction chronology, brief historic contexts relevant to the property, and an evaluation of significance per the NRHP criteria in accordance with the National Park Service's *National Register Bulletin No. 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, as well as GSA's "Eligibility Assessment Tool" included in *Growth, Efficiency and Modernism: GSA Buildings of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s*.

1.1 Methodology

This DOE was prepared by Stantec architectural historian Daniel Herrick, MHC, who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (SOI Qualifications) for architectural history and history. Mr. Herrick performed a site visit on August 4th, 2020 where he documented the building using digital photography and field notes in cooperation with onsite GSA building operations staff. Documentation included comprehensive photographs of the exterior of the Federal Building including the surrounding urban context, as well as interior spaces deemed accessible.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Property Description
July 20, 2021

This report was prepared using information provided by GSA, including architectural plans and historical photographs, as well as supplemental research. In response to COVID-19, in-person research was limited to repositories and locations that were open to visitation, which includes the Carson City Department of Community Development Records. All other research conducted required coordination using online repositories, including the University of Nevada, Reno Digital Library; Newspapers.com; Avery Architectural Index; and other online sources.

It should be noted that COVID-19 access restrictions did not allow for in-person research at the University of Nevada, Reno Library's special collections department, which contains the Hewitt C. Wells collection; collection materials were not digitized or available during the preparation of this report.

2.0 Property Description

The Federal Building is composed in a combination of modernist styles, including elements of the New Formalist style and International style, with regionally inspired materials. The building includes a three-story main office wing with an attached single-story post office wing located at 705 N. Plaza Street in downtown Carson City (**Figure 1**). The parcel and property covers an entire city block bounded by N. Plaza Street to the west, E. Washington Street to the north, N. Steward Street to the east, and E. Robinson Street to the south (Figure 2). The building is setback towards the center of the property and features an L-shaped plan with a three-story rectilinear main office wing that faces west and is oriented north-south, coupled with an adjoining single-story post office wing that extends off the main building at the southwest corner of the property. The remainder of the property is largely defined by surface parking lots and a landscaped northwest corner.

The surrounding area in downtown Carson City is mixed-use, including low-scale commercial properties, such as motels, retail, low density offices, a gas station, and a casino, all with large asphalt surface parking lots or undeveloped portions. Further to the west are additional federal and former-federal buildings, including the Renaissance Revival Nevada State Museum, which was originally constructed as a U.S. Mint, and to the south is the heart of downtown Carson City, which includes the Richardsonian Romanesque style 1890 Federal Building (now known as the Laxalt Building) and the Nevada State Capitol.

Property Description

July 20, 2021

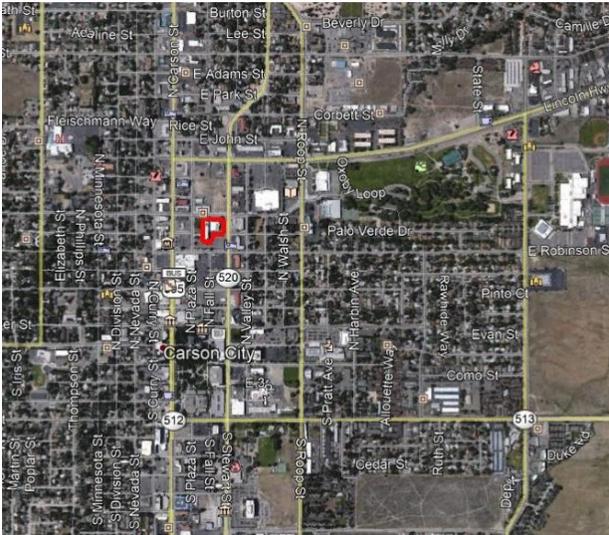


Figure 1: Contemporary Satellite Image of Carson City with Federal Building Identified in Downtown; north is up.¹

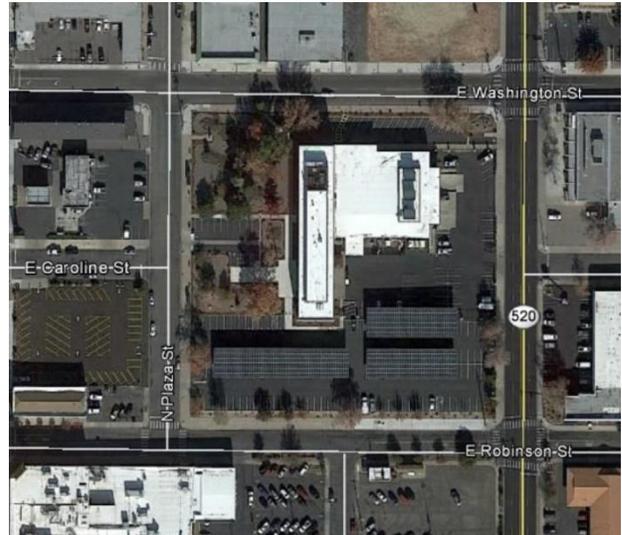


Figure 2: Contemporary Satellite Image of Federal Building property (outlined); north is up.²

2.1 Exterior

The Federal Building is composed in a combination of the New Formalist and International styles with a primary office wing component adjoined by the single-story wing. The building features a mix of modernist elements, including a symmetrical composition with engaged columns and pre-modern forms, such as the flat roof profile while also exhibiting more regional, high desert inspired materials and color palette through the use of a red brick masonry and stone veneer (**Photograph 1**). Both the primary office wing and the single-story wing are defined by a flat roof with a setback mechanical penthouse clad in a metal seam screen covering.

¹ 2018 Satellite Image of Carson City, NV, accessed on Google Earth Pro, edited by author.

² Ibid.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Property Description
July 20, 2021



Photograph 1: Primary (west) and south façade of the Federal Building, specifically the façades of the primary office wing, looking northeast.

2.1.1 Primary (West) Façade

The primary façade of the Federal Building faces north towards N. Plaza Street. It is defined entirely by the main office wing, which is a symmetrical composition of regularly spaced window openings with pronounced engaged columns of brick masonry veneer extending up through all three floors (**Photograph 2**). The brick veneer is primarily defined by a horizontal running bond pattern, although vertical stack bond and regularly spaced recesses and pronouncements are found along the cornice, top of the window openings, and the bases of the brick columns (**Photograph 3**).

The windows are fixed with black anodized aluminum mullions and large vertically oriented glazing with dark tinting. A series of entrances are located along the ground floor with the primary entrance located towards the southern portion of the façade. This entrance features three paired aluminum doors with single glazing integrated into the vertical window bands (**Photograph 4**). There are no canopies or other indications of the entrance, except for a bronze dedication plaque, keycard entry port, and accessible door opener.

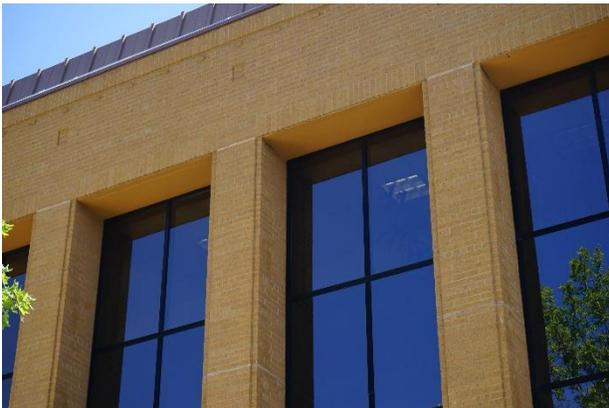
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Property Description

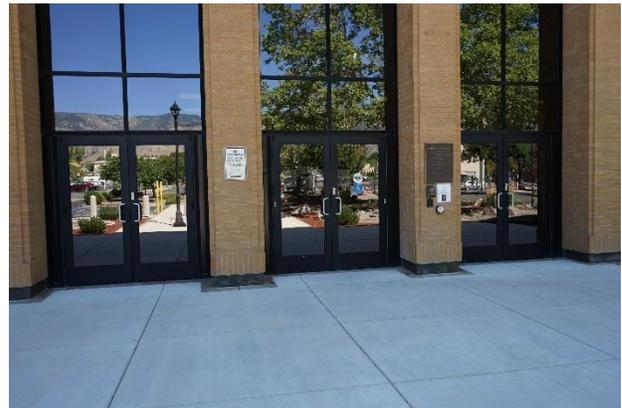
July 20, 2021



Photograph 2: Primary (west) façade of the Federal Building with regularly spaced and elongated vertical window openings, looking east.



Photograph 3: Detail of brick masonry around window openings and cornice.



Photograph 4: Primary office wing entrance with three paired doors.



Property Description
July 20, 2021

2.1.2 South Façade

The Federal Building south façade is largely defined by the primary office wing to the west and the south façade of the single-story wing making the eastern portion of the L-shape, which is setback to the north (**Photograph 5**). The primary office wing façade features a single wall plane composed of the sandstone veneer flanked by the typical brick masonry. Other elements include metal signage which reads “FEDERAL BUILDING” in letters projecting from the building, as well as two small exterior lights located at the first story (**Photograph 6**).

The remainder of the façade is defined by the setback south façade of the single-story wing. It largely features typical brick masonry veneer throughout with regularly spaced small, square single lite windows set in punched openings (**Photograph 7**). A garage block projects at the eastern portion volume, which features a stepped down flat roof, typical brick veneer, and two bays with metal roll up doors. The east portion of the façade features sandstone veneer that wraps around from the rear (east) façade of the single-story wing.

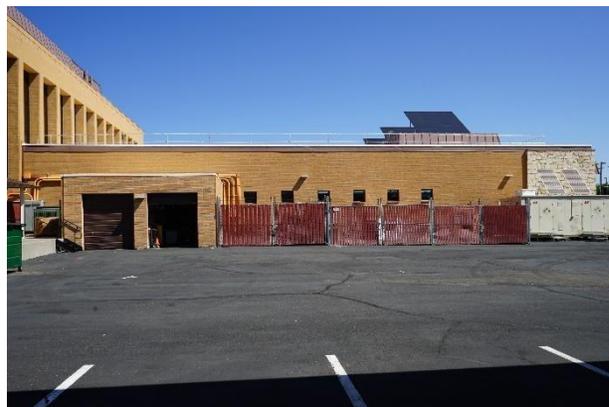


Photograph 5: South façade of the Federal Building with the south facades of the primary office wing (left) and setback single-story wing (right), looking north.

Property Description
July 20, 2021



Photograph 6: Typical veneer with signage and light at the south façade of the primary office wing.

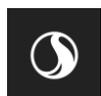


Photograph 7: South façade of the single-story wing, looking north.

2.1.3 North Façade

The north façade of the Federal Building is composed of the office wing to the west and the single-story former Post Office wing to the east, which is slightly setback from the main office wing wall plane and features the primary public entrance to the wing (**Photograph 8**). The north office wing façade mirrors the south façade with a single wall plane featuring typical sandstone with flanking brick masonry cladding throughout (**Photograph 9**). As with the south façade, two simple lights protrude from the façade, although no signage is present (**Photograph 10**).

The north façade of the single-story wing is defined by its primary entrance. A driveway extends along the façade, reaching a small visitor parking space directly outside the north entrance (**Photograph 11**). The façade is divided into two portions; the west portion features the entrance, which is a collection of regularly spaced fixed anodized aluminum windows separated by brick masonry columns, reflecting the primary façade of the Federal Building. Unlike the primary façade, the windows at the north façade of the single-story wing do not extend the full height, but are rather topped with black spandrels. The entrance itself is a simple, single light door set in the setback of the south façade of the main office wing (**Photograph 12**). The entirety of this portion is covered by a large, flat canopy roof with metal fascia. The east portion of the north façade is defined by a series of regularly spaced single-light fixed windows set within punched openings. The entirety of this portion is clad with the sandstone veneer exhibited throughout the building's composition, which extends around the fixed windows. This includes heavy stone lintels and protruding sills (**Photograph 13**).



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Property Description
July 20, 2021



Photograph 8: North façade of the Federal Building with the north façade of the primary office wing (right) and the primary façade of the single-story wing (left), looking south.



Photograph 9: South façade of the Federal Building with south facade of the primary office wing (right), looking southeast. Note the typical veneer and lighting consistent with the south façade.



Photograph 10: Typical exterior light at south façade of the primary office wing.

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Property Description

July 20, 2021



Photograph 11: South façade of the single-story wing with the adjacent parking space and driveway, looking southwest.



Photograph 12: Primary entrance for the single-story wing with repeating window openings and entrance (right).



Photograph 13: Windows at the eastern portion of the south façade. Note the heavy stone masonry lintel and sill detailing.



Property Description
July 20, 2021

2.1.4 Rear (East) Façade

The rear (east) façade of the Federal Building features the east façade of the primary office wing, as well as the east façade of the single-story wing (**Photograph 14**). The east façade of the main office wing reflects the primary façade with regularly spaced full height window openings and brick masonry veneer throughout. This is particularly consistent with the conditions of the primary façade at the southern portion of the main wing's east façade, whereas the northern portion is partially altered through the connection to the single-story wing.

At the southeast corner of the main wing's east façade, a simple raised concrete loading platform extends the width of the façade (**Photograph 15**). It is raised above the adjacent surface parking lot and features a series of rubber bumpers along the edge, as well as pedestrian access through a concrete ramp. A rear entrance to the main wing is located adjacent to the loading platform at the southeast corner. It features three doors integrated into the window openings, similar to the primary entrance at the west façade, although with a mixture of door types, including paired and single doors with varied small or no glazing (**Photograph 16**). A small stand-alone shade structure is located at the north end of the loading platform.



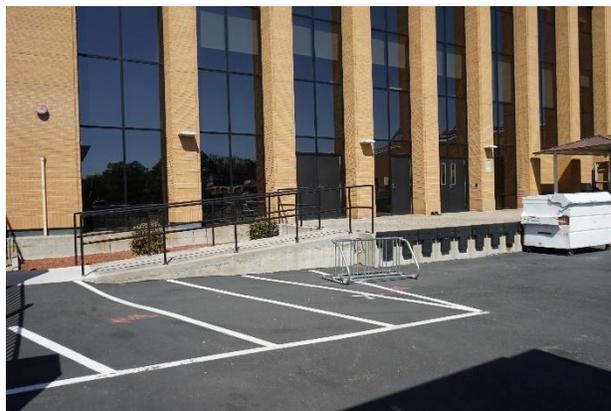
Photograph 14: Rear (east) façade of the Federal Building, looking west.

Property Description

July 20, 2021



Photograph 15: Rear (east) façade of the main office wing.



Photograph 16: Concrete loading platform with ramp (left) and entrances (center-right).

The east façade of the single-story wing is symmetrical and largely defined by a central loading dock flanked by rear entrance openings and expanded wing walls (**Photograph 17**). The central portion of the wall plane is largely empty, save for a large roll-up door entrance, louvered vents, and pyramidal exterior lighting. It features a concrete base wall with typical brick masonry cladding throughout the remainder of the plane. It is sheltered by a large metal seam mansard canopy, which extends the width of the central portion and extends over the recessed rear entrance (**Photograph 18**). These entrance openings are full height and extend along exterior corridors to reach simple metal doors; entrance openings are accessed by a mix of concrete ramps and metal stairs. The flanking wing walls feature the typical sandstone cladding with a metal seam cornice and typical exterior lighting.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Property Description
July 20, 2021



Photograph 17: East façade of the single-story wing, looking southwest.



Photograph 18: South loading dock with recessed side entrances and metal canopy.

2.2 Interior

The interior spaces of the Federal Building are typical to an office building with more prominent and ornate features located near public entrances, elevator lobbies, and corridors and general flexible office space throughout most of the interior. In the primary office wing, the first floor features a single-loaded corridor that extends along the north façade . It is accessed from the primary entrance with the three paired doors and immediately opens to the main elevator lobby, which is essentially a recessed alcove within the corridor. The alcove is defined by granite panel walls with a single elevator; bronze U.S. Federal Government seals flank the elevator door (**Photograph 19**). The majority of the main elevator lobby corridor features terrazzo flooring with black tile veneer extending half way up the wall; the north portion of the corridor, which is set behind an aluminum glazed system with paired doors, features carpet flooring and typical drywall walls (**Photograph 20**). Corridors and elevator lobbies on the upper floors of the office wing reflect the ground floor layout, although materials are much more simplified with carpet flooring and unadorned walls, save for wayfinding signage, found throughout (**Photograph 21**).

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Property Description

July 20, 2021



Photograph 19: Ground floor elevator lobby in the main office wing.



Photograph 20: Single loaded corridor at the ground floor of the main office wing.



Photograph 21: Typical elevator lobby and corridor at upper floors.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Property Description
July 20, 2021

The primary entrance to the single-story wing at the north façade enters into a simple entrance vestibule with terrazzo flooring, which in turn enters into a reception area (**Photograph 22**). The reception area is typical with various office equipment, waiting area furniture, and a reception desk.



Photograph 22: Primary entrance and reception area at the single-story wing.

The majority of the Federal Building interior is dedicated to office space. This largely features flexible open floor plans with prefabricated cubicle dividers, or single loaded corridors with individual offices (**Photograph 23 & Photograph 24**). Materials and finishes throughout appear to be contemporary or recent in construction. This includes carpet or linoleum flooring, dropped ceilings with acoustic tiles and recessed lighting, and typical gypsum board walls with simple doors throughout.

Property Description

July 20, 2021



Photograph 23: Typical flexible office layout with prefabricated partitions.



Photograph 24: Typical double-loaded corridor with adjoining office space.

Bathrooms throughout the building are typical and feature a variety of materials and fixtures, all of which reflect installation periods in the 1990s or later (**Photograph 25**). Mechanical spaces located near the roof are typical with simple concrete flooring and walls with equipment located throughout (**Photograph 26**). Stairways within the main office wing feature similar features with metal stairs and concrete finishes throughout.



Photograph 25: Typical bathroom with tile finish and contemporary fixtures.



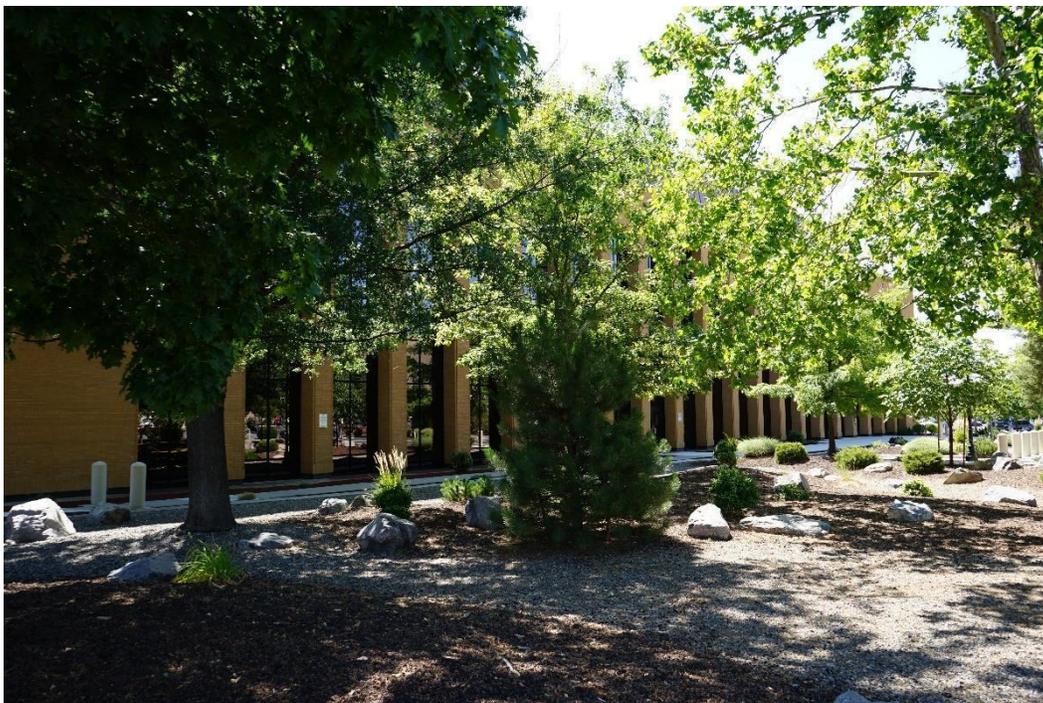
Photograph 26: Mechanical room, typical conditions.



Property Description
July 20, 2021

2.3 Landscape

The property features a landscaped portion along the western boundary, demarcating the primary entrance to the main office wing. It is defined by a contemporary landscape installed in 2015 with drought tolerant xeriscaping and native plants throughout (**Photograph 27**). A simple, broad, hardscaped path of concrete pavers leads to the primary entrance of the main office wing, which in turn extends north and south along the west façade. Security bollards are located near entrances, and a flagpole is located near the primary office wing entrance (**Photograph 28**). A freestanding monument to early Washoe and Euro-American interaction, and a time capsule are located near the northwest corner of the property (**Photograph 29**).



Photograph 27: Typical drought tolerant landscaping at northwestern corner of the property, looking southeast.

Property Description

July 20, 2021



Photograph 28: Hardscaped path with landscaping, security bollards, and flagpole, looking northwest.



Photograph 29: Monument to early Washoe and Euro-American interaction and a time capsule at the northwest corner of the property.

The remainder of the property features a variety of surface parking with a large controlled lot at the northeast corner bounded by security fencing, an open long-term parking lot along the south perimeter with large solar panel canopies throughout, and smaller visitor parking lots near the primary entrances for the main office wing to the west and the single-story wing to the north.



Photograph 30: Secure parking lot (right) and long-term parking (left) at the southeast corner of the property, looking west.



Photograph 31: Main visitor parking at the western portion of the property, accessing the primary office wing entrance.



3.0 Historic Background

3.1 Carson City, Nevada

Carson City has been the political center of Nevada since the state was part of the Utah Territory in the 1850s. Carson City was founded in 1858 by business partners Abraham Curry, John J. Musser, and Francis Proctor. They purchased Eagle Ranch trading post in the Eagle Valley and 865 acres of land and platted a townsite in the fall of 1858, naming it Carson City after the American explorer, Kit Carson.³ By 1859, with the assistance of a steady stream of settlers traveling on the California Emigrant Trail and the discovery of the Comstock Lode, a town formed and boasted a saloon, a telegraph office, a butcher, a bakery, and a blacksmith. Curry and his partners had grand plans for Carson City and set aside 10 acres of land in the burgeoning town as “Capitol Square”, in the hopes that the territory would achieve statehood. From 1860 onwards, the development of new buildings in downtown Carson City focused on the square and Carson Street, the main commercial corridor.⁴

Between 1859 and 1860, commercial buildings were rapidly constructed in the downtown area of Carson City. By 1861, Carson City had over 2,000 residents and possessed a thriving downtown commercial district that extended for almost five blocks along Carson and Stewart Streets.⁵ By the 1870s, most of the original downtown commercial buildings were replaced by sturdier brick or native stone buildings. This is largely attributed to the growth the city experienced after becoming the capitol with Nevada’s statehood in 1864. With this new role for the city, legislators came to town several times a year, leading to a hotel construction boom. Prior to construction of a state capitol building, the Great Basin Hotel served as the legislature’s meeting point and other hotels in town also served dual business purposes, explaining why downtown Carson City boasted eight hotels by the 1870s.⁶

Carson City continued to grow through the end of the 19th century, in large part because of the growing state government, however the decline in mining at the turn of the century affected the population of the capital city. With a major part of the economy gone, by 1930, the population of Carson City was half the size of the previous century. Everything changed in 1931, when the State of Nevada legalized gambling. The

3 J. Daniel Pezzoni, “National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the West Side Historic District, Carson City, Nevada,” prepared by Landmark Preservation Associates (May 2011), 25.

4 Pezzoni, 26.

5 Pezzoni, 30.

6 Pezzoni, 31.

Historic Background

July 20, 2021

population of Carson City slowly grew, with the addition of casinos to the central downtown area in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.⁷ The 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s saw the development of new state and federal government buildings in downtown Carson City, drawing a larger workforce to the area and doubling the population.⁸ Expansion of existing government buildings continued into the 1990s, as did increased development in downtown Carson City. Economic downturns in the 1990s and early 2000s shuttered many downtown casinos and businesses, but in the 2010s, the city embarked on a downtown redevelopment plan, to revitalize the area and bring business back to Carson City.⁹

3.1.1 Government Buildings in Carson City

In 1861, the Nevada Territory was created, and the new territorial legislature chose Carson City as the seat of the territory government.¹⁰ In 1866, construction began on the first federal building in Nevada: a U.S. Mint to process the ore excavated from the Comstock Mines.¹¹ Built on Block No. 65 of Proctor and Green's section of Carson City (now Carson Street), construction of the Mint was completed in 1869 and it began operations in 1870.¹²

As the state capital for Nevada, civic buildings in Carson City are often associated with the state government. In 1869, the state purchased Capitol Square designed by Abraham Curry as a potential capitol site. They called it the "Plaza," and deferred it for future public building construction.¹³ That same year, the state hired San Francisco architect Joseph Gosling to design an official state capitol. He created a two-story Italianate style building with pedimented wings and an octagonal cupola. In 1871, 13 years after Abraham Curry designated land for a capitol, the Nevada State Capitol

7 Carson City, Capital of Nevada, "History," accessed August 14, 2020, <https://www.carson.org/residents/history>.

8 Kathryn Kuranda, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form Amendment to the Thematic Nomination of the Architecture of Frederick J. DeLongchamps," prepared by the Nevada Division of Historic Preservation (July 1987), 3.

9 Ronni Hannaman, "Downtown Carson City Enters New Phase of Redevelopment," *The Nevada Appeal*, December 23, 2017.

10 William D. Swackhamer, *Political History of Nevada* (Carson City, NV: Office of the Secretary of State, 1974), 69.

11 W.E. Wieprecht, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for the U.S. Mint at Carson City, Nevada," prepared by the Nevada State Parks System (1975), 3.

12 S. Allen Chambers, Jr., "Historic American Buildings Survey for United States Mint, Carson City, Nevada," HABS No. NEV-13-22 or NEV-13-CARCI-20, prepared by the National Parks Service (December 1972), 5.

13 Pezzoni, 26.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Historic Background
July 20, 2021

building was completed.¹⁴ As the state grew, so did the capitol, and the building was enlarged in 1905 and 1913 to accommodate expanded state services.¹⁵

In 1885, the state began construction on the first of several public buildings around the Plaza. Located on Block No. 3 of the Sears and Thompson division of Carson City, the Nevada State Printing Office was completed in 1886 as the first official printing office in the state.¹⁶ Following in the footsteps of state building development, the first federal courthouse in Nevada was completed in Carson City in 1890. Built on Block No. 42 of Musser's division of Carson City (now Carson Street), the 1890 Federal Building primarily served as a courthouse, in addition housing a post office, the General Land Office, and the Weather Bureau.¹⁷ It was one of the most distinct buildings in downtown Carson City and easily recognizable, with its brick composition and Richardsonian Romanesque style, featuring an elaborate clock tower.¹⁸ Although the 1890 Federal Building housed the federal court system for the district, it was widely referred to as the post office.

Despite additions made to the capitol building, the state quickly outpaced the size of the original building; state architect Frederic DeLongchamps began to draw plans for the development of a centralized government complex around the capitol. The first office to vacate the capitol was the state attorney general in 1922, upon the completion of the Heroes Memorial Building, across Carson Street from the capitol building.¹⁹ In 1937 the state supreme court became the next to leave, moving into a new building next to the Heroes Memorial Building.²⁰ By the mid-20th century, the Nevada State Legislature also outgrew their chambers in the State Capitol and the Nevada Legislature building was completed just south of the capitol building in 1969.²¹

More state office buildings were erected in the 1950s and 1960s, as the population of Nevada grew, and new state agencies were created. They included the Blasdel Building, constructed in the mid-1950s northeast of the state capitol, as the first of four mid-century buildings on the block. Additions of new state buildings in downtown

¹⁴ Pezzoni, 29.

¹⁵ Constance S. Sparbel, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for the Nevada State Capitol," prepared by the Nevada State Parks System (March 1975), 2.

¹⁶ S. Allen Chambers, Jr., "Historic American Buildings Survey for the Nevada State Printing Office, Carson City, Nevada," HABS No. NEV-13-9 or NEV-13-CARCI-8, prepared by the National Parks Service (December 1972), 1, 4.

¹⁷ S. Allen Chambers, Jr., "Historic American Buildings Survey for the United States Post Office, Carson City, Nevada," HABS No. NEV-13-8 or NEV-13-CARCI-7, prepared by the National Parks Service (December 1972), 1, 6.

¹⁸ Robert Fink and Wilbur E. Wieprecht, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for the Government Building/Carson City Post Office," prepared by the Department of Conservation Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology (1977), 3.

¹⁹ Kuranda, 2.

²⁰ Ronald James, "Nevada State Capitol Building," Online Nevada Encyclopedia by Nevada Humanities, accessed August 13, 2020, <http://www.onlinenevada.org/articles/nevada-state-capitol-building>.

²¹ Travel Nevada, "Nevada State Legislature," accessed August 13, 2020,

<https://travelnevada.com/discover/27661/nevada-state-legislature>.

Historic Background

July 20, 2021

Carson City continued into the 1970s, with the construction of the Kinkead Building in 1975.²²

The expansion of post-war civic buildings in Carson City was not limited to the state government. As the population of Nevada grew, new federal facilities were required to meet the new demands of the growing agencies throughout the region. The Federal Building was constructed in 1970 as a post office and catch-all office for federal agencies without local offices; the original 1890 Federal Building was transferred to the State the following year.²³ Additions to the capitol plaza continued into the 1990s, with the completion of a new state supreme court building southeast of the capitol building in 1991.²⁴

3.2 General Services Administration

GSA was founded in 1949 with the mission of managing the buildings and properties owned and occupied by the U.S. Federal Government. In the 1930s, the Federal Government was expanded to provide additional services and employment to weather both the Great Depression of the 1930s, as well as the onset of World War II.²⁵ This expansion continued in the post-war years, which included the creation of new agencies, as well as the restructuring of the pre-existing agencies, both created before and during the New Deal-era. As restructuring continued, throughout the post-war period, centralization in order to increase efficiency and reduce service costs became an increasing concern. In order to address this and create a standardized building development and property management program to facilitate these agencies, GSA was established.

3.2.1 Post-War Federal Architecture Initiatives

GSA was initially responsible for the repairs and improvements to existing federal buildings, as well as the completion of projects that were put on hold during World War II. However, as the need for additional space became apparent, GSA became involved in a number of lease-purchase projects, but these were primarily unsuccessful. By the

²² Richard Moreno, *A Short History of Carson City* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2011), xiii.

²³ U.S. General Services Administration, "Carson City Federal Building," accessed August 12, 2020,

<https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/regions/welcome-to-the-pacific-rim-region-9/buildings-and-facilities/nevada/carson-city-federal-building#Public>.

²⁴ NETROnline Historic Aerials Viewer, "Carson City, Nevada 1990, 1994," accessed August 13, 2020,

<https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

²⁵ The following section was derived from information within Judith H. Robinson and Stephanie S. Foell, *Growth, Efficiency, and Modernism: GSA Buildings of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Services Administration, Office of the Chief Architect, Center for Historic Buildings, September 2003). Any additional sources used in this section will be cited accordingly



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Historic Background
July 20, 2021

end of the 1950s, the need for increased facilities forced the legislative branch into action. As a result, in 1959, the Public Buildings Act was passed, which gave GSA the responsibility for the construction of federal buildings. GSA began an expansive building campaign, hiring private architects to construct, repair, and remodel a number of federal buildings, instead of relying on a centralized supervising architect associated with the Federal Government. As a result, the popular and prolific Modern styles and the implementation of post-war building materials became the new hallmark for federal buildings throughout the U.S.

3.2.1.1 Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture

Under the Kennedy Administration in 1962, the *Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture* were developed to elevate the quality of federal architecture, particularly through the promotion and incubation of American design. This included three main principles, which continue to be used today:

1. Designs should incorporate the finest in contemporary architectural thought. Including local and regional architectural traditions and influences of the area where the building is located is encouraged. Incorporating pieces of finer art, preferably by living American artists, should be a priority. Buildings should also be functional for users, including the handicapped, and should incorporate materials, methods, and equipment of proven dependability, making them economical to build, operate, and maintain.
2. The development of an official style should be avoided. The architectural profession should dictate the trend of government buildings, but the government should not dictate architectural trends. Costs will likely be slightly higher to obtain quality designs, and the government should be willing to pay more to avoid excessive uniformity of design for federal buildings. Design competitions may be held, and the advice of prominent architects should be sought prior to awarding important design contracts.
3. The choice and development of the building site should be considered the first step in the design process of federal buildings, with special attention paid to nearby street layout and public places. Buildings should be located so as to permit a generous development of landscape.

Additional policies implemented at this time include the adoption of accessibility requirements, which required all federal buildings to have design elements, such as an accessible first floor and restrooms.

Historic Background

July 20, 2021

3.2.1.2 Program for Beautification of Federal Buildings

During the Johnson Administration, the *Guiding Principles* were expanded upon with the *Program for Beautification of Federal Buildings*. This supplemental program to the *Guiding Principles* emphasized the role of siting, landscape architecture, and various social goals by integrating federal buildings into their contexts. The *Program for Beautification of Federal Buildings* states:

The design of federal office buildings, particularly those located in the Nation’s Capital, must meet a two-fold requirement. First, it must provide efficient and economical facilities for the use of the Government agencies. Second, it must provide visual testimony to the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of the American government.

Landscaping is included as an integral part of the design of any building and appropriate instructions are given in this respect during the design stage to contract architects and engineers. As part of these instructions, the architect is told to make his design in keeping with the motif of the community.²⁶

3.3 Property History

3.3.1 Planning & Design

In the post-war years, Carson City continued expansion along with the rest of the country. It had long been considered the “smallest state capitol” in the U.S., but the Carson City Chamber of Commerce and other booster groups were actively working to dispel that stereotype by promoting the growth of the city and encouraging new development beyond its traditional role as a government town.²⁷ As the state capital for Nevada, Carson City had been a center for both federal and state agencies since establishment, and as the city continued to grow, efforts to secure funding for a new federal building to replace the original 1890 Federal Building and courthouse were underway. However, while Carson City continued to develop, other cities outpaced its growth and became increasingly influential. This competition increased for federal funds and development opportunities, particularly between Reno, located approximately 30 miles north.

Throughout the 1950s, both state and federal offices were established in Reno, and the threat of more relocation created a sense of competition and conflict as Reno continued to appear as the regional center. In June of 1960, Nevada U.S. Senator Alan Harvey

²⁶ Robinson, *Growth Efficiency and Modernism*, 48.

²⁷ “Reno Grab Bag,” *Reno Gazette-Journal* September 16, 1961.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Historic Background
July 20, 2021

Bible began assessing the need for new federal buildings in the region. Working with the local chamber of commerce and GSA administrators, plans were developed and started to move through the appropriations process. However, plans for a new large federal building that could house 28 agencies was announced for Reno first. Concern in Carson City increased as the plans for a new federal building in Reno, now the C. Clifton Young Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse, were to include two courtrooms in design, increasing speculation about relocating the U.S. District Court headquarters from Carson City, which had long been in operation in the 1890 Federal Building.²⁸

The sitting U.S. District Judge John Ross, a resident of Carson City, clearly stated that he had no intention of moving the courts, despite the plans for the new court facilities. At the same time, Judge Ross acknowledged that the new courtrooms in Reno would be beneficial to meet the increasing growth and need in Northern Nevada and would not necessarily come to the detriment of Carson City as the headquarters of the courts, and a second judgeship for Nevada was expected to be created and filled by the U.S. Congress in the near future. Judge Ross noted the need for additional space, as did the local U.S. attorneys, prosecutors, and Marshals, all of whom had limited space and operated in the existing 1890 Federal Building, as well as other office leases in Carson City and Reno. While it became clear that many of those operations would be centralized in the new Reno Federal Building, the district court would remain based in Carson City.²⁹

In response to the concerns of Carson City officials and the loss of additional government jobs, a study was conducted to assess the needs for a new federal building. This was primarily conducted in response to a previous study, which had stated no need was required; however, agencies in the city were often short on space and dispersed throughout a variety of office buildings, leading many City leaders to dispute the findings. To increase the likelihood of a new federal building, land owned by then-Ormsby County (now the Consolidated Municipality of Carson City) in the downtown area was offered to the U.S. Federal Government free for the development of a new federal building. Upon this offer, the U.S. Federal Government acted and funds were appropriated for the initial development of the Federal Building in 1962.³⁰

The total appropriation included funding for three new federal building projects. First, it included full funding for the construction of the C. Clifton Young Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Reno, which was identified as costing \$3.5 million for the proposed 5 story, 125,000 square foot office building and courthouse. The second project included \$1.1 million for site acquisition and drawings for a federal building and U.S. courthouse in Las Vegas, now the Foley Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, which was estimated to cost \$5.88 million. Lastly, the appropriations included \$648,000 for

²⁸ "Federal Judge Doesn't Plan Headquarters Shift to Reno," *Reno Gazette-Journal* August 17, 1961.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "New Federal Building Clears Senate Group," *Reno Gazette-Journal* August 29, 1962.

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Historic Background

July 20, 2021

land acquisition costs for a new federal building in Carson City. The Federal Building was estimated to cost a total of \$2.8 million and would include a federal courthouse, post office, and agency offices.³¹

In March 1963, GSA announced it was planning on building the Federal Building using Reno-based architect Hewitt C. Wells. The original plans called for a building that could house a U.S. Post Office, general office space, as well as new courtrooms. The original concept included a modern building with an office tower component, as well as an adjoining pavilion structure that could house the U.S. Post Office; the building would also utilize regionally inspired materials to reflect the high desert setting of Carson City. However, portions of the original building program changed as Judge Ross, who operated his court in the original 1890 Federal Building, passed away the next month, allowing Judge Bruce Thompson of Reno to be appointed as the new U.S. District Judge.³² Judge Thompson immediately announced the plan to shift district court operations to Reno over the coming years until the new Federal Building in Reno was completed, which would house two new modern courtrooms and support facilities. In the meantime, Judge Thompson shifted court proceedings between a number of locations in Northern Nevada, including a courtroom at the Post Office Building in Reno, which would be used for criminal arraignments and sentencing, as well as the original 1890 Federal Building in Carson City, which would continue to be used for jury trials.³³ However, upon this announcement, plans for the Federal Building were revised in the Fall of 1963 to remove the original courtrooms from the building program. This design change led to a series of scheduling delays that would continue throughout the remainder of the 1960s.³⁴

In 1964, \$1.8 Million was appropriated for construction of the new Federal Building.

Using the land donated by Ormsby County, GSA acquired the additional parcels, which were largely used for surface parking for the adjacent casinos, securing the entirety of the block needed for constructing the new building. Although many were excited, some felt that the development of the new Federal Building was too late, with some agencies already shifting to Reno due to space constraints and the opening of the Reno Federal Building that same year.³⁵ This was exacerbated further as schedule delays increased for the Federal Building. Initially, complaints from the Carson City Chamber of Commerce about the loss of the casino surface parking became a contentious issue.³⁶

³¹ Ibid.

³² "Court Moves from Carson to Reno," *Reno Gazette-Journal* August 16, 1963.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Patricia Sullivan "Carson Must Share Blame for Building Delay – Bible," *Reno Gazette-Journal* August 17, 1968.

³⁵ "Step Forward in Carson City Post Office," *Reno Gazette-Journal* May 18, 1964.

³⁶ Sullivan, "Carson City Must Share Blame."



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Historic Background
July 20, 2021

Additionally, issues related to the siting of the building became problematic as utility connection problems became increasingly apparent, especially with the sewer line, water, and gas alignments.³⁷ These issues culminated in shifting the original building layout by 90-degrees and subsequent redesign issues related to the removal of the courthouse program that extended through 1967 (**Figure 3 & 4**). Bids to construct the project were not prepared until Spring 1967, after which it was anticipated that construction of the \$1.9 million, 86,000 square foot office building and post office complex could begin.³⁸

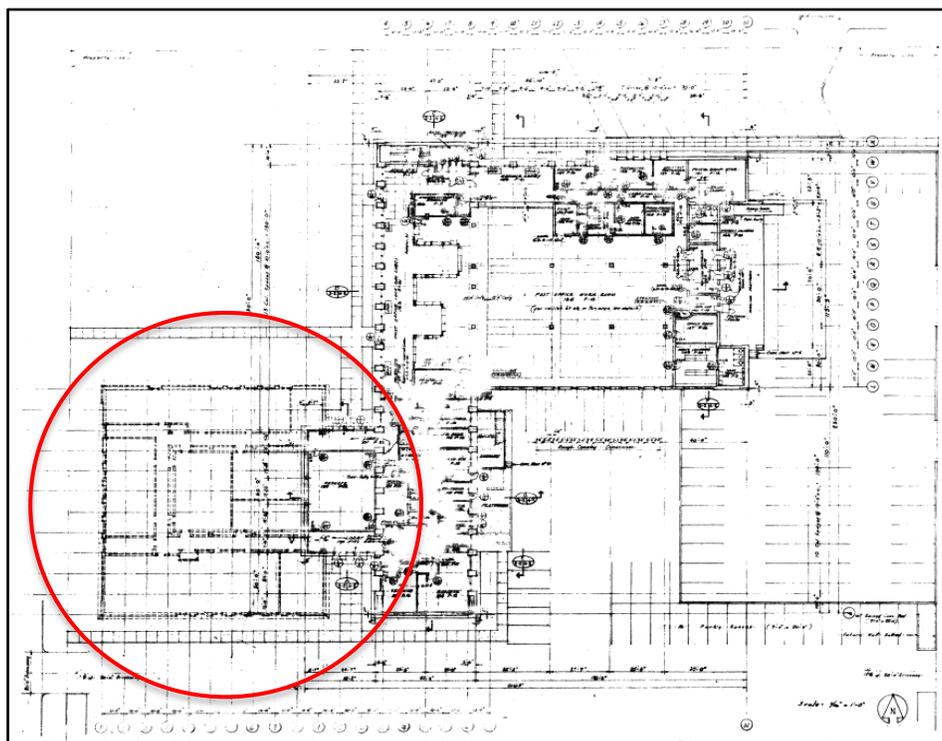


Figure 3: First floor plan of Federal Building with proposed courthouse wing circled in red.³⁹

³⁷ Rankin, James A. "Federal Building Site Plan, Carson City, Nevada," letter to Mr. Oliver Conroy, General Services Administration (May 13, 1965), Carson City Department of Community Development Records.

³⁸ "Bids Ready Soon for Carson City Federal Building," *Reno Gazette-Journal* May 20, 1967.

³⁹ Hewitt C. Wells, "Federal Building, U.S. Post Office, Carson City, Nevada," General Services Administration, June 16, 1967, sheet 3-2.

Historic Background
July 20, 2021

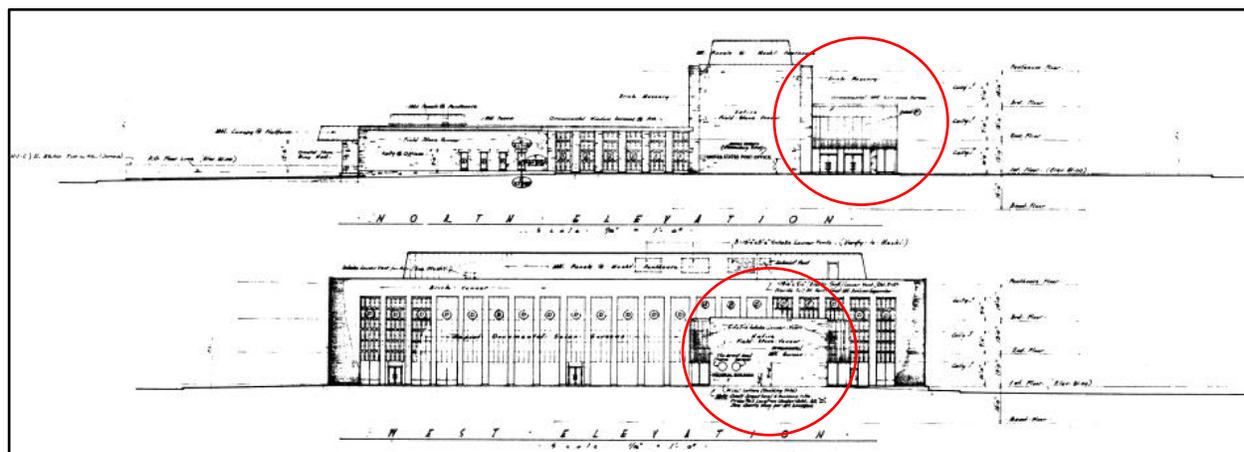


Figure 4: North and west elevations of Federal Building with proposed courthouse wing circled in red.⁴⁰

3.3.2 Construction

Although construction began in 1967, increasing delays occurred in 1968 as a freeze on new construction was put in place by the Federal Government, putting construction on the Federal Building on hold. While the duration and extent of the hold appeared unknown, local news sources and various officials speculated the already delayed project may take several years to complete.⁴¹ However, the construction freeze was lifted and the Federal Building was completed in October 1970 by Jacobsen Construction Company of Salt Lake City, the \$2 million building would house the U.S. Post Office, as well as GSA, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Soil Conservation Service, Internal Revenue Bureau, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Cooperative Extension Service, and the Interstate Commerce Commission.⁴²

The final product reflected the original Hewitt C. Wells use of a modern office building with a post office pavilion, which was consistent with the standard post-war federal government building typology. As with other practitioners in the Late Modern period of the mid-60s through the 1970s, Wells prepared a composition that reflects established modernist forms that reflect popular styles of the day, including New Formalism and International. The building used strong, linear symmetry with elongated, regularly repeating window openings formed by regularly repeating engaged columns, which

⁴⁰ Wells, sheet 4-1.

⁴¹ "Freeze Delays Federal Building Construction," *Reno Gazette-Journal* January 5, 1968.

⁴² "Dedicated Planned Oct.9 for new Federal Building," *Reno Gazette-Journal* September 25, 1970.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Historic Background
July 20, 2021

were originally covered with large metal sun screens. These ornamental aluminum screens featured narrow rectangular panels installed on a larger frame system that extended throughout each window opening, covering the reversible pivoted windows. These modern forms and materials were complemented by a material palette to reflect the regional setting of the High Sierras, primarily through the use of brick masonry and sandstone veneers.



Figure 5: Photograph of the primary façade of the Federal Building presumably in the late 1970s. Note the simple landscaping plan (completely remodeled in 2015) and decorative sun screens set within all of the window openings (removed at unknown date).⁴³

3.3.3 Operations & Use

Since its completion in 1970, the Federal Building has continued to operate as a federal property. In 1995, the U.S. Forest Service offices in Carson City were bombed, as was the Federal Building in Oklahoma City.⁴⁴ Prior to these events, the Federal Building was largely unchanged with limited tenant improvements, although security improvements

⁴³ Photograph courtesy of GSA.

⁴⁴ Jim Namiotka, "Carson City: Federal Workers Admit They're Nervous," *Reno Gazette-Journal* April 20, 1995.

Historic Background

July 20, 2021

became a major concern following the 1995 attacks on federal facilities. However, despite the nature of these attacks, tangible security improvements at the Federal Building were not quick to materialize, as the property was not considered at high risk. However, following the expression of concern by employees at the Federal Building, new metal detectors, security bollards, and fencing were put in place.⁴⁵

In the late 1990s, the U.S. Post Office announced that it was looking for new space and would be relocating from the Federal Building. Space constraints within the building were unable to support the needs of the Postal Service, onsite parking was cited as insufficient, and the developed nature of the site made expansion unlikely.⁴⁶ Ultimately, the U.S. Post Office would relocate to a new facility in 2000, vacating the space it occupied in the single-story wing. The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs subsequently moved into the space, necessitating extensive alterations throughout the former post office space.

More recent alterations to the building include the removal of the original decorative sun screens across the primary façade and replacement of the original pivoted windows, both of which occurred at an unknown date, as well as the remodeling of the landscape, and addition of solar panels to the roof of the post office wing, as well as throughout the south long-term parking lot.

3.3.4 Construction Chronology

The following includes known or observed events associated with the construction and alteration of the Federal Building:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1962 | Funds appropriated by the U.S. Senate to acquire lands and develop plans for the Federal Building. ⁴⁷ |
| 1964 | \$1.8 million in federal funds appropriated for the construction of the Federal Building. ⁴⁸ |
| 1963-67 | Alterations to the design of the Federal Building were performed as the building program changed through the removal of the courtrooms, and site constraints changed in reaction to the needs of the broader community, particularly the impacts to off-street parking and utility constraints. ⁴⁹ |

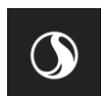
45 Don Cox, "Reno Thoughts are on Oklahoma," *Reno Gazette-Journal* April 19, 1996

46 Jim Namiotka "Carson Post Office Hunts for New Digs," *Reno Gazette-Journal* June 16, 1998.

47 "New Federal Building Clear Senate Group."

48 "Step Forward in Carson City Post Office."

49 Sullivan, "Carson Must Share Blame"; Rankin, "Carson City Federal Building."



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Historic Background
July 20, 2021

- 1967 Bids received for the construction of the Federal Building with the final contract being awarded to Jacobsen Construction Company of Salt Lake City, Utah.⁵⁰
Construction of the Federal Building began in Fall 1967.⁵¹
- 1968 Federal freeze on construction halts construction of the Federal Building, although construction eventually resumes.⁵²
- 1970 Federal Building completed with a dedication ceremony occurring October 9, 1970.⁵³
- 1975 Reconfiguration of the U.S. Post Office driveway from E. Washington Street into the parking lot to improve safety.⁵⁴
- 1983 Sidewalk and curb repairs conducted over 340 linear feet on the property at the southeast corner.⁵⁵
- 1987 Upgrades to the fire suppression system through the Federal Building, including upgrades to the water main connection.⁵⁶
- 1991 South parking lot expansion project, which included new landscaping at the southwest corner with plantings and irrigation.⁵⁷
- 1993-94 Sidewalk repair project implemented around the perimeter of the Federal Building property, which included general repairs to sidewalks, driveway cuts, curbs, and the replacement of walkway blocks at the western portion of the property.⁵⁸
- ca.1995 Accessibility upgrades conducted, including the installation of automatic door openers at all entrances with associated electrical upgrades, as well as signage.⁵⁹
Installation of security fencing around the property, including the security ram proof fencing along the north east secured parking lot.⁶⁰

50 "Bids Ready Soon for Carson City Federal Building.

51 Ibid.

52 "Freeze Delays Federal Building Construction."

53 "Dedication Planned Oct.9"

54 Carson City Department of Public Works, "Transmittal – Project No.48004 & 58002" (July 7, 1975).

55 Carson City Public Works Department, "Building Permit No.1983-207" (September 27, 1983).

56 Carson City Public Works Department, "Building Permit No.1987-328" (November 20, 1987).

57 GSA, "Parking Lot Addition" Drawing set prepared by TEC (September 17, 1991).

58 GSA, "705 N. Plaza – Sidewalk/Walkway Repair Project," Drawing Set (June 14, 1993), provided by Carson City Department of Community Development.

59 GSA, "Handicap Entrances" Drawing set prepared by GSA (unknown date).

60 GSA, "Security Fencing – Federal Building and Post Office," Drawing set prepared by Lionakis-Beaumont Design Group (March 3, 1995)

Historic Background

July 20, 2021

2000	U.S. Post Office vacates the single-story post office wing of the Federal Building and the property undergoes tenant improvements for the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs as the new tenant. Fire alarm system upgraded throughout the building.
2002	Additional guardrail systems added to the interior stairs. ⁶¹
2007	New boiler installed with updated connections and piping. ⁶²
2011	Solar Panels installed on the roof of the Federal Building.
2014	New drought tolerant landscape program installed at the northwestern boundary of the property, included removal of the original brick patterned sidewalks.
2017	Solar panel canopies installed at the south parking lot.
Unknown	Original decorative aluminum sunscreens removed from building. Original reversible pivoted windows also appear to have been replaced with the current aluminum window systems.

3.4 Architecture

3.4.1 New Formalism in Carson City

New Formalism is a subtype of Modern architecture that emerged in the mid-1950s as a reaction against the rigid conventions of earlier idioms of the Modern movement.⁶³ While Modern architectural styles generally rejected the use of historical precedent, New Formalism drew inspiration from Greek and Roman architecture, abstracting Classical forms through industrialized technologies and materials. The style was pioneered by architect Minoru Yamasaki in 1958, whose design of the McGregor Memorial Conference Center in Detroit blended characteristics of the International style with Classical elements to create a modern monument.⁶⁴ The New Formalist style was primarily utilized for high profile cultural, institutional, and civic buildings between the mid-1950s and 1970s. It was popularized by architects such as Yamasaki as well as by Edward Durrell Stone, Philip Johnson, Wallace Harrison, and Max Abramovitz, among

⁶¹ GSA, “Carson City Stair Wells,” Drawing set prepared by M&H Architecture & Construction Consulting (July 15, 2002).

⁶² GSA, “Carson City Federal Building Boiler Replacement” Drawings – As Built prepared by Gardner Engineering, Inc. (October 10, 2007).

⁶³ Marcus Wiffen and Frederick Koeper, *American Architecture Volume 2: 1860-1976* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1981), 384.

⁶⁴ “McGregor Memorial Conference Center,” National Park Service, accessed February 16, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/places/mcgregor-memorial-conference-center.htm>.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Historic Background
July 20, 2021

others.⁶⁵ New Formalism is typically characterized by monumental proportions and symmetrical composition as well as using Classical features such as the elevated podium, colonnade, arcade, and cornice.⁶⁶

Fundamental characteristics that were often incorporated into New Formalist buildings include:

- Monumental proportions, scale, or massing.
- Symmetrical composition.
- Strong geometric forms and linear accents emphasizing building structure and roofline.
- Abstracted Classical features, such as arches, colonnades, columns, podiums, and entablatures.
- Manmade as well as traditionally rich materials, including precast concrete, glass curtain walls, travertine, marble, and granite.
- Patterned screens or grills of metal, cast stone, or concrete.
- Formal landscapes with pools, fountains, and sculpture
- Hierarchy of interior spaces with clear distinctions in design and materials between spaces that were generally publicly accessible and those that were not.

Examples of New Formalist architecture are found throughout the U.S., particularly in major metropolitan centers. In addition to the McGregor Memorial Conference Center, the most notable examples include: the Pacific Science Center (Yamasaki; 1969) in Seattle; Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (Abramovitz, Harrison, and Johnson; 1962) in New York; and John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Stone; 1971) in Washington, D.C.

There are several notable buildings exhibiting the characteristics of the New Formalist style in Northern Nevada. The C. Clifton Young Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Reno was completed in 1965 and designed by the local architectural firm Lockard, Casazza, Parsons & Associates (**Figure 6**). It exhibits characteristics of New Formalism, such as strict symmetry, prominent columnar supports at the front portico, panelized granite and marble cladding, and flat projecting rooflines. The former Reno City Hall (now Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum) also exhibits characteristics of New Formalism, including monumental proportions, formal landscape, patterned metal panels, and abstracted columns and cornice (**Figure 7**). The building was

⁶⁵ "New Formalist," Docomomo-US, accessed February 16, 2021, <https://www.docomomo-us.org/style/new-formalist>.

⁶⁶ "New Formalism," Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, accessed February 16, 2021, <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/historic-buildings/architectural-style-guide/new-formalism>.

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Historic Background

July 20, 2021

completed in 1965 and was designed by Hewitt C. Wells, architect of the Federal Building.

In addition to cultural, institutional, and civic buildings, the characteristics of high-style New Formalist architecture were widely embraced by banking institutions during this period and many postwar bank buildings exhibit the style's influence. Two such examples in Carson City are the Bank of America at 600 E. Williams Street and the Wells Fargo at 211 N. Stewart Avenue (**Figures 8 & 9**). Both feature monumental proportions and massing as well as abstracted cornices and classical columns. While the Federal Building in Carson City exhibits elements of the New Formalism style, Wells used a combination of commercial modern architectural styles, including New Formalism and International. The International style is exhibited through the absence of ornamentation on the building, the flat roof, and the uniform wall surfaces.



Figure 6: C. Clifton Young Federal Building.⁶⁷



Figure 7: Former Reno City Hall, ca. 1970.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Photography taken by Stantec, August 5, 2020.

⁶⁸ "Reno City Hall (former)," Historic Reno Preservation Society, accessed February 16, 2021, <https://renohistorical.org/items/show/204>.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Historic Background
July 20, 2021



Figure 8: 600 East Williams Street, Carson City.⁶⁹



Figure 9: 211 North Stewart Street, Carson City.⁷⁰

3.4.2 Hewitt C. Wells, Architect

Hewitt C. Wells was a Reno-based architect that operated throughout the second half of the 20th century. Born in Washington D.C. in 1915, Wells grew up in New England and would eventually study architecture at Princeton, where he graduated with a masters in 1940. After serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II, he returned to the U.S. and began his career working for architect Albert Kahn in Detroit, Michigan. Soon after, Wells moved to the west, where he first began practicing in San Francisco. In 1962 Wells relocated to Reno, Nevada, where he joined the firm of Longchamps, O'Brien, and Wells. He continued to operate in the Reno area, designing buildings throughout Nevada and California, while also gaining some attention as a painter and professor at Truckee Meadows Community College.⁷¹

His notable works include the Washoe County Library in Reno, Nevada (1966), the addition to the Nevada State Museum Calhoun Annex in Carson City, Nevada (1971), and the Franciscan Restaurant in San Francisco, California (1957). Of his works, he is most celebrated for the design of the Washoe County Library, which was listed in the NRHP in 2012 for its contributions to the formative cultural development of Reno in the 1960s, as well as an outstanding example of Modern architecture in Reno (**Figures 10 & 11**).⁷²

⁶⁹ "600 E. Williams St.," Loopnet.com, accessed February 16, 2021 <https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/600-E-Williams-St-Carson-City-NV/12055824/>.

⁷⁰ "211 N Stewart St.," Loopnet.com, accessed February 16, 2021 <https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/211-N-Stewart-St-Carson-City-NV/14558712/>

⁷¹ "Reno architect, artist exhibits art in Elko," *Reno Gazette-Journal* June 29, 1972.

⁷² National Park Service, "National Register Nomination – Washoe County Library," prepared by Susie Trexler of the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (2012).

Historic Background
July 20, 2021



Figure 10: Exterior of the Washoe County Library, ca.1966.⁷³



Figure 11: Interior of the Washoe County Library, 1977.⁷⁴

4.0 Determination of Eligibility

4.1 Evaluation Frameworks

The following evaluation utilizes the NRHP significance criteria, as outlined in *National Register Bulletin No. 15*, as well as the GSA Modernism Eligibility Assessment Tools included in *Growth Efficiency and Modernism: GSA Buildings of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s*

4.1.1 National Register of Historic Places Significance Criteria

The following NRHP evaluation is based upon the established significance criteria, as outlined in *National Register Bulletin No. 15*. These criteria include the following:

- A. Association with significant events in history, or broad patterns of events.
- B. Association with significant people in the past.

⁷³ "Washoe County Library," Washoe County Historical Society, accessed September 2, 2020, <http://renohistorical.org/items/show/60#&gid=1&pid=2>.

⁷⁴ "Washoe County Library," Washoe County Historical Society, accessed September 2, 2020, <http://renohistorical.org/items/show/60#&gid=1&pid=6>.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Determination of Eligibility
July 20, 2021

- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural type, period, or method of construction; or it is the work of a master or possesses high artistic value; or it represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or may yield, information important in history or prehistory.

In addition to exhibiting significance under one of more of the above criteria, a property must retain sufficient historical integrity to convey that significance. The aspects of integrity include location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling. A property must also meet the 50-year age threshold, which requires a property to be 50 years of age or older, unless special consideration for exceptional significance can be proven.

4.1.2 GSA Modernism Eligibility Assessment Tool

The GSA Modernism Eligibility Assessment Tool was developed to assist practitioners in assessing the potential eligibility of GSA properties for listing in the NRHP, and ultimate qualification as a historic property per the NHPA. The assessment tool, which is included in the historic context statement *Growth, Efficiency and Modernism*, provides supplemental categories and guidance under each of the established NRHP significance criteria, specifically criteria A, B, and C.

Components of the GSA Modernism Eligibility Assessment Tool include the following:⁷⁵

- Is the building the work of a twentieth-century master architect, whose work had a profound influence on the course of American architecture? Is it a formative work within the overall portfolio of design? Alternatively, is it a distinctly lesser work of a master architect or the work of professionals of only modest renown?
- Is it an extremely successful example of a Modern-era style, such as Expressionism, Formalism, or Brutalism? Is it an important landmark that paved the way for the major stylistic shift to Modern Federal architecture? Alternatively, is it lacking in design quality or is it one of a great number of repetitive unsuccessful designs?
- Does it exemplify the design philosophy of the Modern era? Does it make exceptional use of Modern-era materials or artistic components? Does it contain public art by notable artists? Is it significant because of a monumental plaza or landscape design by a noted landscape architect? Does it display exceptional qualities of design, such as integration of interior and exterior design concepts and vocabularies? Alternatively, does it make rote use of preexisting design philosophy? Is it merely a typical building of its time?

⁷⁵ Robinson, *Growth, Efficiency, and Modernism*, 104-105.

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Determination of Eligibility

July 20, 2021

- Did it serve as a groundbreaking model that influenced other Federal buildings in the United States in its technological advances, functionality, framing systems, materials selection, or space design? Alternatively, does it regress to an earlier type or technology, or is it part of a large group of similar and typical types or technologies?
- Is it an outstanding example of a Federal program seeking quality design, such as President Kennedy’s “Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture,” the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, or the Public Buildings Cooperative Use Act? Alternatively, did it fail to respond to such programs?
- Does it exemplify social goals broadly embraced in the United States, such as energy efficiency, historic preservation, handicapped access, the eradication of urban decay and blight? Alternatively, does it fail to address these social goals?
- Is it a public building that reflects the dignified presence of the Federal government in a superior way? Does it significantly enhance its environment? Is it an important part of a city plan or Federal district master plan? Is it an exceptional architectural and social focal point of a small town? Does it represent an extraordinary example of functionally and aesthetically housing Federal workers and missions? Alternatively, is it inadequate or lacking in symbolism of the Federal government in its community?
- Does it significantly reflect a clear link between GSA’s philosophies and architectural programs? Is it tied exceptionally well to the Art-in-Architecture Program, GSA’s selection process for architects and engineers, or design directives? Alternatively, does it ignore these programs or does it display only modest success in meeting the goals of these programs?
- Is it an outstanding model for combining cost efficiency and functional utility? Alternatively, is its quality and integrity flawed by cost-cutting measures, poor-quality materials, or shoddy craftsmanship?
- Is it the principal venue for a historical event exceptionally important to the history of the country, state, or region? Is it the site of an important government action, event, or other historical occasion? Alternatively, is there no link to significant historical events?
- Is it exceptionally tied to the productive accomplishments of a person important to the history of the country, state, or region? Did a significant historical figure or President have a particular link to the site? Alternatively, is there no such link to an important person?



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Determination of Eligibility
July 20, 2021

- Does it contribute to a potential historic district? Is it a contributing element to a collection of buildings from the same era, such as an architecturally integrated Federal complex or campus? Is it an important architectural component in a downtown area? Alternatively, is it an unimportant element when compared with surrounding buildings?
- Is it exceptionally true to its original architectural design, period of significance, and historic character? Does it display exceptional qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association? Alternatively, has it been extensively altered or remodeled, is it missing key design features, or has it deteriorated to the point of no longer exhibiting its original architectural character?

4.2 National Register of Historic Places Evaluation

4.2.1 Criterion A

The Federal Building does not appear to be significant under Criterion A. At the time of its completion in 1970, Carson City had long been an established government town, both in terms of its status as the Nevada State Capital, as well as the home of the U.S. District Court for Nevada during the first half of the 20th century. While the construction of the Federal Building was influential in retaining some federal agencies in the Carson City area, especially at a time when many agency jobs were being relocated to the growing regional center of Reno, the building itself does not embody a pattern of development, but rather the perpetuation of an existing one. Its placement in downtown Carson City, north of the State Capitol, Courts, and other government office buildings, also did not present a new or significant physical pattern of development to the area.

GSA Modernism Eligibility Assessment

1) Significant Federal Program

The Federal Building does not embody the “Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture.”

The Federal Building does appear to adhere to these guidelines, but does not appear to do so in a significant fashion. While it does exhibit regional influences in the use of materials and finishes, the overall execution of the building design is reflective of established typology of an office tower with an adjoining post office wing, which was used for dozens of federal buildings in the preceding years. The building also appears to largely adhere to the New Formalist style and utilized a contemporaneous architect, but it does not appear to exhibit an elevated design or execution of the style. This may reflect schedule and cost issues with the project, which led to multiple redesigns and loss of funding in 1968, which required construction to be halted. The Federal Building also did not include any fine art in its original design. It is not clear at this time whether the design was scaled back during construction in light of the federal funding issues, but

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Determination of Eligibility

July 20, 2021

there are no indications that the design of the building embodies the second principle. The third principle outlines the need for quality siting and development of a landscape as a public space. While the Federal Building does adhere to this through the intentional siting and development of a surrounding landscape to showcase the building, it does not appear to do so in an elevated way that would qualify as significant. The design and development of the landscape appear to be standard and, particularly through the implementation of a contemporary landscape plan, does not appear to reflect the original adherence to this particular principle.

While the Federal Building generally conforms to and reflects the Federal Guiding Principles, it does so in a way that appears to rise to a level of significance. Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to have significant associations with a *Significant Federal Program*.

2) *GSA Philosophy in Practice*

The development of the Federal Building did include contracting a private, consulting architect with Hewitt C. Wells employed to establish the design. While this generally meets the practices established by GSA in 1949, this is typical to almost all federal buildings of the post-war years. As such, the subject property, which was completed in 1970, does not appear to exhibit any noteworthy significance that would elevate the property to being NRHP eligible under this consideration.

Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to have significant associations with *GSA Philosophy in Practice*.

3) *Embodies Social Goals*

The Federal Building does not appear to have been developed with any of the social goals – energy efficiency, historic preservation, accessibility, or eradication of urban blight – created through the federal architecture initiatives. The Federal Building appears to have been specifically developed to house federal agency operations in Carson City with no additional goals. While the property was constructed on parcels that were previously undeveloped or dedicated to surface parking, these were typical conditions in the vicinity and did not necessarily qualify as urban blight. In fact, the reduction of surface parking in the construction of the Federal Building led to serious concerns with local businesses, particularly the neighboring casinos that required parking. As such, the nature of the development and the previous conditions of the property do not reflect the goal of addressing urban blight.

Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to have significant associations in *Embodying Social Goals*.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Determination of Eligibility
July 20, 2021

4) *Public Building Icon*

The Federal Building does not appear to have a noteworthy impact on the image of the federal government in Carson City. First, the presence of the federal government in Carson City is largely overshadowed by Carson City's status as the Nevada State Capital. The prominence of the state capitol building, capitol plaza, and associated buildings are by and large the centerpieces of downtown Carson City. Specific to the federal government, the original 1890 Federal Building is also retained in the vicinity of the Federal Building and is a significantly more noteworthy and celebrated presence, although it is noted that the building was transferred to the State in 1971. Additionally, the U.S. Mint, now the Nevada State Museum, is also located in the vicinity of the Federal Building and presents itself as a more iconic representation of the federal government and its role in the history of Carson City, as well as Nevada and the U.S.

Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to have significant associations as a *Public Building Icon*.

5) *Location of Historic Action or Event*

There is no evidence that the Federal Building was the location of a significant event. Following its completion, the building appears to have operated in a typical fashion and continues to do so. Therefore, it does not appear to have any significant associations with as a *Location of Historic Action or Event*.

Significance Summary

The Federal Building does not appear to exhibit any significant associations under Criterion A, nor any of the relevant GSA Modernism Eligibility Tool aspects. Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to be eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A.

4.2.2 Criterion B

There are no apparent associations between the Federal Building and any significant individuals. While the property was part of a general building program that was ushered through the appropriations process by Senator Bible, there are no direct associations between his career and the Federal Building. During that appropriation, three federal buildings in Nevada were outlined, most notably of which was the Clifton C. Young Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, which received full funding and was allowed to proceed. Additionally, Senator Bible would likely be responsible for a multitude of projects and developments in Nevada during his tenure, of which the Federal Building would be one of several.

Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to be eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion B.

Determination of Eligibility

July 20, 2021

4.2.3 Criterion C

The Federal Building does not appear to be significant under Criterion C. While the Federal Building does exhibit many of the fundamental stylistic components that evokes the sense of a New Formalist building, it does not adhere to the definition of a New Formalism and is a true combination of modern architectural styles. The Federal Building exhibits the strong linear and symmetrical composition, the monumental massing set within an open landscape, and the elongated full-height recessed window openings common in New Formalism; however the other components of the building are a combination of International style and natural and organic not commonly utilized in Modern architectural styles. There are better examples of true New Formalism style buildings in Carson City, in the form of downtown bank buildings. The Federal Building itself does not appear to be a particularly noteworthy or high style example of New Formalism or any style of architecture in the broader context, therefore it does not appear to be eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criterion C.

GSA Modernism Eligibility Assessment

1) *Master Architect*

The Federal Building was designed by Reno-based architect Hewitt C. Wells, who was a celebrated practitioner of Modern architecture in California and Nevada. While he was a noteworthy architect operating in the region, the Federal Building does not appear to be a formative design within his portfolio. Rather, Wells is best recognized for his other works in the region, specifically the celebrated Washoe County Library in Reno, as well as the Nevada State Museum Calhoun Annex in Carson City. Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to have significant associations with a *Master Architect*.

2) *Exemplifies a Modern-Era Style*

As described above, the Federal Building is composed in a combination of modern architectural styles, including the New Formalist style and International style. The Federal Building does not appear to exhibit many of the classically inspired hallmarks of New Formalism or International style, especially compared to many other high style New Formalist federal buildings and other civic institutions throughout the U.S. The Federal Building also does not appear to be a rare example of the style in Carson City, Nevada. There are some examples found elsewhere in the community, and while these executions are distinctly corporate and reflect the prototypical bank designs of the Late Modern-era from the mid-1960s through the 1970s, they are better examples of true New Formalism style than the Federal Building. Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to *Exemplify a Modern-Era Style*.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Determination of Eligibility
July 20, 2021

3) *Federal Prototype*

The Federal Building does not appear to be an influential prototype in the development of federal buildings. Constructed in 1970, the building reflects established design trends and construction methods, and appears to be typical within the development of federal buildings. Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to have significant associations as a *Federal Prototype*.

4) *Model for Cost Efficiency, Functional Utility*

As described above, the Federal Building is a typical federal building. There are no indications that the building was notable for cost efficiency or functional utility. In fact, the property was originally perceived as problematic in the planning stages as development and construction encountered numerous difficulties and delays. In terms of operations, there is no evidence that the building exhibited any noteworthy efficiency or utility. Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to have significant associations as a *Model for Cost Efficiency, Functional Utility*.

5) *Embodies Modern Design Values*

The Federal Building does retain examples of modern design values through the use of established modern forms, materials, and design. However, it does not appear to be particularly noteworthy as an overall composition with limited detailing, simplified forms, and the removal of original character-defining features, specifically the metal sunshades. Additionally, the property lacks other design elements, specifically the use of public artwork or noteworthy landscape, at least in a way that dates to the original design and construction of the property. Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to have significant associations as an *Embodiment of Modern Design Values*.

6) *Significant Ensemble or District*

The Federal Building is not an integral part of an existing or potential historic district. While the property is located in proximity to earlier federal buildings, specifically the 1890 Federal Building and former U.S. Mint, the proximity is coincidental as the construction of these properties in downtown Carson City are separated by multiple decades with no cohesive plan. Additionally, while the Federal Building is near the Nevada State Capitol and other state government buildings, this too does not likely qualify as a potential historic district as there is also no shared development plan; the properties are only linked through proximity within the relatively small footprint of downtown Carson City. Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to have significant associations with a *Significant Ensemble or District*.

7) *Intact Original Architecture*

The Federal Building does retain several aspects of its original form, massing, and fenestration pattern, with many of the original materials and detailing remaining.

Determination of Eligibility

July 20, 2021

However, several alterations, including the removal of the character-defining metal sunscreens and pivot windows, removal of the original monument signage, and other alterations to the landscape, have detracted from the already simple original design of the subject property. Despite these alterations, the Federal Building does continue to convey its original New Formalist design and forms, perpetuating its significance at the local level as a rare example of New Formalism in Carson City. Therefore, the Federal Building does appear to have significant associations with *Intact Original Architecture*.

Significance Summary

The Federal Building does not appear to exhibit any significant associations under Criterion C, nor any of the relevant GSA Modernism Eligibility Tool aspects. Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to be eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C.

4.2.4 Criterion D

This criterion is typically related to archaeological properties rather than built resources, unless a built resource property can exhibit unique information related to construction. Based upon the information available on the 1970 Federal Building there is no evidence to suggest that the subject property would be significant under this criterion. It was constructed at a time where architecture and engineering are fully documented, and is unlikely to yield any information to increase relevant understandings.

Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to be eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion D.

4.2.5 Integrity

Location:

The Federal Building has not been moved since its original construction in 1970, and therefore retains its integrity of location.

Setting:

The Federal Building is in the urban setting of downtown Carson City, which features a collection of civic, government, and commercial buildings, in addition to a collection of casinos and hotels dating from the 19th century to the present-day. While the buildings and existing conditions in the area reflect various periods of construction both before and after 1970, the general eclectic and relatively sparse urban characteristics of downtown Carson City remain intact. Therefore, the Federal Building retains integrity of setting.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Determination of Eligibility
July 20, 2021

Design:

Overall, the Federal Building appears to exhibit multiple alterations to the interior and exterior of the building, as well as the surrounding property. At the interior, many of the spaces have undergone tenant improvements to accommodate new agencies, although much of the original shared and publicly accessible spaces in the primary office tower appear to reflect the original design. At the exterior, major alterations include the addition of solar panels, the removal of the original decorative sunscreens, and the replacement of the original pivot windows at the main wing's north and south facades. The surrounding landscape has also been altered to reflect a contemporary design in recent years, complete with drought tolerant plantings and new hardscape. Despite these alterations, the Federal Building continues to retain its original massing of the main office wing with the post office wing, as well as many of its modern architectural elements, particularly the symmetrical composition of the primary façade, the engaged columns with the regularly spaced full-height window openings, and the monumental siting with expansive setbacks. With the alterations described above, the Federal Building does not retain sufficient integrity of design.

Materials:

As described above, the alterations that occurred at both the interior, exterior, and surrounding landscape have resulted in the loss of some materials. However, many of the original materials that comprise the building remain, including the brick and sandstone veneer found throughout. Their execution as regional inspired materials is an important aspect to the building's composition, particularly its relationship with the surrounding setting of the High Sierras. Therefore, the Federal Building retains sufficient integrity of materials.

Workmanship:

The alterations to Federal Building, as described above, have not greatly diminished the integrity of workmanship. While some elements, particularly the decorative sunscreen, are no longer extant, the retention of the buildings original forms, materials, and detailing clearly illustrate the workmanship employed in the construction of the building and execution of the design. This is exemplified by the arrangement of the brick masonry veneer across much of the building, which employs a variety of bond types and patterns to create visual interest and texture using otherwise simple materials.

Therefore, the Federal Building does retain integrity of workmanship.

Feeling:

Overall, despite the alterations that have occurred, the Federal Building continues to retain its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, which in turn evokes the

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Determination of Eligibility

July 20, 2021

feeling of a 1970s modern civic building with regional influences. Therefore, the Federal Building retains its integrity of feeling.

Association:

Through its continued use as a federal facility operated by GSA, the Federal Building continues to exhibit its historical significance and association as a federal building in Carson City, Nevada. Therefore, the Federal Building retains its integrity of association.

Summary

In accordance with National Register Bulletin No. 15, the Federal Building in Carson City has been evaluated for significance under the criteria outlined in the NRHP. While the Federal Building has undergone numerous alterations throughout the interior and exterior, it does retain integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Although it does retain most aspects of integrity, the Federal Building does not exhibit significance under any of the criteria at the national, state, or local level and is therefore not eligible for listing in the NRHP.

5.0 Conclusion

Designed by architect Hewitt C. Wells, the Federal Building was constructed in downtown Carson City, Nevada in 1970. The building does not appear to be a particularly noteworthy or high style example of New Formalism or International style in the national, state, or local context, and it does not appear to exhibit many of the character-defining features associated with any particular architectural style. It is not associated with any significant events at the national, state, or local level and it does not have any association with significant individuals. Therefore, the Federal Building does not appear to be eligible for listing in the NRHP.



6.0 Bibliography

Publications & Primary Materials

Chambers, Jr., S. Allen. "Historic American Buildings Survey for the Nevada State Printing Office, Carson City, Nevada," HABS No. NEV-13-9 or NEV-13-CARCI-8. Prepared by the National Parks Service (December 1972).

Chambers, Jr., S. Allen. "Historic American Buildings Survey for the United States Post Office, Carson City, Nevada," HABS No. NEV-13-8 or NEV-13-CARCI-7. Prepared by the National Parks Service. (December 1972).

Chambers, Jr., S. Allen. "Historic American Buildings Survey for United States Mint, Carson City, Nevada," HABS No. NEV-13-22 or NEV-13-CARCI-20. Prepared by the National Parks Service (December 1972).

City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources. "SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement: Architecture and Engineering/ LA Modernism/ Late Modern, 1966-1990." Prepared by Daniel Paul (July 2020).

Fink, Robert and Wilbur E. Wieprecht, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for the Government Building/Carson City Post Office." Prepared by the Department of Conservation Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology (1977).

General Services Administration. Carson City Federal Building Records (Building NV1400ZZ)

Kuranda, Kathryn. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form Amendment to the Thematic Nomination of the Architecture of Frederick J. DeLongchamps." Prepared by the Nevada Division of Historic Preservation (July 1987).

Moreno, Richard. *A Short History of Carson City*. Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2011.

Pezzoni, Daniel J. "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the West Side Historic District, Carson City, Nevada." Prepared by Landmark Preservation Associates (May 2011).

Rankin, James A. "Federal Building Site Plan, Carson City, Nevada," letter to Mr. Oliver Conroy, General Services Administration (May 13, 1965). Carson City Department of Community Development Records.

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Bibliography

July 20, 2021

Robinson, Judith H. and Stephanie S. Foell. *Growth, Efficiency, and Modernism: GSA Buildings of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Services Administration, Office of the Chief Architect, Center for Historic Buildings, September 2003.

Sparbel, Constance S. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for the Nevada State Capitol." Prepared by the Nevada State Parks System (March 1975).

Swackhamer, William D. *Political History of Nevada*. Carson City, NV: Office of the Secretary of State, 1974.

Trexler, Susie. "National Register Nomination – Washoe County Library." Prepared by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (2012).

Wieprecht, W.E. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for the U.S. Mint at Carson City, Nevada." Prepared by the Nevada State Parks System (1975).

Articles

"Bids Ready Soon for Carson City Federal Building." *Reno Gazette-Journal*, May 20, 1967.

"Court Moves from Carson to Reno." *Reno Gazette-Journal*, August 16, 1963.

"Dedication Planned Oct.9 for new Federal Building." *Reno Gazette-Journal*, September 25, 1970.

"Federal Judge Doesn't Plan Headquarters Shift to Reno." *Reno Gazette-Journal*, August 17, 1961.

"Freeze Delays Federal Building Construction." *Reno Gazette-Journal*, January 5, 1968.

"New Federal Building Clears Senate Group." *Reno Gazette-Journal*, August 29, 1962.

"Reno architect, artist exhibits art in Elko." *Reno Gazette-Journal*, June 29, 1972.

"Reno Grab Bag." *Reno Gazette-Journal*, September 16, 1961.

"Step Forward in Carson City Post Office." *Reno Gazette-Journal*, May 18, 1964.

Cox, Don. "Reno Thoughts are on Oklahoma." *Reno Gazette-Journal*, April 19, 1996.



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Bibliography
July 20, 2021

Hannaman, Ronni. "Downtown Carson City Enters New Phase of Redevelopment." *The Nevada Appeal*, December 23, 2017.

Namiootka, Jim. "Carson City: Federal Workers Admit They're Nervous." *Reno Gazette-Journal*, April 20, 1995.

Namiootka, Jim. "Carson Post Office Hunts for New Digs." *Reno Gazette-Journal*, June 16, 1998.

Sullivan, Patricia. "Carson Must Share Blame for Building Delay – Bible." *Reno Gazette-Journal* August 17, 1968.

Online Sources

Carson City Capital of Nevada. "History." Accessed August 14, 2020.
<https://www.carson.org/residents/history>.

James, Ronald. "Nevada State Capitol Building." Online Nevada Encyclopedia by Nevada Humanities. Accessed August 13, 2020. <http://www.onlinenevada.org/articles/nevada-state-capitol-building>.

Google Earth Pro. Satellite Image of Carson City, NV (2018). Accessed August 22, 2020.

NETROnline Historic Aerials Viewer. "Carson City, Nevada 1990, 1994," Accessed August 13, 2020. <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

Travel Nevada. "Nevada State Legislature." Accessed August 13, 2020.
<https://travelnevada.com/discover/27661/nevada-state-legislature>.

U.S. General Services Administration. "Carson City Federal Building." Accessed August 12, 2020. <https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/regions/welcome-to-the-pacific-rim-region-9/buildings-and-facilities/nevada/carson-city-federal-building#Public>.

Washoe County Historical Society. "Washoe County Library." Accessed September 2, 2020. <http://renohistorical.org/items/show/70?tour=14&index=7#&gid=1&pid=1>;
<http://renohistorical.org/items/show/60#&gid=1&pid=2>.

Washoe County Historical Society. "Pioneer Theater." Accessed September 2, 2020.
<http://renohistorical.org/items/show/70?tour=14&index=7#&gid=1&pid=1>.

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – CARSON CITY FEDERAL BUILDING, CARSON CITY, NEVADA

Bibliography

July 20, 2021

(Page Intentionally Left Blank)

