

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**



432  
01-162

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Austin U.S. Courthouse  
other names/site number Austin Federal Building

**2. Location**

street & number 200 West Eighth Street  not for publication  
city or town Austin  vicinity  
state Texas code TX county Travis code 453 zip code 78701-2325

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Galanda Jones Camp* 3.9.1  
Signature of certifying official Date

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Thomas Ober* 3-1-01  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

TEXAS SHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other, (explain:)

*Edson H. Beall* 4.25.01  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>Courthouse</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>Government offices</u>

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>Courthouse</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>Government offices</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement: Moderne

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Granite

walls STONE: Limestone

roof ASPHALT

other \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description  
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets pp. 5-8.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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**Austin U.S. Courthouse  
Travis County, Texas**

**Narrative Description**

Since completion in 1936, the Austin U.S. Courthouse has been an important landmark in the state capital of Texas. Located on West Eighth Street, the building functions in both a practical and visual capacity, establishing a federal presence among a group of municipal and private office buildings in downtown Austin. Nearby historic buildings include the City Municipal Building, the Capital National Bank, and the Brown Building. Construction of two large parking garages in the vicinity, however, has detracted from the dominance it once had over the surrounding landscape. Nonetheless, the Austin U.S. Courthouse remains very much as it was when first built and still serves as an integral part of the city and Travis County.

The Austin U.S. Courthouse is an excellent example of Depression-era Moderne architecture. This style is revealed in its central massing, the rectangular form, the vertical flow of the window bays, the decorative metal grilles, and the geometric details. The exterior is also defined by reed-like pilasters, which enhance the vertical flow of the building while reflecting an element of restrained Classical Revival influence. Well-known local architect Charles H. Page of C. H. Page and Son (which later became Page Brothers, Architects), in association with New York architect Kenneth Franzheim, designed the building. These two firms worked under the guidance of Louis Simon, the Supervising Architect for the U.S. Treasury Department. Algernon Blair of Montgomery, Alabama, served as the construction contractor; W. E. Simpson Company provided structural engineer services; and R. F. Taylor was the mechanical engineer.

*Exterior*

The Austin U.S. Courthouse is a 4-story, rectangular plan, steel and concrete building with a basement and service penthouse. The walls, which are clad in cream-colored limestone, rise above the Texas gray granite base. A fluted band visually divides the first and second floors. Fluted pilasters vertically extend from the second to the fourth floors between the recessed window bays. The windows are double-hung, with anodized aluminum frames and sashes. Second-, third- and fourth-floor windows are separated by cast-iron spandrels that depict either stylized eagles or a geometric pattern. A carved stone panel with a geometric pattern is also visible above each fourth-floor window. A cornice—consisting of an incised horizontal band—circumscribes the building near the roofline. A carved stone parapet extends from this cornice. The features characterize both the primary and secondary façades.

The building's square corners gradually chamfer as they approach the roof, which is composed of three roof levels: the main fourth-floor roof, the service penthouse roof (centrally located above the primary entry), and the second-floor courtroom roof (visible on the north [rear] elevation). All roofs are flat with asphalt built-up systems.

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**Austin U.S. Courthouse  
Travis County, Texas**

**Narrative Description (continued)**

A slightly stepped central bay and the service penthouse create a central massing that contributes to the impressiveness of the primary entry on the south façade. Further emphasis is drawn to this area by a large carved limestone eagle with a shield set at the base of the penthouse. Below it is the following inscription:

UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

There is a raised, 5-point star of limestone on each side of the inscription. The entry itself is composed of four original bronze doors set under a metal canopy and transom with metal grills. Granite steps and metal railings are set at the base of the doors.

The north (rear) elevation also provides entrance into the building through two basement-level entries and a sidewalk-level elevator. Access to this area is restricted by gates, which are located at both ends of the driveway that runs behind the structure. While the elevation is primarily functional in nature, it displays many of the features described on the remaining elevations. However, a large parking garage on the adjacent property largely obscures the view of this façade. A covered parking area abuts the eastern half of this building face.

Green spaces, plantings, sidewalks, and other landscape features characterize the site area immediately surrounding the building. Narrow lawn areas border the west, east, and south elevations. Plantings, including mature magnolia and live oak trees, are present along these building faces. The north elevation serves as a service area with an adjacent paved parking area. Other site features include a replacement flagpole (to the left of the primary entry steps) and a handicapped access ramp (to the left of the primary entrance door).

*Interior*

The building's interior, particularly the entry lobby, the main stairway, the ceremonial courtroom, and the corridors/elevator lobbies, contain excellent examples of Art Moderne and Art Deco finishes and detailing. Upon entering into the building, visitors are impressed by the entry lobby's attractive pinkish mauve marble walls, geometrically patterned terrazzo floors, and suspended plaster ceilings with white bronze moldings. The semicircular staircase on the west wall of this area is quite striking. It has terrazzo treads and risers and a heavy, white bronze handrail. The staircase walls are clad in marble wainscot. The elevator doors, located on the east wall opposite the stairs, were once black with white bronze inlays. Although these doors have been replaced with contemporary metal doors, it should be noted that, at the time of the preparation of this nomination, new doors designed to closely resemble the original were being produced.

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**Austin U.S. Courthouse  
Travis County, Texas**

**Narrative Description (continued)**

The lobby opens into a corridor that runs east to west. The corridor's floors are terrazzo; the walls are marble wainscot and plaster with a decorative band of fretwork separating the two materials. A pair of doors interrupts the marble and wainscot on the north wall. The doors have a shiny black background with white bronze, crossed arrows set over a Roman axe. Wall sconces—similar in appearance elevator hall lanterns—are mounted above the doors. Fluted marble pilasters, containing a drinking fountain on one side and a mail chute on the other, are located on both sides of the doors. White bronze and glass chandelier fixtures illuminate the corridor.

Doors similar to those in the first-floor corridor provide entry into the second-floor ceremonial courtroom. These doors also have a black background, but the bronze inlay, however, is in a vertical, liner design that gives the door an Art Deco appearance. The courtroom located beyond the doors is just as impressive. The courtroom is of double height. Its walls are light-colored, book-matched wood set in darker wood squares. The wood paneling extends from the floor to the ceiling. The ceiling is coffered with alternating plaster squares and rectangles with acoustical tile recesses. A modern fluorescent fixture, eight original suspended chandeliers, and five windows on the north wall serve as light sources. The courtroom spectator benches and attorney/defendant tables are separated by a low, wooden, partition that extends from the north to the south wall. Attached to the top of the partition are white bronze railings that present a very linear, Art Deco-like appearance. A white metal door embellished with a federal seal serves as a gate between the two sections of the courtroom.

The judge's bench is located on the east wall. It and the other courtroom furnishings are relatively simple in design. Behind the judge's desk is a plaster panel with a bronze eagle set in an arch of 13 bronze stars.

The elevator lobbies and corridors on the second, third, and fourth floors share many of the same original finishes. The walls are clad in marble wainscot and plaster, and the floors are geometrically patterned terrazzo. The ceiling in the second-floor elevator lobby is coffered; ceilings in other areas are generally suspended plaster with geometric crown molding. The light fixtures range from suspended chandeliers to wall sconces with Art Deco detailing to modern fluorescent types.

The remaining interior spaces, mainly consisting of federal tenant offices and modern courtrooms, have been the focus of numerous renovations. Original finishes have been removed or concealed, and dropped ceilings, partitions, and carpeting have been added. As a result, these areas are largely contemporary in appearance.

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**Austin U.S. Courthouse  
Travis County, Texas**

**Narrative Description (continued)**

*Alterations*

Overall, the Austin U.S. Courthouse retains a high degree of integrity in its setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. While modifications have occurred, they have not impacted the building's ability to convey its historic significance as a federal building, nor its architectural significance as an excellent example of a Moderne style public building. Alterations to the building have been primarily restricted to the interior. The changing needs of the U.S. district court and other federal tenants have resulted in the removal of some original fabric, primarily in the office areas. Specifically, the installation of dropped acoustical tile ceilings, contemporary light fixtures and finishes, and carpeting has resulted in the loss of both the volume and character of the original office spaces.

The main historic spaces—the entry lobby, the main stairwell, the corridors/elevator lobbies, and the ceremonial courtroom—retain original finishes and details. In the entry lobby, security equipment that includes a metal detector has been added, unavoidably detracting from the volume and character of this space. The original incandescent fixtures that once complemented the entry lobby's ceiling have been replaced with fluorescent tubes. The original elevator doors have been replaced with contemporary units; however, plans are underway to install new doors that are similar to the original.

In the corridors and elevator lobbies, contemporary fixtures such as surface-mounted fluorescent lights have been added to supplement original lighting. These elements are generally unobtrusive. Supplemental lighting has been installed in the main courtroom.

The exterior has been the site of limited alterations. In 1975, double-hung windows with aluminum sashes and frames replaced the original metal casement units. Natural anodized aluminum was used to maintain the period style of the exterior. More recently, a handicapped access ramp has been installed at the west end of the south elevation. A metal canopy for covered parking has been added to the north elevation. The courtroom windows on the north building face have been replaced with bronze glass and bronze aluminum frames in a fenestration pattern that does not match the original. This elevation, however, is largely obscured by adjacent construction so these changes are not clearly visible from the street.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Politics/Government
- Architecture
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1936-1950

**Significant Dates**

1936

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Simon, Louis A.—Supervising Architect, U.S. Treasury Department  
Page, C. H., Sr.—Architect, Austin TX  
Franzheim, Kenneth—Consulting Architectural Firm, New York NY

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) **See Continuation Sheets pp. 9-13.**

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.) **See Continuation Sheet p. 14.**

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record  
# \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository:  
General Services Administration, Greater Southwest Region, Fort Worth, TX  
Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

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**Austin U.S. Courthouse  
Travis County, Texas**

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

*Summary*

The Austin U.S. Courthouse is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level of significance for its association with federal construction projects designed to relieve the economic Depression of the 1930s. Completed in 1936, the building is symbolic of both the continued federal government presence in Austin and the overall growth of the federal government in the 1930s. Like other public buildings from the 1930s, the design and construction of the Austin U.S. Courthouse were part of the federal construction programs enacted to reduce unemployment during the Depression. The building is also eligible under Criterion C at the local level of significance as an excellent example of federal architecture from the mid-1930s. Architecturally, the Moderne design of the Austin U.S. Courthouse reflects the organizational influence of the Beaux-Arts architectural style and the Moderne architectural movement, sometimes described as a compromise between tradition and progress.

*Historical Significance*

The city of Austin, founded in 1839, was named the permanent state capital of Texas in 1873, after years of uncertainty. Although in 1839 the city streets and lots were laid out as the capital of the Republic of Texas, the city was considered vulnerable to Mexican forces and hostile Native American tribes, and the government was moved in 1842, first to Houston and then to Washington-on-the-Brazos. It was only when Texas was annexed by the United States in 1845 that the government was reestablished in Austin. Shortly thereafter, the first federal courthouse and post office in Austin was built at Sixth and Colorado streets.

Between 1877 and 1881, a U.S. post office and courthouse was constructed at a cost of \$200,000 and served in its original capacity until 1914, when the growing post office moved to a larger building on West Sixth Street. The 1881 building was built by Abner Cook, an Austin resident and master builder famous for his Greek Revival houses. In 1896 the building was the location of the embezzlement trials of William Sydney Porter, the well-known American short-story writer. This building remained the site of the courthouse until the present federal building was constructed in the 1930s. The 1881 building continued to house various federal offices until 1968. The University of Texas then acquired the building, restored it, and named it O. Henry Hall after Porter's pseudonym.

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Austin U.S. Courthouse  
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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

As with the post office, the growing needs of the federal district court and various federal agencies necessitated either the construction of a new federal building or the expansion of the existing 1881 building by the mid-1920s. According to the *Austin Statesman* in February 1928, the chamber of commerce renewed its request for the appropriation of \$200,000 from the Treasury Department for an addition to the 1881 federal building.<sup>1</sup> By 1933, however, one-half of a city block had been selected as the site for a completely new building to be constructed with federal funding.

The new site, at Colorado and Eighth streets, had been occupied for more than 35 years by the Central Christian Church but had been abandoned years earlier when the church moved to Twelfth and Guadalupe streets. The former church building was razed for construction in July 1933. The stone from the old Central Christian Church building was salvaged by the congregation of the St. Elias Orthodox Church for use in a new church on Neches Street.<sup>2</sup>

In June 1934, U.S. Congressman J. P. Buchanan introduced an appropriations measure for \$415,000 for the construction of a U.S. courthouse in Austin. This measure was successful, and construction was initiated 18 months later. As the first day of construction finally drew near, local commentators noted that the process was a miracle, a result of “many changes in politics and economies” that had facilitated the decision to build.<sup>3</sup>

The construction contract for the project was awarded to Algernon Blair of Montgomery, Alabama. According to the *Austin Dispatch*, Austin residents had hoped that a local contractor would be chosen for the job. In the end, however, Blair was the successful bidder and was appreciated by locals as a “leader in federal construction fields.”<sup>4</sup> The Algernon Blair construction firm was founded in 1896 and managed dozens of public building projects during the mid 1930s, including 18 U.S. post offices; the courthouse in Austin, however, was its only federal courthouse project of the period. Engineering positions for the project were awarded to Texas residents; W. E. Simpson Company of San Antonio served as the structural engineer and R. F. Taylor of Houston as the mechanical engineer.

The actual construction of the building ran relatively smoothly, taking about one year. Groundbreaking ceremonies at the site took place on September 16, 1935. By the winter of 1935, the first of the four floors had been completed and the second floor had been framed. The limestone and granite for the exterior façade was obtained from the local Austin firm of Texas Quarries and installed. The building was expected to be finished by May 1936, but cold weather and other factors delayed completion until September—several weeks later than the government deadline of August 24. The

<sup>1</sup> *Austin Statesman*, 9 February 1928.

<sup>2</sup> *Austin American-Statesman*, 4 July 1933.

<sup>3</sup> *Austin Dispatch*, 16 September 1935.

<sup>4</sup> *Austin Dispatch*, 16 September 1935.

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**Austin U.S. Courthouse  
Travis County, Texas**

**Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)**

building was formally dedicated and opened to the public on September 22, 1936. The dedication ceremony drew prominent government officials and social figures from all over the state and region. Frank Scofield, the local internal revenue collector, and Congressman J. P. Buchanan, who had lobbied for funding for the building's construction, hosted the ceremony. Tom Miller, Austin's mayor, served as master of ceremonies.<sup>5</sup> The next day the community showed its gratitude to Col. H. W. Hackett, First Assistant Public Works Administrator, by making him the guest of honor at Scofield's banquet.

The construction of the new Austin U.S. Courthouse reflected the general economic and idealistic trend, both nationally and in the Austin area. After the 1929 stock market crash, the Great Depression left many jobless and in a general state of hopelessness, but oil production brought economic hope to the region within the year. At the same time, President Franklin Roosevelt introduced his New Deal programs. Most notable among the programs was the Public Works Administration that provided thousands of jobs and funding for public service projects; one of the recipients was the Austin U.S. Courthouse. As a federal undertaking, the construction of the building served as a powerful symbol of U.S. permanence and presence, while also providing employment opportunities during difficult economic times.

Immediately after its completion, the U.S. courthouse housed, among others, the offices of the Collector of Internal Revenue, District No. 1; the Referee in Bankruptcy; and the U.S. Weather Bureau; as well as judicial functions related to the Department of Justice; the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas; the United States Probation Office; and the grand jury room.

The building's most famous tenant arrived in the 1940s when Lyndon B. Johnson, a Johnson City native and future U.S. president, assumed office upon the death of Rep. James Buchanan. As a U.S. congressman, Johnson moved into a suite of second-floor offices in the southwest wing, which he kept until 1949 when he became a U.S. senator. He then moved his offices to the first floor of the wing and remained there until after the beginning of his vice presidency in 1961. Currently, the courthouse houses the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, the U.S. District Court, the U.S. Pretrial Service Office, the U.S. Probation Office, the U.S. Marshal's Office, and judges' chambers, clerks' offices, and law libraries.

*Architectural Significance*

The Austin U.S. Courthouse was one of the many public buildings designed under the supervision of the Office of the Supervising Architect for the Treasury Department. For more than 75 years (1850s-1939), this office was responsible for the design and construction of such public buildings as custom houses, post offices, and courthouses. The buildings it created were not only designed to serve a federal function but to express the permanence and presence of the federal government in the cities and communities in which the buildings were located. Early in its history, the Office of the

<sup>5</sup> *Austin American*, 22 September 1936.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

Supervising Architect employed a variety of architectural styles to convey this presence. At the turn of the century, however, classically inspired styles such as Classical Revival and Beaux-Arts began to predominate. These styles were thought to express democratic values. Additionally, they reflected the government's view that "government buildings should be monumental and beautiful, and should represent the ideals of democracy and high standards of architectural sophistication in their communities."<sup>6</sup>

While these ideals continued to be applied for many years, the expense of constructing "monumental and beautiful" buildings became a concern. In 1913, federal construction policy measured the cost of constructing post offices against both the postal receipts taken in by a city or community and the value of the real estate where the building was to be built. Following the passage of the Public Buildings Act in 1926, the evaluation of the cost of constructing public buildings coincided with a new architectural movement that promoted modernism. As the nation entered into the Depression, the Treasury Department used restrained—or "starved"—versions of classically inspired styles of architecture in its designs. At the same time, private architects hired to design public buildings for the Treasury Department and other government agencies combined Beaux-Arts composition and symmetry with a form of ornamentation referred to as Zigzag Moderne.<sup>7</sup> The result of these two combined influences was a classically balanced version of Art Deco architecture known as "PWA or WPA Moderne." The terms "PWA" or "WPA" come from the extensive use of the style in government-sponsored public building programs during the 1930s. PWA or WPA Moderne has been described as,

. . . pristine, formally balanced compositions employing piers rather than columns, with windows arranged as vertical recessed panels, and smooth surfaces for interiors and exteriors. Smooth stone, polished marble, and granite often face these buildings which are sprinkled with stylized embellishments. Additional decorative features may include ornamental metal-work, restrained sculptural decorations, murals, and pictorial friezes.<sup>8</sup>

While architects in the Office of the Supervising Architect resisted moving in the direction of totally modern designs, the federal government did not restrict consulting private architects' design, style, or material choice. As a result, a significant number of federal buildings in Texas were designed in the Moderne style during this era. Like starved Beaux-Arts and Art Deco styles, Moderne architecture reduced classical ornamentation in favor of linear and geometric decorative features. The Moderne style suited federal buildings because it popularized the angular lines and severe forms that mirrored the authority of the U.S. court system.

<sup>6</sup> Boland, Beth. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria to Post Offices*. National Register Bulletin 13. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division, 1994.

<sup>7</sup> Cohen, Judith Singer. *Cowtown Moderne: Art Deco Architecture of Fort Worth*. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1986: p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> Cohen, Judith Singer. *Cowtown Moderne: Art Deco Architecture of Fort Worth*. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1986: p. 15.

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**Austin U.S. Courthouse  
Travis County, Texas**

**Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)**

The American Institute of Architects campaigned for the government to contract out the design of public buildings throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and the Austin U.S. Courthouse is an example of one of the cases in which a private architect was hired to complete the designs. The hiring of local designers and craftsmen was an important issue for Austin residents and the press. Well-known Austin architect Charles H. Page, of C. H. Page and Son, designed the plans for the new U.S. courthouse, and Kenneth Franzheim of New York served as consulting architect.

Charles H. Page headed a firm that was described as one of the most active firms of the twentieth century. Page worked as an architect in Austin for 65 years and served as the dean of Texas architects. He was a long-time Austin resident and well-known local political figure, hosting the annual state Inaugural Ball for nearly 50 years. The child of English immigrants, he moved to Austin with his family when his father, Christopher H. Page, a master stonemason and construction contractor, obtained a job working on the Capitol in the 1880s. Because of his skill, Christopher Page was eventually promoted to the position of managerial subcontractor on the project, and young Charles helped in a variety of small ways. C. H. Page and Son (later, Page Brothers, Architects) was responsible for many of the building contracts in Austin, including the Travis County courthouse and the Austin National Bank. The firm also designed the Texas Building at the St. Louis World's Fair as well as hundreds of other public buildings. The Page-Gilbert House, the home built by Christopher Page and passed on to Charles Page and then later to Charles's own son, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Austin U.S. Courthouse has maintained its original character throughout its more than 60 years of continuous use and still functions today much the way it did in the 1930s. The federal building continues to serve its primary historic function, that of a U.S courthouse. It also retains much of its original fabric, particularly in public interior spaces and on the exterior. As such, the building continues to exemplify the federal government at the local level and is reminiscent of Depression-era public building projects. Additionally, it remains an excellent example of a Moderne building and is worthy of listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

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**Bibliography**

- Boland, Beth. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria to Post Offices*. National Register Bulletin 13. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division, 1994.
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- Cohen, Judith Singer. *Cowtown Moderne: Art Deco Architecture of Fort Worth*. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1986.
- Walk, Haydel, and Associates. *General Services Administration Historic Structures Report: United States Courthouse, Austin*. Prepared for the General Services Administration, Fort Worth, Texas, April, 1990.

*Newspaper Articles*

- Austin Statesman*, "C.C. Letter Ask [sic] New Federal Building," 9 February 1928.
- Austin Statesman*, "Site Being Cleared For Federal Building," 4 July 1933.
- Austin American-Statesman*, "Federal Courthouse For Austin Before Congress For Vote," 3 June 1934.
- Austin Statesman*, "Federal Building Work Is Started," 16 September 1935.
- Austin Dispatch*, "Work Starts On Federal Building," 16 September 1935.
- Austin Dispatch*, "Work Progresses On Texas Only Revenue Building," 8 December 1935.
- Austin Dispatch*, "New US Courthouse to be Ready in 3 Months," 15 March 1936.
- Austin American*, "U.S. Courthouse Formal Opening to Attract Many," 22 September 1936.
- Austin American*, "Assistant to PWA Boss Is Honored at Banquet," 23 September 1936.
- Austin American*, "New Courthouse," 17 September 1937.

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 1.35 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 / 1-4 / / 6/2 - 0 / 8 - 6 - 0 / / 3-3 / 4 3 / - / / / - / - - / / - / - / - - /  
- 8 / 2 - 4 - 0 / Zone Easting Northing  
Zone Easting Northing 4 / - / / / - / - - / / - / - / - - /  
2 / - / / / - / - - - / / - / - / - - - /  See Continuation Sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) **See Continuation Sheet p. 15.**

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) **See Continuation Sheet p. 15.**

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Victoria Green Clow, Cultural Resources Project Manager, and Elizabeth Burson, Archivist/Historian  
organization Geo-Marine, Inc. date April 3, 2000  
street & number 550 East Fifteenth St. telephone (972) 423-5480  
city or town Plano state TX zip code 75074

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Property Owner**

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

name General Services Administration, Greater Southwest Region  
street & number Fritz G. Lanham Federal Building, 819 Taylor Street telephone (817) 978-4229  
city or town Fort Worth state TX zip code 76102

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   10   Page   15  

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**Austin U.S. Courthouse  
Travis County, Texas**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The legal property description of the Austin U.S. Courthouse is Lot 1-6, Block 099, Original City.

**Boundary Justification**

All property lines are as they existed at the time of the building's construction. The nomination includes all property historically associated with the building.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 11 Page 16

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**Austin U.S. Courthouse  
Travis County, Texas**

**Photographs**

1. Austin U.S. Courthouse
2. Texas
3. Victoria Clow
4. October 12, 1999
5. Geo-Marine, Inc.
6. South façade
7. Photo 1

Item numbers 1-5 are the same for all photographs. Item numbers 6 and 7 are listed below for each photograph.

6. South façade, main entry detail
7. Photo 2

6. West façade
7. Photo 3

6. East façade
7. Photo 4

6. North façade
7. Photo 5

6. Main staircase
7. Photo 6

6. First floor corridor
7. Photo 7

6. Doors, north wall, lobby corridor
7. Photo 8

6. Courtroom doors
7. Photo 9

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   11   Page   17  

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**Austin U.S. Courthouse  
Travis County, Texas**

**Photographs continued**

- 6. Courtroom, looking east
- 7. Photo 10
  
- 6. Detail, east wall of courtroom
- 7. Photo 11
  
- 6. Elevator lobby, second floor
- 7. Photo 12

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Austin US Courthouse

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Travis

DATE RECEIVED: 3/20/01      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/09/01  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/25/01      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/05/01  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 01000432

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    4.25.01 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the  
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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



131002 0231 - 3 1

Austin US Courthouse  
Austin, Texas  
Photo 1

STATES  
HOUSE

200 W



1200002 0231-2 1

Ausitin US Courthouse  
Austin, Texas  
Photo 2



1243002 0231 -3 1

Austin US Courthouse  
Austin, Texas  
Photo 3



1359002 0231-3 3

Austin US Courthouse  
Austin, Texas  
Photo 4



1280002 0231-3 1

Austin US Courthouse  
Austin, Texas  
Photo 5



1083002 0231 - 1 N

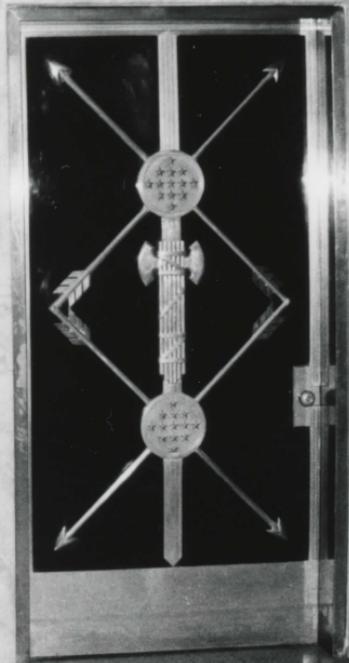
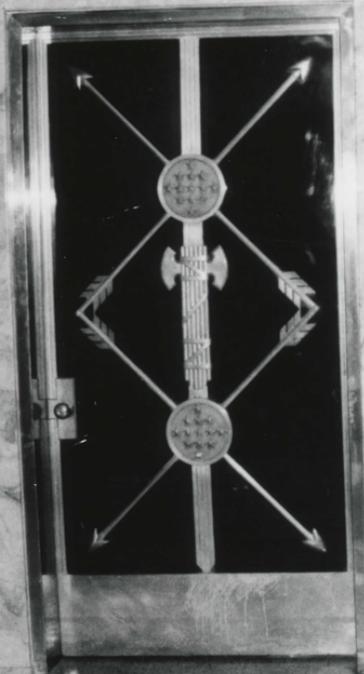
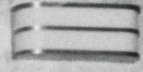
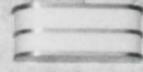
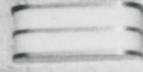
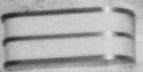
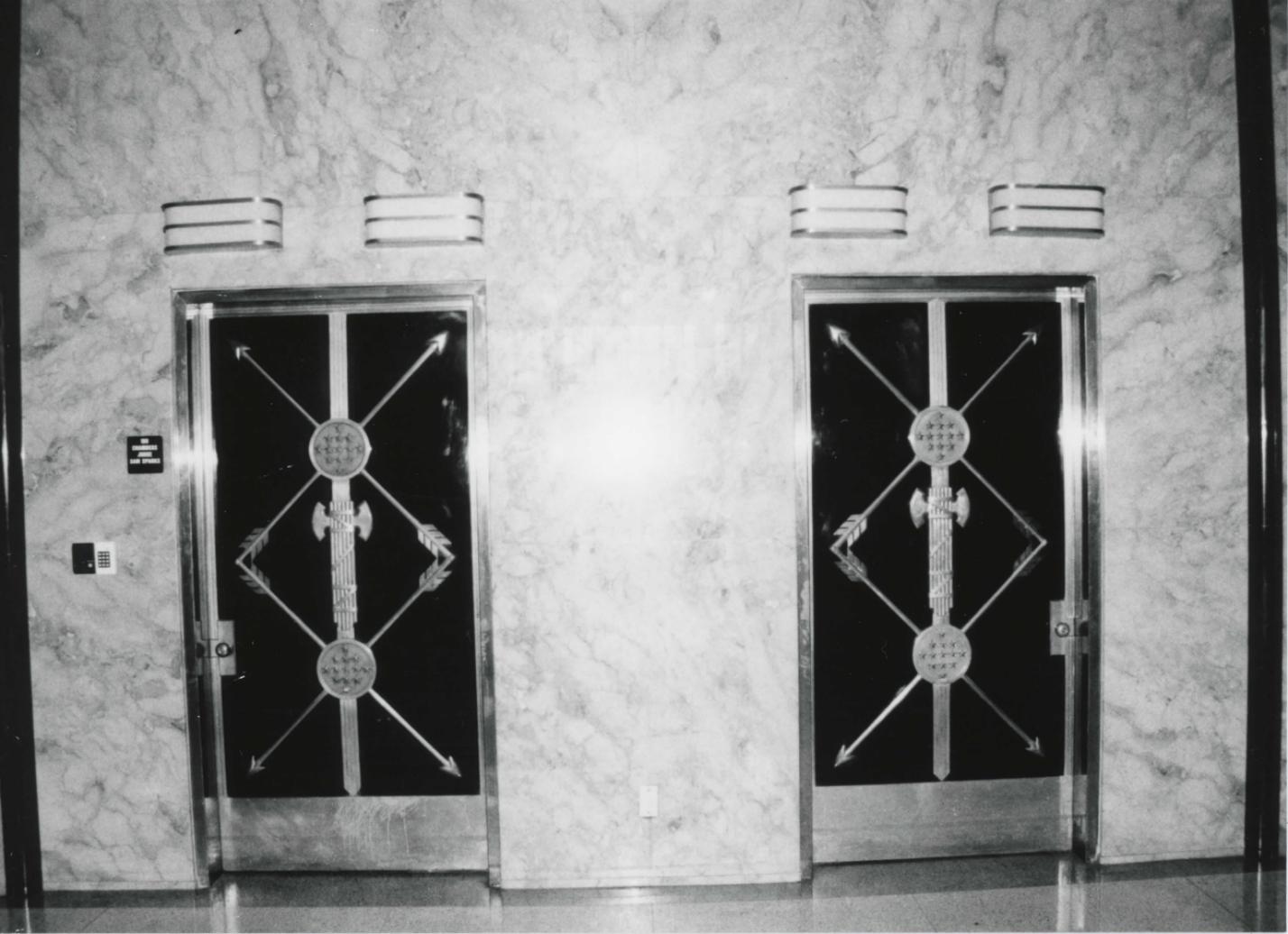
Austin US Courthouse  
Austin, Texas  
Photo 6

XIT



1093002 0231 -1 2

Austin US Courthouse  
Austin, Texas  
Photo 7



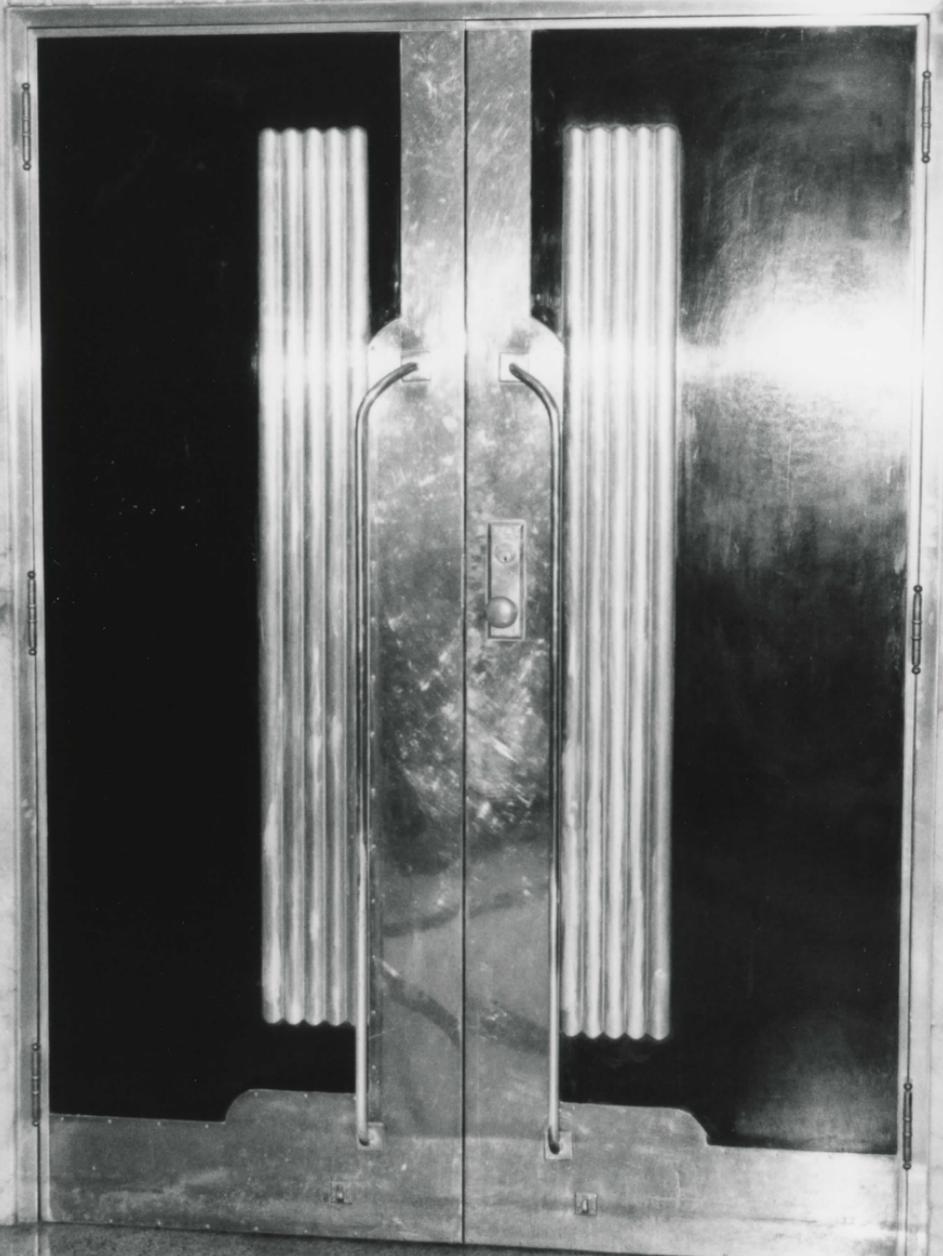
Small black rectangular sign with white text, possibly a nameplate or room number.



104J002 0231-2 2

Austin US Courthouse  
Austin Texas  
Photo 8

U.S. DISTRICT COURT  
COURTROOM NO. 1



110002 0231-2 1

Austin US Courthouse  
Austin, Texas  
Photo 9



1163002 0231-1 1

Austin US Courthouse  
Austin, Texas  
Photo 10



1149002 0231-1-3

Austin US Courthouse  
Austin, Texas  
Photo 11



112002 0231-1 N

Austin US Courthouse  
Austin, Texas  
Photo 12

