Del Rio Federal Building
(Del Rio Courthouse and Post Office)
100 Broadway, corner of Main Street
Del Rio
Val Verde County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3394

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HABS
TEX
233-DELRI
1-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DEL RIO FEDERAL BUILDING

(DEL RIO COURTHOUSE AND POST OFFICE)

HABS NO. TX-3394

Location: 100 Broadway, corner of Main Street
Del Rio, Val Verde County, Texas

Present Owner: U.S. Government, General Services Administration
Field Office, Region 7
819 Taylor Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76102.

Present Occupant: None

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The Del Rio Federal Building was planned by the U.S. Treasury Department Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor under Secretary of the Treasury Franklin MacVeagh in 1911-1912.[1] It was designed and built at the end of a unique period for the Treasury Department, the so-called "Battle of the Eaves", a time when the Office of the Supervising Architect changed with each successor to reflect individual preference for various historical styles, causing each office holder to "improve" or "correct" the work of his predecessor.[2] It was also near the end of Taylor's term of office during which he had declared a "Federal Return to Classicism".[3] This building was also planned at the end of the period when the Tarsney Act was being actively implemented. This congressional act encouraged, and later required, the Treasury Department to use the services of private architectural firms for design of federal buildings via competitions. The Tarsney Act is considered to be the first real, though short-lived, lobbying victory for the fledgling American Institute of Architects.[4]

---

[1]This information is shown on original plans for the building.

[2]Lois Craig & the Staff of the Federal Architecture Project, The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics and Symbols in the United States Government Building (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1972-1977), 195.

[3]Craig, Federal Presence, 232.

[4]Craig, Federal Presence, 202-203.

The Del Rio Federal Building was also to house the U.S. Customs Service, a vital federal office on this crossing between the U.S./Mexican border that played a significant part in the U.S. handling of the Mexican Madero Revolution in 1911-1912.[5] The Customs Service attempted to prevent staging for the revolution in the United States and tried to prevent the smuggling of armaments for the revolution into the United States.[6] This agency has continued to play an important role in U.S.-Mexican relations since that time.

The building's imposing classical revival physical presence in this small border town is indicative of the trend in the second decade of the 20th Century toward expanding the federal presence in individual congressional districts, which the Treasury Department tried unsuccessfully to diminish.[7]

I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) of erection: Planning began by at least 1911 (Site Surveys, April 19, 1911 and June 14, 1911). The first set of plans, pages 1-8 & L-8, were signed by James Knox Taylor on January 28, 1912. Taylor's successor, O. Wenderoth, signed the first detail sheet for the elevator on June 12, 1913 and one for courtroom details on April 3, 1914 with the septic plans being approved by August 14, 1914, so the building was probably occupied late in 1914. Correspondence by Del Rio's Deputy Customs Officer Luke Dowe dated May 17, 1913, indicated that construction of the building was well underway at that time, and the cornerstone contains the date of 1912.

---

[5]Michael Dennis Carmon, United States Customs and the Madero Revolution, Southwestern Studies, Monograph #48 (El Paso: The University of Texas at El Paso), 5-11.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Craig, Federal Presence, 239.

New sanitary drainage and sewer plans were drawn March 30, 1920 (Drawing No. P-750) and November 27, 1922 (Drawing No. RP-34) under Supervising Architect J.A. Wetmore. A new boiler was planned April 11, 1932 under Wetmore as well (Drawing No. H-1100). Elevator improvements and a new elevator penthouse were drawn June 29, 1935, under the supervision of Supervising Architect G.W. Stone (Drawing No. 35).

The landscape plan was completed April 10, 1936 and approved by Supervising Architect Louis A. Simon on April 13, 1937.

A series of blueprints found in the building's basement dated September 18, 1939 through May 26, 1941, detail replacement of window sash, main entry doors, sewer system repairs, roof repairs (including platform and instrument room for the Weather Bureau) and plumbing/electrical repairs.

Another series of blueline prints found in the basement starts with 1963 Sheets 27-1 though 27-5, with alterations to the first and second floor post office and courtroom/court office areas, mechanical and electrical changes, continues through 1964 shop drawings, a 1965 Electrical & Mechanical Space Alterations sheet (No. 27-9), 1965 shop drawings for the new judge's bench and hearing room through 1969 Electrical Alterations for Courts & New Detention Cells & Toilets at the first and third floors.

B. Architect: James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect for the U.S. Treasury Department 1897-1912, was the architect of record for the Del Rio Federal Building.[8] This building was designed during the last two years of the Tarsney Act, a period when the Supervising Architect's office was required to use private architectural firms to design some federal buildings, at a time when the act was under attack by Congress.[9] The Tarsney Act was repealed by Congress in 1912, the primary design and early construction period for the building. This occurred after the term of Lyman J. Gage as Secretary of the Treasury. Gage, the head of the World's Colombian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 signalling a return to classicism in American architecture, was the first Secretary of the Treasury to implement the 1893 Tarsney Act when he took office in 1897 with Taylor as Supervising Architect.[10]

---

[8]Craig, Federal Presence, 195.

[9]Ibid., 203.

[10]Ibid.

Taylor, under Secretary Gage, declared "The Federal Return to Classicism" in his annual report of 1901.[11] In his report, Taylor declared that the Treasury Department:

> finally decided to adopt the classic style of architecture for all buildings as far as it was practicable to do so, and it is believed that this style is best suited for Government buildings. The experience of centuries has demonstrated that no form of architecture is so pleasing to the great mass of mankind as the classic, or some modified form of the classic, and it is hoped that the present policy may be followed in the future, in order that the public buildings of the United States may become distinctive in their character.[12]

This was the official beginning of a *Beaux Arts* classicism trend in public building which was influenced by Secretary Gage's preference for that style.[13] It was an attempt to herald the end of the "Battle of the Eaves" that had raged through previous administrations when one Supervising Architect might prefer Gothic Revival style, but his successor liked Romanesque Revival, and so on. The amount of time that passed between Congressional authorization of a new federal building and completion of its construction was sufficiently lengthy to allow each successor to alter his predecessor's design.[14]

By the time the Del Rio Federal Building was being designed in 1911-1912, Franklin MacVeagh had become Secretary of the Treasury. Congress was coming to the conclusion that it was too costly to hire private architects to do work the Supervising Architect's office could perform much more reasonably. Congress also felt that both jurors and project awardees were monopolized by AIA members. The Tarsney Act was repealed in 1912 after some 35 buildings had been designed under its auspices.[15]

If the Del Rio Federal Building was designed by an outside firm, it is not indicated on any of the drawings or shop drawings and no direct evidence has been found. The physical appearance of the

---

[11]Ibid., 232.

[12]Ibid., 236, from the Report of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury, 1901.

[13]Ibid., 232.

[14]Ibid., 195.

[15]Ibid., 203.

building, however, could indicate either that Taylor had begun to lean more toward regional references, or there was a private architect who was not credited on the building's plans or cornerstone. This building's deep, panelled eaves with polychrome diamond design, its simple wrought iron balconets, its predominantly stucco wall finish and red clay tile roof give it a southwestern character in spite of its symmetrical bays with classical arches, columns and pilasters. Several "standard detail" sheets were found in the building's basement which were developed under Taylor's term and were issued to the contractor during construction.[16] These included details for electrical panel boxes, light fixtures and iron grilles at basement windows. No reference to a private-practice architect has been found with regard to this building. The Tarsney Act only required the Treasury Department to use private architects part of the time, at the discretion of the Supervising Architect.

C. Original & Subsequent Owners: Lots 1 & 2, and part of Lot 3, Block E, The Martin Addition of Del Rio, was purchased June 14, 1910 from Col. H.D. Bonnet, Attorney-in-Fact, his wife and married children for the sum of $7,053.58.[17] The property was occupied by a church, a barbershop and a residence when surveyed for purchase by the U.S. Government in 1911.[18] The site has been continuously owned and occupied by the U.S. Government from 1910 to the present.

D. Builders, Contractors, Suppliers: Shop drawings found in the building's basement showed the original General Contractor to be P.T. Shields. No address for Shields was given. Subcontractors included Houston Structural Steel Co., Houston, TX; Mosher Mfg. Co. for structural steel members; Mr. C.J. Gleason of Augusta, GA, for the sewage ejector & Mr. Martin Brauer of Del Rio for the septic system drains; St. Louis Terra Cotta Co. of St. Louis, MO, for terra cotta details at cartouche, sills, water table, first story sill course, belt course, capitals and cornice; A.L. Gooch of Austin, TX, for granite and stone at the primary facades; National Slate Co. (no address given) for marble and terrazzo details inside at floors, stairs, bases; Motor Testing Record and shop drawing photo of elevator cab by Otis Elevator Co., Yonkers, NY. Standard Treasury Department detail sheets found in the basement included

---

[16]Most were dated 1910-1911.

[17]Val Verde County Deed Records, Book 22, pages 180-181.

[18]Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Del Rio, Texas (1909), 4, and Photo #28 of original survey drawing #X-1.

"Lighting Fixtures No. LF-86", Electrical Systems (with box covers) Misc. Drwg. No. 77", "Lock-Out Louvers in Brick Walls", "FS Detail of Fuel Room & Stack Doors", "Standard Electrical Details Misc. Drwg. No. M-62", "Standard Mech. Details Misc. Drwg. No. M-85", Standard Fire Proof Vault & Closet Doors Details Misc. Drwg. No. M-55", and "Cornerstone Inscription Detail", which were all developed initially under Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor in 1910-1911. They were approved for use in the Del Rio building by his successor, O. Wenderoth, in 1912-1913.

E. Original Plans & Construction: Materials used in plans from the earliest drawings seem to have been faithful to the original design as still present in the building and as shown in available historic photographs.

F. Alterations & Additions: New sanitary drainage and sewer which tied into Del Rio's sewer system were implemented in 1922. The building was painted and some repairs were made in 1930. The exterior *torcheres* may have been painted a metallic gold at that time. Close inspection shows a metallic gleam under the present black paint and Jewell McDowell Smith remembers them as having been gold.[19] A new boiler was installed in 1932 under Supervising Architect J.A. Wetmore. Elevator improvements and a new elevator penthouse were implemented by the manufacturer of the original elevator equipment, Otis Elevator Co., under the direction of Supervising Architect G. W. Stone in 1935. A 1936 landscape plan including a concrete drainage system around the base of the building was implemented after approval of Supervising Architect Louis A. Simon in 1937 (Photo #1 & #38). The new landscaping was said to have been sorely needed and was instigated by the Del Rio Postmaster of the time, Bert James McDowell, according to his daughter, Jewell McDowell Smith.

From 1939 to 1942 window sash and main entry doors were replaced and altered in appearance, there were sewer system repairs, and roof repairs, including the addition of a viewing platform and instrument room for the Weather Bureau. Plumbing and electrical repairs were accomplished by the San Antonio Builders Exchange from June to August of 1942. These were implemented under the auspices of the Federal Works Agency, John M. Carmody, Administrator, Public Buildings Administration. The Federal Works Agency was also

---

[19]"Post Office Paint Work Supervised by U.S. Expert," Del Rio Evening News. March 20, 1930, 1. On microfilm in the offices of the Del Rio Times Herald, Del Rio, Texas, and interview with Jewell McDowell Smith.

responsible for the addition of a sump pump in 1949. C&R Div., Public Building Service, General Services Administration in Dallas, Texas, were responsible for new handrails at both main entries to the building and heating alterations on the third floor in 1955.[20] It is not known when original light fixtures were removed, but most have been replaced and pipe stubs remain in hallways, in the basement and in the courtroom that are evidence of possible gaslighting.

The next rash of alterations and improvements to the building occurred from 1965 through 1969, after the post office moved to its new location down the street on Broadway in 1964. The post office workroom was divided into a hearing room and offices on the first floor, and the courtroom on the second floor was modernized and expanded. The new judge's bench was manufactured by Prassel Mfg. Co., San Antonio, TX, for General Contractor Forgy Construction. Offices on the second floor were also modernized, shortening the hall to provide room for a secretary, and adding wood panelling and bookcases to the offices. There were electrical alterations for the courts, and new detention cells and toilets were added at the first and third floors. The current building manager for the GSA in Del Rio, Mr. Arturo Calvetti, remembers that the pendant bowl lighting fixtures in the hallways were added then to help return some of the original character to the public areas of the building. These changes were made under the direction of the General Services Administration Design & Construction Division, Region 7, Dallas and Fort Worth offices.[21]

Since the 1960s, original staircases have been enclosed to provide for fire separation under more recent life safety codes, the interior of the building was painted, new signs installed and various repairs performed from the 1970s until the present by the Region 7 General Services Administration's Fort Worth office. The building has been completely vacant since August, 1992, according to Mr. Calvetti.

G. Historical Context:

The 1912 Del Rio Federal Building was constructed in the central business district of the county seat of Val Verde County, Texas. Del Rio serves as a border port of entry between the United States and Mexico and is located at a terminus of the main line of the Southern Pacific Railroad between New Orleans and San Francisco on

---

[20]This information was found in blueprints found in the building basement.

[21]Drawing No. 27-1 through 27-16 found in the building basement.

the Rio Grande River.[22] When construction began on the new building in 1912, Del Rio was an unincorporated town with a population of about 4,000 on the Galveston, Houston & San Antonio Rail Road line.[23]

There were a number of political forces at work in the second decade of the 20th Century that would cause the federal government to build such a fine edifice in a small southwest Texas border town. There was a lot of pressure on Congress in that decade to extend the federal presence to small cities, with particular emphasis on post offices. Constituents were demanding attention and there was a competitive relationship between Congressmen that contributed to the trend.[24] And while federal officers, such as Daniel C. Roper, First Assistant Postmaster General from 1913 to 1916, and Secretary of the Treasury Franklin MacVeagh were advocating either simple, low-cost buildings, or were trying to keep the number of new buildings to a minimum, they were fought by the individual congressman who wanted to show his constituents he could take good care of them and that he carried a lot of clout in Washington.[25]

This attitude of one-upmanship was underscored in a speech by Del Rio's Congressman, Representative James A. Garner, in a 1916 speech, just two years after completion of the Del Rio Federal Building:

> There are half a dozen places in my district where Federal buildings are being erected or have recently been constructed at a cost to the Government far in excess of the actual needs of the communities where they are located. Take Uvalde, my home town, for instance. We are putting up a post office down there at a cost of $60,000, when a $5,000 building would be entirely adequate for our needs. This is mighty bad business for Uncle Sam, and I'll admit it; but the other fellows in Congress have been doing it for a long time and I can't make them quit. Now

---

[22]Walter P. Webb, ed., The Handbook of Texas, Vol 1 (Austin, Texas: The Texas State Historical Association, 1952), 485-486.

[23]Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide (Dallas, Texas: A.H. Belo & Co., 1912), 359.

[24]Craig, Federal Presence, 239.

[25]Ibid., 242 and Daniel C. Roper, The United States Post Office: Its Past Record, Present Condition and Potential Relationship to the New World Era (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1917), 91 & 107.

> we Democrats are in charge of the House and I'll tell you right now, every time one of those Yankees gets a ham, I'm going to get a hog.[26]

In fact, the Secretary of the Treasury tried to place a ceiling on the amount spent for federal buildings each year, for which Congress retaliated by slashing the Supervising Architect's staff by 15 percent in 1911.[27]

Del Rio's location on a primary railway line also contributed to its selection as the site of a new public building, as the Post Office relied primarily on rail service for distribution at the time.[28] The rail access and position at the Mexican border also added significant federal tenants to the building, in addition to the Post Office: the U.S. Customs Service and the Texas Western District federal courts.

The Del Rio Customs office had already proved its importance to the federal government in the events leading up to and throughout the Madero Revolution in Mexico from 1910 to 1912, as a crucial part of the Saluria District of Texas. The Del Rio Customs officer, Deputy Collector of Customs Robert W. Dowe, was an experienced lawman when appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1902.[29] He brought in his brother Luke as well as other loyal law enforcers. The Dowes supervised about 30 men and maintained customs houses at Eagle Pass, Del Rio and Presidio, Texas, in the Saluria District. There also were mounted patrols along 700 miles of the Rio Grande River and an officer in San Antonio when the Madero difficulties began.[30]

Francisco I. Madero, Jr., son of a prominent Coahuila rancher, opposed the re-election of Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz in 1910, using the United States side of the border as a haven from which to conduct his planning.

---

[26]Craig, 242.

[27]Ibid., 239.

[28]Roper, United States Post Office, 96.

[29]Carmen, U.S. Customs, 10.

[30]Ibid., 12.

As early as 1909 federal law enforcement officers, including Customs agents, were told to prevent violation of U.S. neutrality laws, including investigation of munitions shipped to Mexico, but the instructions never became specific. The officers were given the mission to prevent any activity that could cause international difficulties with Mexico without being given the means to do so. This caused confusion about just what the officers' duties were and resulted in the already sparsely-staffed Customs officers being used as trackers and guides. They were being exposed to many dangers outside their realm of responsibility and outside their jurisdiction. They responded heroically but were not effective because of their small numbers and the large area they had to patrol.[31]

Porfirio Diaz resigned in 1911 and Francisco Leon de la Barra, a former Mexican Ambassador to Washington, became Mexico's interim president.[32]

Luke Dowe, a former Texas Ranger, served in the Customs Service under his older brother Robert from 1892 to 1894. He was Captain of the mounted inspectors from 1898 to 1902, and was Deputy Customs Collector in Del Rio from 1903 for many years.[33] In 1913, correspondence from Luke Dowe to his superiors in Washington shows that he was looking forward to moving into his new quarters in the Federal Building as a boost to his budget, since he would no longer have to pay $270 per year to rent an office.[34]

The Post Office was to be the new building's primary tenant, occupying the main floor and a storage area in the basement. The first Postmaster to occupy the new building was Frances M. Brady.[35] Bert James McDowell, formerly a mounted customs

---

[31]Ibid., 24, 30 & 33.

[32]Ibid., 74.

[33]Ibid., 11, & interview with Jewel McDowell Smith.

[34]Val Verde County Library, Del Rio, Texas, "People" file.

[35]Smith interview & list of Del Rio Postmasters provided by the Historian, Corporate Information Services, United States Postal Service (January 29, 1993).

inspector, was probably the first U.S. Marshall to inhabit the new building. He was appointed to the Western District of Texas by President William Howard Taft in 1912.[36]

McDowell was then appointed Postmaster by President Warren G. Harding in 1922 and again by President Herbert Hoover in 1930.[37]

Postmaster McDowell had the building painted inside and out in 1930, with technical assistance by a representative of the Treasury Department. Contractors were Redick & Keys of Denver with the low bid of $3,645 to paint and varnish the interior, and paint exterior wood and metal work. The work also included miscellaneous repairs.[38]

McDowell's daughter, Jewell McDowell Smith, remembers that her father instigated the landscaping of the building in 1935 and that the grounds were very bare before the landscaping was installed.

Ray Ross, the last Postmaster in Del Rio to be a political appointee, was tapped by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to be McDowell's successor.[39] The landscape plan was implemented during his tenure.

The Weather Station, then part of the Department of Commerce, probably moved in to the new building from its office on Martin Street in 1914.[40] Local legend holds that there were aircraft spotters on the roof of the building during World War II, but Mrs.

---

[36]Smith interview. Mrs. Smith has kept the presidential certificates by which her father was appointed to his two terms as Del Rio Postmaster and one term as U.S. Marshall.

[37]Ibid.

[38]"Post Office Paint Work Supervised," 1.

[39]Smith interview & list of Del Rio Postmasters provided by the Historian, Corporate Information Services, United States Postal Service (January 29, 1993).

[40]Interview with Mr. and Mrs. E. Robuck Daughtry. The Daughtrys have a clipping in their file from the Del Rio News Herald that cites 1914 as the year this occurred and a recent letter from the local Weather Bureau confirming this. However, they also have a clipping on the retirement of Harold L. Molyneaux, Director of the Del Rio Weather Station from 1920 to 1963, that places the station's move to the building at 1924.

Jacqueline Buchanan, who worked there during the war, says they just saw her and her co-workers on the roof reading the weather instruments. Other Weather Station employees during the war were women hired "to do a man's job" because of the war effort.[41]

The Weather Station was a frequent, but not constant, building tenant from 1914 to 1963. Weather Station Director Harold L. Molyneaux claimed to have moved the station four times during his 1920 to 1963 tenure. One of his favorite memories of the old building was taking groups of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to the roof to see the weather instruments.[42]

The federal courts for the Western District of Texas met on the second floor of the building. The name of the earliest Federal District Judge that served in the building located to date is Judge DuVal West, in 1928, with D.H. Hart as Clerk and H.E. Walker as U.S. Marshall.[43] Others who have served in this district since construction of the building include Judge John Wood, who was known as "Maximum John" for his stiff sentences for drug smugglers. Judge Wood was shot recently while sitting in the San Antonio federal court house.[44] Others included Judges McMillan, West, Spears, and Thomasson.[45] Judge Homer Thornberry served as a judge in Del Rio, El Paso and San Antonio for over 30 years was later nominated to the United States Supreme Court by President Lyndon Johnson, but was not accepted by the Senate. He now serves as Judge of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals for Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi.[46] Judge William Sessions, who is now Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington, DC, also served as a judge in the Del Rio Federal Building.[47]

---

[41]Daughtry interview and interview with Mrs. Jacqueline Buchanan.

[42]Daughtry interview.

[43]Del Rio City Directory (1928), located at the Val Verde County Library, Del Rio, Texas.

[44]Interview with Del Rio attorney Arturo Gonzales.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Interview with Judge Homer Thornberry.

[47]Gonzales interview.

Del Rio attorney Arturo Gonzales remembered a "colorful" U.S. Marshall that served in the building, former Texas Ranger Walter E. Riggs. Riggs served as Deputy U.S. Marshall for 26 years, 20 of which were in Del Rio. Before his appointment as U.S. Marshall he had experience as a Texas Ranger, a Sheriff and a Game Warden in Zavala County. He was stationed in Del Rio in 1943.[48] During a court session, U.S. District Judge Homer Thornberry declared that Riggs was:

> . . . one of the best known and probably one of the most loved Deputy Marshalls and law enforcement officers in this area, a man who has from youth stood for law enforcement and for promotion of understanding and respect for law enforcement".[49]

Riggs' son, James E. Riggs, entered the Customs Service in 1950 after having been appointed U.S. Commissioner in Del Rio in 1946, at age 21. He was Senior Resident Agent at Eagle Pass from 1970 to 1972 where he won certificates of award for outstanding service each year, then was stationed in Del Rio as Senior Resident Customs Agent in 1972.[50]

The Post Office moved out of the Federal Building in 1964, to a new building just down the block on Broadway, allowing additional court functions to move to the first floor and allowing additional office space for the district's Congressman and other functions. When the new federal building was completed across the street on Broadway, the 1912 building was vacated in August of 1992. The General Services Administration has continued the excellent maintenance of the building and its site to the present time.

II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Architectural Character:

The eclectic Del Rio Federal Building evokes a southwestern regional character through the use of deep overhanging bracketed eaves painted red, green and gold to delineate the panel details of the soffit between the solid scrolled wood brackets (Photo #10 & Field Photo #1), and smooth stucco wall finish, wrought iron

---

[48]Val Verde County Library, "People" file.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid.

railings at upper floors and red clay tile hipped roof (Photo #1 & #2 & Field Photo #106). Its design characteristics are closer to Italian Renaissance Revival than any other single style. The building's single block massing, symmetrical facades, terra cotta detailing at water table, belt coursing, cartouche, cornice and pilaster capitals, the use of Roman-arched openings at the ground floor and its griffin-based cast and wrought iron *torcheres* at the two main entries (Photo #1, #2, #3, #4 & #5 & Field Photo #104) are all indicative of the trend toward Greek and Roman classical architectural themes popular when the building was designed and constructed. Other Greek and Roman classical motifs used in the building include rosettes at exterior lamps and on interior built-in furniture, architrave bearing plates with dentil moldings on the *torcheres* and heavy architrave moldings over doors.

Classical themes were preferred at that time for public buildings because, as Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor stated in his report to Congress in 1901:

> . . . it is believed that this style (classical) is best suited for Government buildings. The experience of centuries has demonstrated that no form of architecture is so pleasing to the great mass of mankind as the classic, or some modified form of the classic . . .[51]

The building's interior retains much of its original character as well, with marble and terrazzo floors (Photo #15 & #16 & Field Photo #8), panelled doors and transoms with original hardware (Photo #17 & #18 & Field Photo #34), smooth plaster wall and ceiling finishes with arched forms articulated at the first floor corridor (Photo #15 & #16 & Field Photo #13) and acorn termini at stair rails (Photo #24 & Field Photo #77). The pink Tennessee marble forms a floor grid corresponding to the structural grid and pattern of arched openings with white terrazzo background and 14" high grey Tennessee marble base mold at the first floor corridor (Drawing #1) The dark-stained trim mold and doors were typical of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, adding richness and solemnity to the interior. Exterior doors and trim were typically painted in the Nineteenth Century, but were more often stained and varnished in important buildings of the early Twentieth Century, especially if doors were protected from the elements by a porch or awning.

There are later alterations of both space and finishes in some significant areas, such as the former Post Office space at the

---

[51]Craig, Federal Presence, 236, quoted from the Report of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury, 1901.

first floor and the second floor courtroom. On the northwest side of the first floor corridor, arched openings framed large wrought iron grilles above panelled wood and glass doors, brass-grilled Post Office windows and brass Post Office boxes (Photo #31). These were removed in the 1960s when the Post Office moved down the block. The arches were filled with recessed plaster walls and a dark-stained chair rail mold matching the other side of the corridor, with a wainscot of Keene's cement plaster (Photo #16). The former Post Office work space now has a suspended ceiling and window panes have been painted to obscure natural light below the new ceiling. Fan lights above the ceiling are not painted. A new partition wall bisects the windows and the floor is now carpeted. Several original metal vaults remain in the building, although the vault door at the first floor has been removed.

B. Condition of Building Fabric:

The Del Rio Federal Building was maintained well during the 80 years it was occupied by its various federal tenants and continues to be cleaned and repaired as needed in spite of its vacancy. There are areas where minor repairs are needed due primarily to the building's age, but mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems are in good working order and the building itself is in very good condition overall.

C. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions - In plan, the building is a 90'4" X 58'4" rectangle (Photo #30). Its three-story wall height is 37'9" high, plus roof height and 10'6" below grade to the basement floor (Photo #30).

   Vertically, the building's facade at all four sides is visually divided into base, shaft and cornice (Photo #30). All four sides are bracketed by full-height corner pilasters or cantons.

   Horizontally, the Main (First) Street facade is symmetrically arranged with a ceremonial Doric entrance colonnade flanked by two single bays with an ABA rhythm (Photo #30). The second floor facade is composed of a central terra cotta cartouche with federal eagle motif, flanked by two window bays. The third floor is divided into seven window bays each separated by pilasters with composite terra cotta capitals with acanthus leaf and shell or *coquillage* motifs, both of which were classical Greek and Roman decorative figures, on column capitals. This primary facade is half the width of the Broadway Street facade, with a more vertical emphasis. The entry is the focal point of this facade (Photo #4 & #5 & Field Photos #106 & 107).

The Broadway facade is divided horizontally into seven bays at the first floor, with the central entry arch being slightly larger than the flanking arched window openings and is approached by a ceremonial entry second in importance to the Main (First) Street entry. The second floor is divided into seven bays like those of the Main (First) Street facade. The third floor is divided into thirteen bays separated by pilasters like those found on the Main (First) Street facade at the same level (Photo #30). This facade has a horizontal emphasis with a central entry that is secondary to the Main (First) Street facade.

The northeast side is simpler in detail, with four symmetrically spaced bays at the first two levels, with seven bays at the third floor divided by pilasters identical to the other elevations (Photo #30).

The northwest facade is divided into five wide central bays with a central projecting bay at the former loading dock. The two end bays match those of the other facades at the first floor. At the second floor, the five central bays are taller than the two end bay openings, which match those of other facades at that level. The third floor is divided into eleven bays separated by pilasters like those of the other third floor facades (Photo #30).

2. Foundations - The exterior base sheathing consists of stippled, dressed ashlar limestone blocks with a raised bead joint and a terra cotta water table. The foundation consists of spread concrete footings with concrete perimeter beams (Photo #32).

3. Walls and Facades - Above the water table, the walls are smooth stucco finish with a terra cotta belt course at the first floor, a terra cotta bed molding at the bottom of the third floor and terra cotta cornice, column and pilaster capitals on all four facades (Photo #32). Exterior walls are brick laid in an English Bond pattern under the stucco and terra cotta finish.[52]

4. Structural System, Framing - This is a steel frame building with steel beams, girders & hangers, wood joists and wood roof framing (Photos #32 & #33). Exterior wall framing is infilled with solid brick masonry.

---

[52]From field notes dated June 24, 1992, made by Grace Crane of General Services Administration, Field Office, Region 7, Fort Worth, Texas.

5. Porches, Stoops, Bulkheads - Ceremonial red Texas granite stairs lead to two main entries at Main (First) Street and Broadway, with granite platforms for the cast and wrought iron *torcheres* on tripod bases. The tripod bases, in addition to providing a strong foundation, may symbolize the three branches of the federal government. There are griffins at each foot of the tripod and scrollwork acanthus leaf forms supporting the light fixtures. Griffins are mythological Greek figures that symbolically guard the two main entrances to the building. Acorn finials at the top of each fixture are traditionally used as symbols of hospitality. Red Texas granite steps with pipe railings lead down wells to the basement at the south corner of the Broadway facade and north of the loading dock at the northwest side. The former loading dock at the northwest side still retains its wood frame *porte cochere*, but the openings have been replaced with glass and aluminum frame doors. Low iron railings at second and third floor openings are balconettes.

6. Chimneys - A masonry stack from the boiler in the basement rises through all three floors and attic, piercing the roof at the northwest hip. It is faced with stucco, with inset metal louvers and metal cap (Field Photo #4).

7. Openings -

   a. Doorways and Doors: At the Main (First) Street facade, three sets of double doors with round arched fan light transoms over horizontal two-light transoms are inset behind the entry colonnade. Each door has four divided lights in the top half, and one single flush panel below with painted plywood obscuring the base panels. The fan shaped transom lights have been obscured with paint (Photo #5 & Field Photo #103). The doors and horizontal transoms are replacements designed in 1939.[53] The original doors were similar, but lacked the fixed horizontal transom and were more detailed in profile (Photo #30).

      At the Broadway facade, the single pair of doors and transoms match those of the Main Street facade within a round arched opening (Photo #1 & Field Photo #92). The doors in this opening are replacements like those

---

[53]Blueprints for this work are stored in the building's basement.

described above. Below grade, a single metal panel door with wrought iron grille and metal panelled transom leads to the basement (Field Photo #90).

There are no doors on the northeast facade.

At the southwest facade, aluminum frame and glass doors at the former loading dock obscure the original door area (Photo #6 & Field Photo #108). At this facade, double panel wood doors with divided lights above provide access to the basement below grade.

b. Windows and Shutters - All windows are wood double-hung six-over-six-light or eight-over-eight-light sash divided with plain mullions and muntins with either horizontal two-light transoms or fan light transoms. The fan light transoms have twelve panes radiating vertically from the central base and divided in half horizontally in a semi-circle. The transom lights are obscured with paint. On the rear facade are triple four-over-four light sash in a segmental arched opening. The sash replaces original wood casements with divided lights in six-light vertical panels (Photo #1, #6, #9, & #30, & Field Photos #93, 94, 95). The replacements were designed in 1939.[54] Metal panels or shutters obscure some of the basement sash (Field Photo #111).

c. Blind Niches/Niches - There are two lookout galleries and stairs from the basement to the first floor flanking the former Post Office work room. These have narrow metal ladders that lead to a platform overlooking the workroom through cast metal grilles that resemble air vents. They were used by the postal inspectors to observe operations in the work room secretly (Photo #29 & Field Photo #24 & #25).

8. Roof -

a. Shape, Covering, Type and Materials: The roof is a low-pitched wood-framed hip roof with flat roof deck covered by Spanish/Mission Style red clay tile (Photo #30 & Field Photo #4).

---

[54]Blueprints for this work are in the building's basement.

b. Cornice, Eaves, Materials, Form, Notable Features and Gutter System: There is a molded terra cotta cornice, deep overhanging bracketed wood eaves with paneled soffit and solid scrolled wood brackets (Photo #30). Copper gutters feed through copper scuppers and downspouts at the northeast and southwest corners of the building. The downspouts feed into a molded concrete gutter with splash blocks at the ground that drains through the curb, under the sidewalk and to the street.

D. Description of Interior -

1. Floor Plans: See 8-1/2" X 11" sketch floor plans noting photo angles, and photos matching numbers noted on the plans included herein.

2. Stairways: The central stair system begins at the first floor at the Broadway Street side of the building near the center by the elevator and proceeds up through the attic to the roof. The stairs from the basement to the first floor are concrete with pipe railings encased in brick walls. They are accessed at the first floor through the janitor's closet off of the entry foyer. From first to third floors, the stair treads are terrazzo, with panelled metal risers, grey marble base, natural wood handrail with acorn termini (Photo #24 & Field Photo #77) attached to inside plaster walls with metal brackets and newer added wood handrails on outside plaster walls (Field Photo #6). From third floor through the attic to the roof, the steps and risers are wood, with wood handrails attached to stucco walls with metal brackets (Photo #24 & Field Photo #75). The stairs to the mezzanine, at the third floor corridor, are carpeted and have a center pipe railing, with spindle wood railing and squared columns at the mezzanine deck (Photo #25 & Field Photo #61).

   Another single flight of stairs from the north corner of the basement to the first floor has been sealed preventing access (Photo #29).

3. Attic: The attic is a large, open space with wood roof framing visible, enclosed machine room for the elevator, HVAC equipment platform with metal pipe railing, and several presumably original doors and windows stored on the attic floor (Photo #29 & Field Photo #76).

4. Flooring:

   a. Basement - All of the basement floors are concrete.

   b. First floor - The corridor floor is a grey and white terra cotta field with pink Tennessee marble banding and central carpet runner. There is a grey and white terrazzo floor at the original restroom. There is carpeting in offices and former Post Office work room that may cover an original floor finish.[55] The new restroom has a ceramic tile floor (Photo #15, #16 & Field Photo #9, 10, 16).

   c. Second floor - The corridor, offices and courtroom have been carpeted. Original plans do not specify the flooring for these areas. There is linoleum or vinyl tile at entry corridor and in the newer rest rooms. There is a grey and white terrazzo floor at the original rest room (Photo #20, #21, #22, #23 & Field Photo #42, 43, 44, 46, 48).

   d. Third floor - Linoleum or vinyl tile with central carpet runner at is the flooring at corridors. There is no carpet runner on the linoleum or vinyl tile in the detention area. There is a grey and white terrazzo floor in the original restroom, and carpet in the perimeter offices (Photo #25 & Field Photo 60, 61, 63, 64, 67).

   e. Attic - The attic has a wood floor.

5. Wall & Ceiling Finishes:

   a. Basement - The basement has running bond brick columns and common bond brick walls, with newer wood frame partitions with sheet rock walls. The ceilings are of plaster with suspended ceilings in one area (Photo #12, #13, & #14 & Field Photo #81, #82, #83). There are grey marble partitions for shower stalls in the basement where plumbing fixtures are being stored.

---

[55]Grace Crane's notes indicate her suspicion that the floor in the Magistrate Courtroom (former Post Office work area) may be "PO parquet" under the carpeting. Flooring for that area is not specified on the original plans.

b. First floor - Walls at the first floor are primarily painted plaster with new partitions of gypsum board having a similar finish to the plaster walls. There is a molded wood chair rail 4' high with recessed round-arched panels, crown mold at main corridor. The offices have plaster walls with dropped ceiling and light panels. The wall curves into plaster ceiling above the dropped ceiling panels to form a cove. The main corridor plaster ceiling is still lime-coated, causing later paint to peel. There is a 10" wood base mold in the offices. The corridor has a grey 14" marble base mold (Photo #15, #16, #17, #18, #19).

c. Second floor - The second floor has painted plaster walls with new partitions of gypsum board or wood sheet panelling in perimeter offices. There is a wood chair rail, a simple crown mold, and picture molding in corridor, but the ceiling seems to be somewhat lower than expected, perhaps to accommodate air conditioning ducts to the courtroom. There are grey marble partitions at the original toilet. The court reporter's office still has a wood chair rail and picture molding and retains its original ceiling height with the plaster wall coving into the plaster ceiling. The courtroom has been enlarged and has a new walnut veneer bench and rail.[56] This new bench, on a raised platform off-center with the wall, the new panelling at the rear wall and new panelled rail are quite modern in appearance compared to the red gum molded rail, squared balusters and panelled posts of the original courtroom details. Originally, the judge's bench was centered on the opposite wall in its 1914 configuration (Photo #37). The original coffered ceiling and wood chair rail remain in the courtroom. The coffer pattern reflects the structural grid of the building. Sliding pocket door frames have been retrofitted with padded, vinyl-upholstered swinging doors with single diamond-shaped glass panes for sound-proofing the courtroom (Photo #20 & #21).

The judge's offices are newly wood-paneled and many walls are covered with built-in book cases, with dropped ceiling and light panels. The plaster wall curves into the plaster ceiling above to form a cove (Field Photo #52, #53).

---

[56]Blueprints of the drawings for this work are stored in the building's basement.

d. Third floor - Painted plaster walls and ceilings are also on the third floor, with dropped lay-in ceilings in some offices and part of the detention area. The plaster walls join the plaster ceiling at the cove joint above. There is a wood chair rail in the corridor and offices, and a picture mold in most of the offices and in the detention area. The original grey and white terrazzo floor remains in the original restrooms (Photo #25 & #26 & Field Photo #62, 63, 64).

e. Attic - The wood framing of the hip roof is exposed in the attic. Purlins are 6" X 10" lumber, posts are of 6" X 6" lumber, inclined rafters are 2" X 10" lumber, spaced at 1'4" on center. Deck rafters are 2' X 8" lumber spaced 1'4" on center. Hip rafters are 4" X 14" lumber. The wall plate is of 3" X 10" lumber, spliced at the ends and anchored to the wall with 2'0" X 3/4" anchor bolts at 4'4" on center. There is some beaded board panelling on the wall near the stair to the roof (Photo #31 & #32).

6. Openings:

a. Doorways, Doors, Transoms - Original doors are varnished dark wood with simple casings and squared openings, except the double doors at the two main entries which are framed by engaged columns to the springline of a round arched molding over each door (Photo #15 & #16). These main entry doors, as mentioned earlier, are 1939 replacements of the originals. The wood used for the original doors and trim appears to be mahogany. The doors have frosted glass at the top panel and a single raised panel below, with a frosted glass operable transom (Photo #17). The courtroom at the second floor corridor has sliding pocket doors (Photo #21 & Field Photo #40). These openings have also been retrofitted with swinging padded doors with a single diamond-shaped window pane in the top part of each door. The padded doors provide an acoustical barrier between the courtroom and the hall. The windows in the padded doors help prevent collisions between persons entering or leaving from opposite sides of the doors. Several corridor door assemblies include frosted glass side lights. Some early doors have entablature-type trim at the top rather than transoms (Photo #18 & Field Photo 10). For the most part, original doors remain.

New doors in some office areas are obviously new, slab doors with very simple frames at the first floor where new partitions divide the former Post Office space. They

are also found on the second floor where new openings have been cut or new partitions built in the judge's, district attorney's and clerk's office areas and in the basement in new partition walls. Fire doors at stair halls are metal with metal frames and their partitions have reduced the size of the foyer spaces from 10' X 14' to 10' square, and cut away the corner of the bottom step at the first floor. Elevator doors are wire-glass and paneled metal at the first through the third floors. There is a painted metal gate at the basement instead of the metal and glass doors. The cab has an expanding bronze gate (Photo #11 & Field Photo 12, 13). Original basement doors are two-paneled, some with original lettering designating the area's earliest use (Photo #12).

b. Windows - Most, if not all, the windows were replaced in 1939, but the original transoms were retained.[57] The original windows were wood casements with divided lights in six-light vertical panels. The fan lights with eight or twelve radiating panes or two-light squared transoms now hang over double-hung, six-over-six light and eight-over-eight light wood sash.

Transom lights and several window panes on the southwest side to the hearing room have been painted to obscure the glass or are obscured with painted wood panels, probably because the intense south Texas sun caused too much heat gain in the building. Even with the generous transom areas blocked, the perimeter rooms receive a great deal of natural light from the large windows, and the central corridor enjoys natural light from the stair foyer and, at first floor, from the Main (First) Street foyer. Basement windows are primarily small, horizontal wood windows with divided lights. Solid metal panels or shutters cover some basement openings (Field Photo 111). Angle irons at some windows were installed in World War II to hold "black-out" screens.[58]

---

[57]Blueprints for this work are stored in the building's basement.

[58]Crane, field notes.

Artificial lighting is provided by pendant bowl fixtures in corridors that replaced dropped, fluorescent fixtures in the mid-1960s. Some of the fluorescent fixtures remain in perimeter offices, and rooms with lay-in suspended ceiling panels have fluorescent lighting in some of those panels. The only original light fixtures inside appear to be those remaining in the detention area of the third floor (Field Photo #67) and in the basement and the 1935 elevator (Photo #11, #12, #13, #14). No evidence of sky lights has been found.

7. Decorative Features and Trim: Original post office boxes and trim have all been removed from the building since the post office moved out in the mid-1960s. No photographs of this elaborately detailed wall have been found, but the original plans show panelled screens with pilasters, brass grilles at windows and a central wood clock case within the framework of the round arches on squared columns along the hall (Photo #30 & #31).

The original elevator by Otis Elevator Company in New York had a domed cab with Greek key patterned grille, single paneled metal lower walls and gate and metal grille on all four sides of the top half.[59] The outer doors were paired metal doors with five wired glass lights in each door.[60] The elevator cab that replaced the original elevator has painted metal panel walls, bronze Greek key design grille and light fixture (Photo #11 & Field Photo #80) and dates from 1935.[61]

The brass electrical panel and frame in the second floor corridor is an original feature and was one of the "typical details" developed by Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor for use in federal buildings across the country (Field Photo #41).[62]

Arched openings to stair halls have been enclosed with fire walls and fire doors in response to safety regulations and new space requirements.

---

[59]Shop drawing photo stored in the building's basement.

[60]Page E-21 of drawings stored in the archives of the General Services Administration, Field Office, Region 7, Fort Worth, Texas.

[61]Blueprints for this work are stored in the building's basement.

[62]Ibid.

8. Hardware: Original interior door assemblies retain their original hardware, including most transom hardware. There are even two extension poles with original hardware to open and close exterior transoms remaining in the building (Photo #26). Hinges, door knobs and plates are simple, large-scale brass hardware. Transom hardware appears to be iron (Photo #17 & Field Photo #34). Courtroom doors at the second floor corridor have simple cast brass escutcheons (Photo #21 & Field Photo #40). Exterior door hardware dates to 1939.[63] Many of the original plumbing fixtures remain (Photo #22 & #23).

9. Mechanical and Electrical Equipment:

   a. Heating, Electric Air Conditioning, Ventilation - The building has been heated via a boiler in the basement and steam radiators since construction (Photo #22, #26). The boiler has been replaced at least once. Piping in the basement is labeled and is marked "asbestos insulation free." Cooling has been provided in more recent years by window unit air conditioners. Only the second floor court area has central airconditioning and heating, with equipment located in the attic. This work was done in the 1960s.[64] The fact that very little of the building has central heating and cooling systems has probably helped to account for so many of the ceilings being at original heights.

   b. Wiring for electricity has been updated through the years. All lighting is electric, although there is evidence in the building of piping for gas lighting. Often early Twentieth Century buildings had electric lighting, with gas lighting providing alternative lighting for the less dependable electricity. The original conduit and lighting plan shows a symbol for an outlet at each of the locations where pipe stubs are still found, but they are not connected to anything on the drawings (Photo #36). The specifications state that there was no gas service in the city and that the service connection would not be made.[65] No photographs of fixtures or other evidence of fixtures that may have been installed at these locations has been found.

---

[63]Ibid.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Partial specification book stored in the building's basement, 35.

c. Plumbing has been added near rooms which were originally plumbed for rest rooms. Original rest rooms contain original fixtures, though repairs and replacement of lines may have occurred (Photo #22 & 23). No original rest rooms have been removed or remodeled, but new, modern ones have been added, according to Mr. Calvetti. What appear to be original plumbing fixtures are stored in the building, stacked inside marble-partitioned stalls of an unused restroom. The sewer changed from a septic system on the grounds to city sewer in the 1920s, with an ejection pump for the sewer located in the small pump house dependency north of the building outside.[66]

d. Elevator - The original elevator was installed by Otis Elevator Company in 1913. The system was updated, and a new cab and penthouse was installed, in 1935.[67] The 1935 elevator is still functional (Photo #11).

10. Original Furnishings: The only decorative (though functional) items not discussed above include the first floor paneled wood writing desk used by postal patrons while standing which is mounted with scrolled open wood brackets and paneled with bevelled glass-covered green felt (Photo #19 & Field Photo #8) and the wood framed built-in bulletin board with green felt backing and glass panelled door (Field Photo #9), both of which are in the first floor corridor. There was a matching desk near the remaining one that was removed and replaced by a door (Photo #15 & Field Photo #10, door at left of frame).

No original window coverings or carpeting remains and no historic photos of the interior have been found showing original furnishings, but the benches in the courtroom may have been an early feature. They are quarter-sawn golden oak with recessed paneled end pieces and center supports with open squared spokes in the back rest (Photo #20 & Field Photo #51).

---

[66]Page RP-34 of drawings stored in the archives of the General Services Administration, Field Office, Region 7, Fort Worth, Texas.

[67]Ibid., Sheet no. 35.

E. Site:

1. The building is sited on two lots and part of a third lot at the corner of two major downtown streets, its two primary facades facing southwest (Main, formerly First, Street) and southeast (Broadway Street).

2. The two primary facades are bordered by original pink stained concrete side walks with low curbed retaining walls to provide a level lawn up to the building. A molded concrete drainage system around the building perimeter which appears on the 1930s landscape plan has been altered by the addition of a drain line that cuts through the original curb at the Broadway side (Photo #1 and landscape sketch field plan). The property is delineated by an original continuous concrete curb (Photo # 38).

   The northwest (rear) facade overlooks the original parking lot, which was initially macadam-surfaced and is now stamped concrete pavers, entered from Main (First) Street. The parking area now extends to the northwest lot line. The landscaping, installed in the mid-1930s, has retained few original plants (see notes on landscape sketch field plan). The curbed beds remained bare until the 1930s. Only the large magnolia tree on the Broadway Street side and the privet hedge seem to have been specified on the 1930s plan, but all of the trees on the site are mature and may have been substituted for those specified. An undated original planting plan for the building by Frank E. Stiles of Del Rio shows numbers at plant locations but does not provide a key or legend.[68] A flagpole has been aded near the Broadway Street entrance since 1948.

3. Outbuilding: A small-scale one-story rectangular structure with gabled clay tile roof, stucco walls, circular gable end vents and entrance facing southwest is first noted on the 1930 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Del Rio at the northern corner of the main building (Photo #110). It is noted on the 1936 landscape plan as a pump house (Photo #38) and is still used for that purpose today, according to Mr. Calvetti. It is also used for storage.

---

[68]This plan is stored in the building's basement.

III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings: Approximately 95% intact on linen, stored in the archives of the General Services Administration, Field Office, Region 7, Fort Worth, Texas.

B. Early Photographs, Renderings, etc.: A 1948 photo of the building has been located at the Texas State Archives in Austin. It has been copied and a 4" X 5" archival print is provided ((Photo #27). Two other xerographic copies of building photos taken during construction in 1912 which appeared in later news articles about Del Rio history, an aerial view from the 1930s and a 1969 flood photo of the Broadway Street side were located at the Val Verde County Library, but to date originals have not been located. Two other original 8" X 10" historic photos have been purchased at the request of the General Services Administration. They are views showing the building being framed and under construction by a Del Rio photographer named Rose ca. 1912. The photos were purchased from Ned Coleman, 4102 Valley View Road, Austin, Texas 78704. They are located in the Field Records of this report. No interior photos or early renderings have been located, other than a news photo showing the interior being painted in 1977 (in a Del Rio *News Herald* collection of 4" X 5" negatives at the Whitehead Museum in Del Rio).

C. Interviews: (all Del Rio residents)

1. Postmaster Dale Prescott - current Del Rio postmaster.

2. Mr. Frank Centilli - retired postal worker with memories of the old post office from the 1920s.

3. Mr. & Mrs. E. Robuck Daughtry - local historians who donated xerographic copies of news articles from the The Del Rio Times Herald to the Val Verde County Library containing 1912 construction photos. The Daughtrys have not been able to locate the original photos.

4. Mr. Michael Baker - local historian who spoke at the new Post Office opening in the 1980s. Mr. Baker had a good historic photo of the building, but loaned it to Congressman Bustamente's staff, who reportedly lost it.

5. Mr. Dan Bus - local historian and retired editor of the The Del Rio Times Herald (from 1960-1974 & 1982-1992); is very interested in the building's preservation and introduced me to other local sources.

6. Mr. Arturo Gonzales - elderly attorney who knows some of the past judges and U.S. Marshalls headquartered in the building.

7. Mrs. Jewell McDowell Smith - daughter of Bert James McDowell, early Customs officer, U.S. Marshall & Postmaster whom she credited with having the grounds landscaped in the 1930s.

8. Mr. Joe Labadie - past Val Verde County Historical Commission Chairman & National Park Ranger.

9. Ms. Barbara Hambrie - reference librarian, Val Verde County Library, Del Rio.

10. Ms. Lee Lincoln - Director, Whitehead Museum, Del Rio.

11. Judge Homer Thornberry - former judge for Western District of Texas.

12. Mrs. Jacqueline Buchanan - former Weather Bureau employee at the building during World War II.

13. Mr. Arturo Calvetti, Del Rio federal buildings manager.

14. Judge Durwood Edwards, Federal Magistrate, officed in the building before the new Federal Building was completed and is very interested in the future of the old building.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary & Unpublished Sources Not Listed Above:

   a. Thirteen pages of original drawings & surveys on linen from 1911 to 1914 remain in General Services Administration Archives, Field Office, Region 7, Fort Worth, Texas.

   b. Twenty-four pages of original drawings on linen & mylar from 1922 to 1971 and "General Building Profile as of 9/16/92" remain in General Services Administration Archives, Field Office, Region 7, Fort Worth, Texas. Additional drawings, blueprints and blueline prints stored in the building basement are listed in notes taken at the site, copies of which are included under III.H of this section.

   c. One page list of Del Rio Post Office Postmasters provided by the Historian, Corporate Information Services, United States Postal Service (January 29, 1993).

d. Seven pages of field notes made by Grace Crane of General Services Administration, Field Office, Region 7, on a site visit to the building June 24, 1992.

e. "Del Rio Post Office, 1948," L.L. Cook Photo Collection, #1968/89-511, Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas.

f. Val Verde County Library: Historical files, U.S. Customs file (correspondence from Customs Officer Luke Dowe in 1913).

2. Secondary Sources:

Carmen, Michael Dennis. U.S. Customs and The Madero Revolution. Southwestern Studies, Monograph #48. The University of Texas at El Paso, 1976.

Craig, Louis & the staff of the Federal Architecture Project, The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics and Symbols in the United States Government Building. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1977.

Del Rio City Directory, for the years 1900, 1928, 1929, 1933-34, 1935, located at the Val Verde County Library, Del Rio, Texas.

Harris, Cyril M., ed. Historic Architecture Sourcebook. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1977.

La Hacienda, an official Bicentennial publication compiled by the Whitehead Memorial Museum, Del Rio, Texas, 1976.

Roper, Daniel C., The United States Post Office: Its Past Record, Present Condition and Potential Relationship to the New World Era. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1917.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for the City of Del Rio, 1905, 1909, 1917, 1924, 1930, located in the Barker History Center, Austin, Texas.

Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide. Dallas, Texas: A.H. Belo & Co., 190, 1911, 1912, 1916.

The Del Rio News Herald, Del Rio, Texas (sporadic archives date back to 1929 on microfilm).

Val Verde County Library: People files, 8/1/68 News Herald clipping, obit. for U.S. Marshall W. E. Riggs; 8/13/72 News Herald clipping, "James Riggs Comes Home as Senior Customs Agent".

Webb, Walter P., ed., The Handbook of Texas. Austin, Texas: The Texas State Historical Association, 1952.

E. Likely Sources to Investigate Further:

National Archives, Suitland Reference Branch (NNRR), Textual Reference Division, has located approximately 3500 pages of information concerning the Del Rio Post Office and Courthouse dating from 1910-1933 that would be available to a researcher in their research room at the Washington National Records Center, 4205 Suitland Road, Suitland, Maryland, about one mile from the District of Columbia line (Southern Avenue). Research room hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Monday through Saturday, except legal holidays. This office can be contacted by telephone at (301) 763-7411 no later than 2:00 p.m. Friday to request records for Saturday.

F. Federal Sources Consulted with No Data on the Building or its History:

Richard Fusick, National Archives Civil Reference Branch, Washington, DC.

Georgette Wilson, HABS/HAER/NPS, Washington, DC

Library of Congress Prints & Photographic Division, Reference Desk, Washington, DC

G. Project Information:

This project was sponsored by the United States General Services Administration, Field Office, Region 7. The project's prime contractor was WSM Architects of Austin, Texas. The subcontractor was David Hoffman & Co., Architects and Consultants, of Austin, Texas. Field photographs were taken by Binnie Hoffman of David Hoffman & Co. in December, 1992. Large format photographs and lithographs were shot, processed and printed by Geno Esponda of Esponda Photography, Austin, Texas, in June, 1993. Sketch maps of photograph locations and the landscape field notes sketch were made by University of Texas at Austin architecture graduate student Robert Donnelly.

H. Supplemental Material:

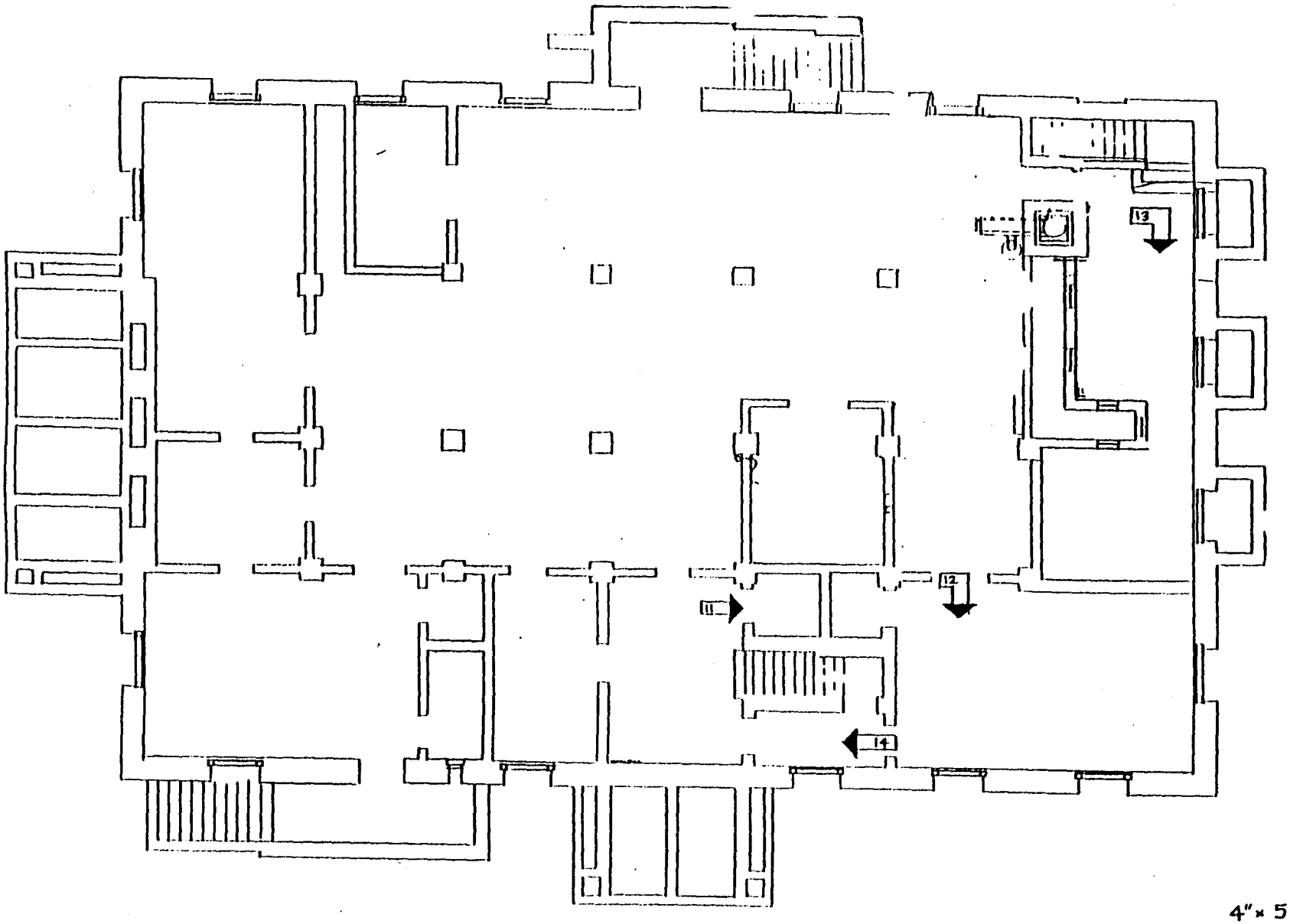
See attached.

Prepared by: Binnie Hoffman
Preservation Consultant
David Hoffman & Co.,
Architects and Consultants
2401 Vance Lane
Austin, Texas 78746

June 29, 1993

I. General Services Administration is sending original blueprints found in the building to the National Archives in Washington, DC.

August 4, 1993



BASEMENT PART PLAN

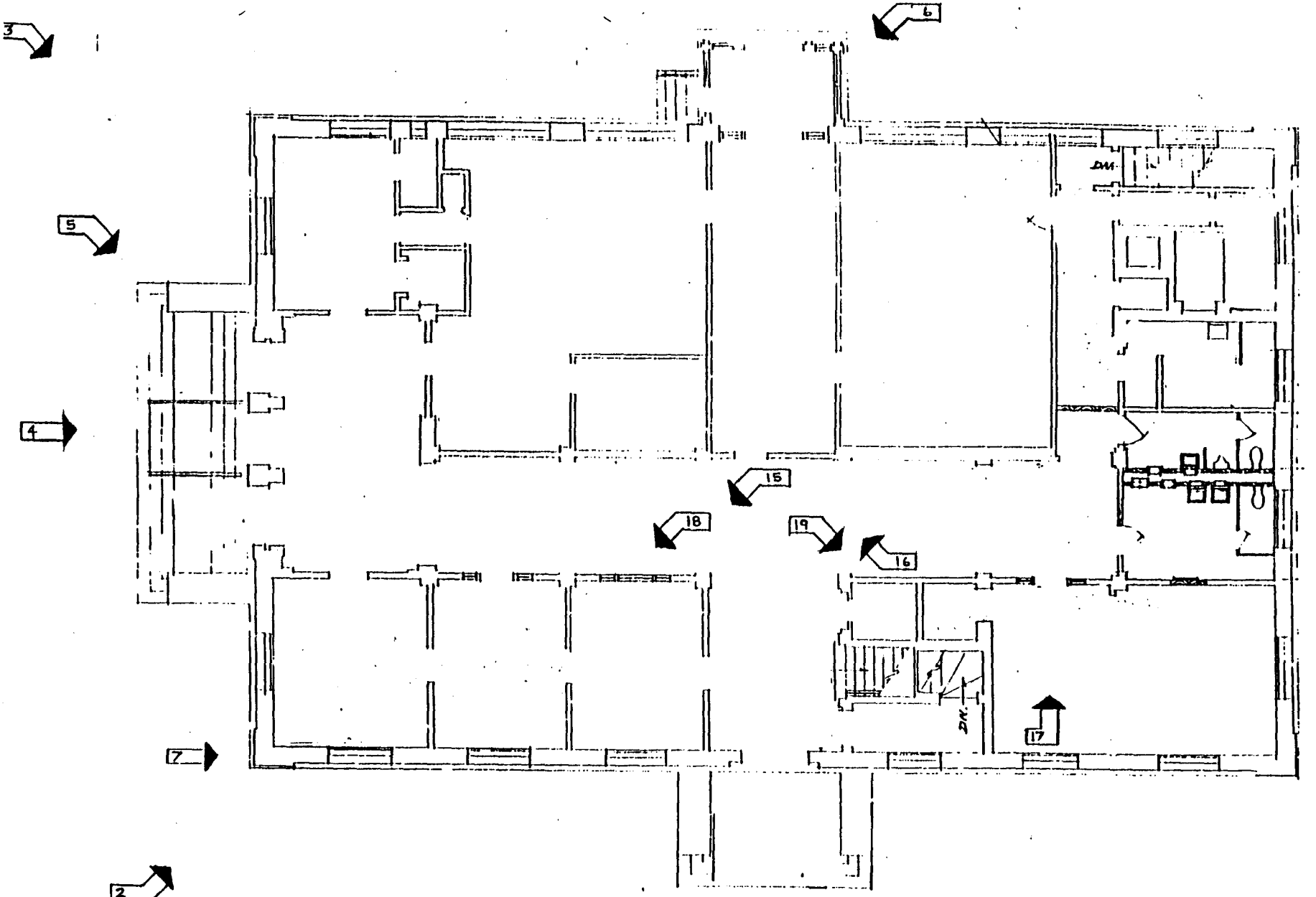
OLD DEL RIO FEDERAL BUILDING
100 EAST BROADWAY
DEL RIO , TEXAS

4"× 5" PHOTO LOCATIONS

PLAN NORTH

NOT TO SCALE

DEL RIO FEDERAL BUILDING
HABS NO. TX-3394
PAGE 33



PLAN - FIRST FLOOR

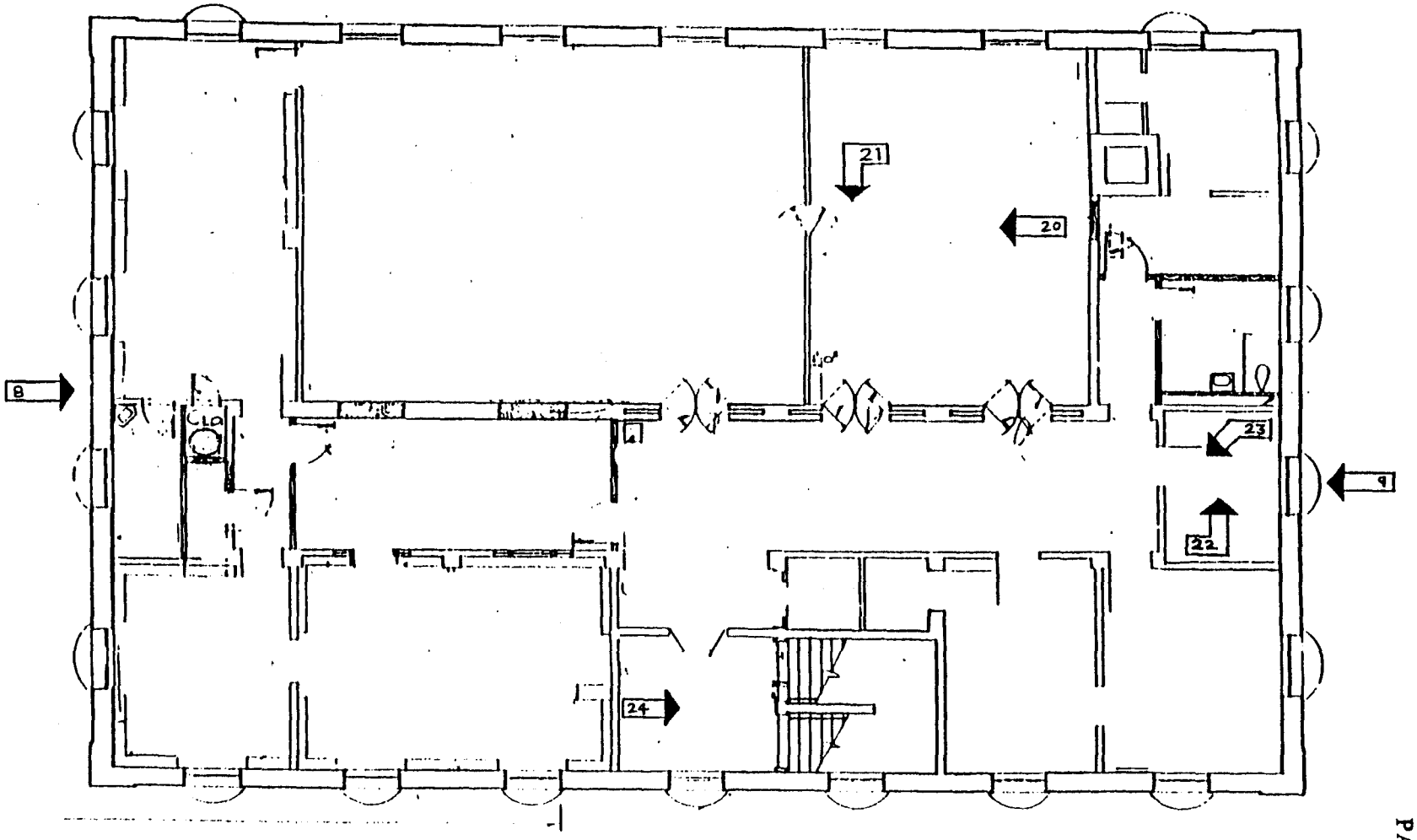
DEL RIO FEDERAL BUILDING
HABS NO. TX-3394
PAGE 34

OLD DEL RIO FEDERAL BUILDING
100 EAST BROADWAY
DEL RIO, TEXAS

NOT TO SCALE

4"x5". PHOTO LOCATIONS

PLAN NORTH



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

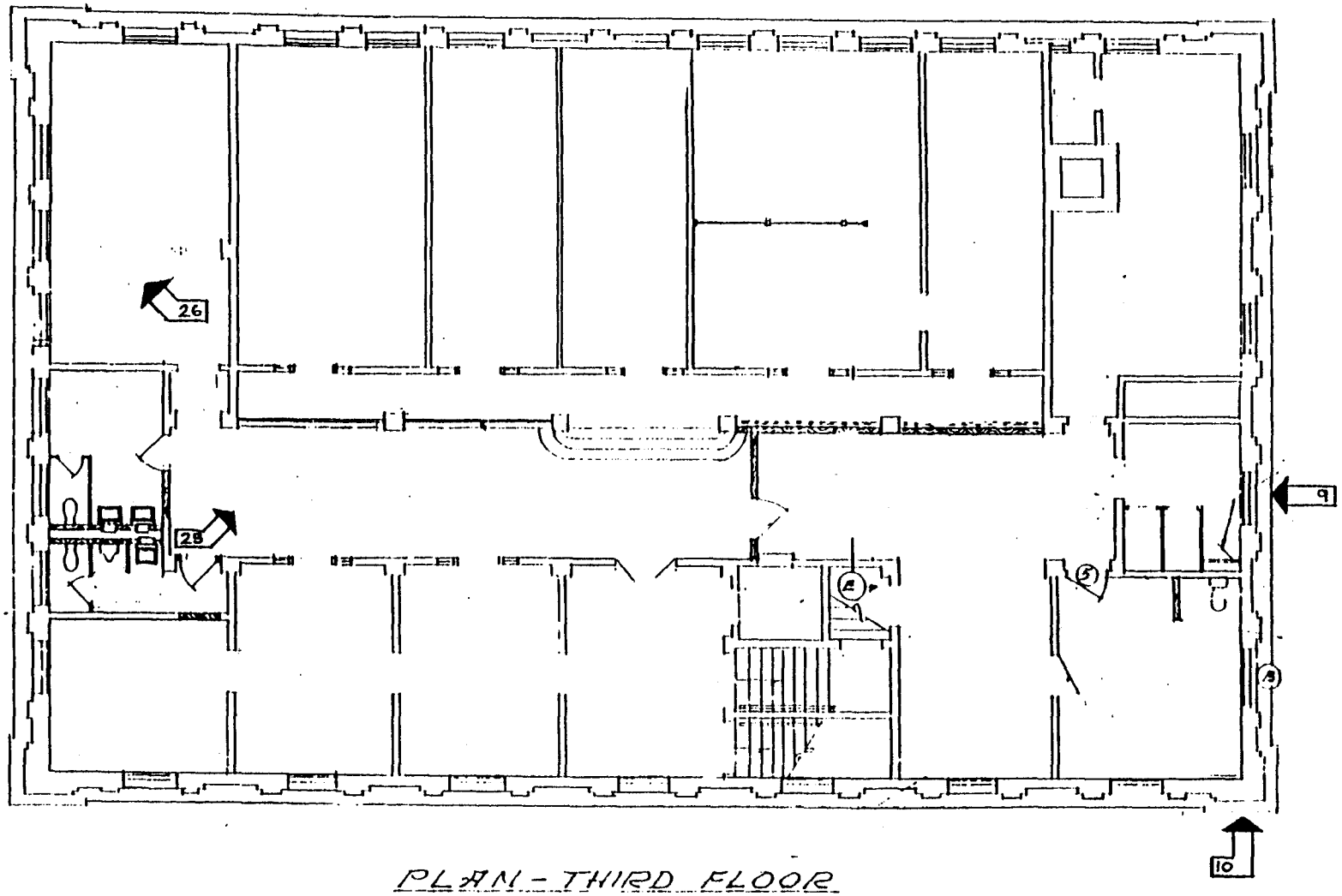
4"x5" PHOTO LOCATIONS

PLAN NORTH

OLD DEL RIO FEDERAL BUILDING
100 EAST BROADWAY
DEL RIO, TEXAS

NOT TO SCALE

DEL RIO FEDERAL BUILDING
HABS NO. TX-3394
PAGE 35



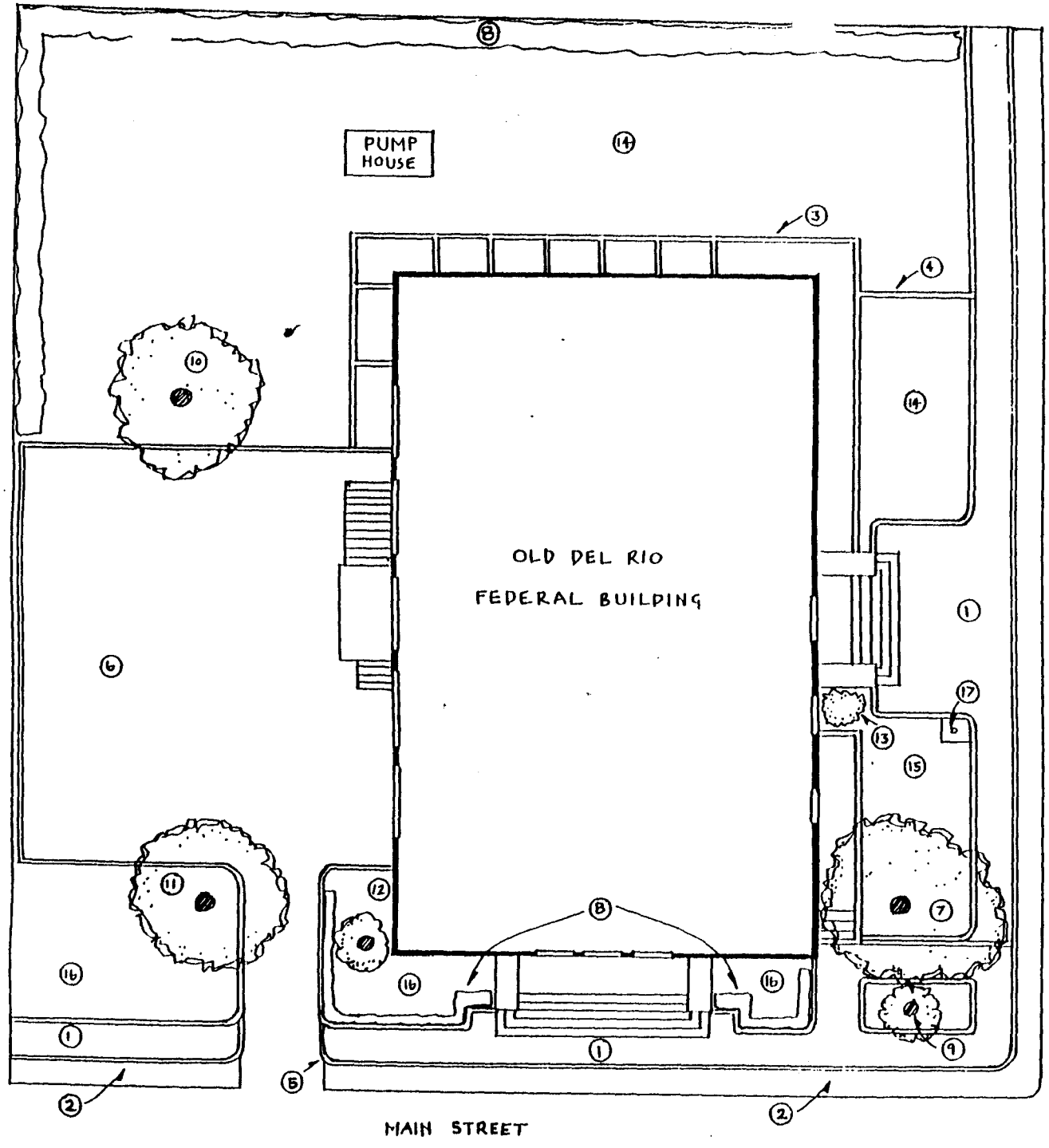
PLAN - THIRD FLOOR

4"x5" PHOTO LOCATIONS

PLAN NORTH

OLD DEL RIO FEDERAL BUILDING
100 EAST BROADWAY
DEL RIO , TEXAS

NOT TO SCALE



LEGEND :

1. ORIGINAL SIDEWALK & CURBING (PINK CAST CONCRETE)
2. SIDEWALK EXTENSION
3. CONCRETE DRAINAGE SYSTEM – 1936 LANDSCAPE PLAN
4. DRAIN EXTENSION CUTS THROUGH ORIGINAL CURB
5. REMNANT OF ORIGINAL TEXAS RED GRANITE CURB
6. EXPANDED PARKING LOT – CONCRETE PAVERS
7. MATURE MAGNOLIA TREE
8. MATURE PRIVET HEDGE
9. MATURE EVERGREEN TREE – SPIRE FORM
10. MATURE EVERGREEN – CONICAL FORM
11. MATURE DECIDUOUS SHADE TREE
12. MATURE LOQUAT TREE
13. PINK TEA ROSE BUSH
14. GRASS
15. ENGLISH IVY
16. BARE SOIL
17. FLAG POLE

PLAN NORTH

OLD DEL RIO FEDERAL BUILDING
100 EAST BROADWAY
DEL RIO TEXAS

LANDSCAPE SIGHT PLAN & FIELD NOTES

DEL RIO FEDERAL BUILDING
HABS NO. TX-3394
PAGE 37