RECEIVED
NOV 30 1987
NATIONAL
REGISTER

Historic Resources of Downtown Gallup
Mckinley County, New Mexico

1. Name: El Morro Theater

2. Location: 205-209 West Coal Avenue
Gallup, New Mexico

3. Classification:
Category building
Ownership private
Status occupied
Accessible yes: unrestricted
Present Use commercial

4. Owner of Property:
Richard Kauzlaric
307 S. Third Street
Gallup, New Mexico 87301

5. Location of Legal Description:
McKinley County Courthouse
205-209 West Hill Street
Gallup, New Mexico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys:
New Mexico Historic Building Inventory
August 1985
New Mexico Historic Preservation Division
228 E. Palace Avenue, Rm 101
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87503

7. Description:
Condition fair
altered
original site

The 1928 El Morro Theater is the only example of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture in Gallup. It was designed by Carl Boller of the Boller Brothers architecture firm of Los Angeles and Kansas City. The Boller Brothers firm was responsible for designing many theaters in the Southwest, Midwest and California. Once described as a "castle of pleasure and art",

the El Morro occupies a prominent location on Coal Avenue and has been the backdrop to many Indian Tribal Ceremonial parades.

This two-story row building has a barrel vault roof, clay tile parapet cap, symmetrical facade and roof drains and corbels. The original street facade is stucco with an inscribed tile-like pattern and false stuccoed keystone-like arch. The main focus of the facade is the central portion consisting of ornate, low-relief, molded, half-round columns (vaulting shafts), architrave and impost moldings, and two architrave windows. On either end of this portion are two porthole-like openings with horizontal wood louvers and decorative plaster molded surrounds. Above is a decorative, low relief, molded plaster parapet with curvilinear gable and molded shields. Four small cone-shaped finials are missing from this area. Along the upper facade is a row of nine arched windows with wooden spindle frieze and six-over-one double hung sash windows. The central window in this configuration is larger, more ornate, and four-lite sidelites. Originally this facade was painted in several colors and will be painted in several colors again during rehabilitation.

The lower portion of the north facade consists of two storefronts, one on each side of the entrance to the theater. The door and window configuration of these storefronts remains as original except that the transoms have been covered and the wooden window frames have been replaced with aluminum. The entrance foyer of the theater is recessed, leading to the original ticket office between two wood and glass entry doors. Decorated with zigzag pattern glazed tile, the ticket booth protrudes into the foyer and is glazed on three sides. The original poster display cases with zigzag pattern glazed tile below are still in use at the front of the theater. The ceiling of the foyer is beamed in a coffer-like pattern with heavily textured plaster panels between. Each beam has been plastered, and decorated with a striated scratch pattern surface texture. The foyer floor consists of small multicolored ceramic tile. The original marquee has been replaced, but will likely be returned to a marquee similar to the original during rehabilitation.

The lobby of the El Morro is rectangular in shape with a snack bar directly across from the entry. Doors on either side of the snack bar lead to the first floor of the theater. Seats slant down toward a slightly renovated stage with no curtain. Originally the stage was surrounded by a large Reuter organ used both for movies and vaudeville. Stairs to the currently unused balcony rise from the east and west ends of the lobby. Also on the balcony level are offices and toilets. Originally there was also a "cry

room" associated with the ladies room, complete with a glass panel so mothers could continue to watch the movie while they comforted their children.

The walls of the El Morro were lavishly decorated with painted murals by David A. Swing of Phoenix. These murals depicted locally important historical scenes; the titles were Onate Passing El Morro, Surrender of Zunis to De Vargas Coronado before Hawaikuh, and Pioneers Passing Navajo Church rock. Unfortunately these works of art have been painted over, but good records exist of how they originally appeared.

The El Morro is among the buildings which will be rehabilitated in the Downtown Gallup Rehabilitation Program. As much as possible it will be taken back to its historical appearance, with the exception of the murals which would be too costly to recreate. Currently it is in fair condition with paint peeling from the exterior. Even before rehabilitation the El Morro Theater is one of the grandest structures in Gallup.

8. Significance:
Area of significance architecture
entertainment
Period of significance 1928

Criterion A important in the entertainment life of Gallup
Criterion C important example of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture in Gallup
Builder/Architect Carl Boller

The 1928 El Morro Theater is architecturally significant for its use of Spanish Colonial Revival styling, and historically significant for its association with the entertainment life of Gallup.

Historically, this theater is, and has been, a mainstay of the entertainment life in Gallup. Originally the stage presented vaudeville and dramatic offerings as wells as motion pictures, with a Reuter organ providing the sound The builders desired that the El Morro would be a place "where you could hear music that would entrance and delight you, and where novelty entertainment would reign supreme". This theater was packed on weekends and brought other parts of the world right into downtown Gallup, both to entertain and to educate.

Although the El Morro was not the first theater in Gallup, it was one of the most lavish. Architecturally, the El Morro is built in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, a period style which appears nowhere else in the city. This type of period architecture was scarce both because it was so exotic (and therefore not broadly applicable to commercial building), and because its detailing was expensive to execute. The developers of the El Morro Theater were able to overcome both these obstacles; the exotic styling was appropriate to a vaudeville and motion picture house, and the Gallup Realty Company which build the structure had great faith that it would prove to be a profitable venture in spite of the cost. In the opening night program, the owners stated that "or destinies are cast with the destiny of this community, and we are proud to have added to the beauty and brightness, of this, our home".

Of further architectural interest, this building was designed by Carl Boller, a partner in the Boller Brothers architectural firm of Los Angeles and Kansas City. This firm was active in the 1920s and designed more than 90 theater buildings through the Midwest, Southwest and California.

The theater is currently being rehabilitated to more closely conform to its historic appearance. This work will reinforce the structure's role as a local civic landmark.

9. Major Bibliographical References:
See continuation sheets

10. Geographical Data: The nominated property consists of the west 2.7' of the south 84.1' and the west .3' of the north 55' of Lot 2, all of Lots 3 and 4, and the east 5' of Lot 5 of Block 44, of the Original Townsite.

Quadrangle Name: Gallup East
Quadrangle Scale: 7.5 minute
Acreage: less than one acre
UTM References:
Zone 12 Easting 704740 Northing 3933630

8700 2221

WASO Form - 177
("R" June 1984)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

El Morro Theater (Downtown Gallup MRA)
McKinley County
NEW MEXICO

Nationwide Review
NOV 30 1987

Working No. _____
Fed. Reg. Date: _____
Date Due: 12/31/87 - 1/14/88
Action: ___ ACCEPT
✓ RETURN 1-14-88
___ REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☒ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria Return
Reviewer Boland
Discipline Historian
Date 1/14/88
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: ✓ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition
☐ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair
☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one
☐ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one
☐ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance *(in one paragraph)*

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context — was this the town's first theater, as implied in the cover form (Item 8, p 2, last paragraph)?
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

+10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References

Verbal boundary description and justification Please be specific - what part of "Lots 2 and 5 are being nominated?

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed Beth Grosvenor Boland Date 1/14/88 Phone: _____

GPO 918-450

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet

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9. Major Bibliographical References:
See continuation sheets

10. Geographical Data: The nominated property consists of Lots 3 and 4, partial Lots 2 and 5, Block 44, of the Original Townsite.
Quadrangle Name: Gallup East
Quadrangle Scale: 7.5 minute
Acreage: less than one acre
UTM References:
Zone 12 Easting 704740 Northing 3933630

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Duplicate

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Downtown Gallup MRA
State McKinley County, NEW MEXICO

Nomination/Type of Review		Date/Signature
Cover		Keeper _____
1. El Morro Theater	Substantive Review	Keeper Beth Boland 5/16/88
		Attest _____
2. Palace Hotel	Substantive Review	Keeper Beth Boland 5/16/88
		Attest _____
3. US Post Office	Substantive Review	Keeper Beth Boland 5/16/88
		Attest _____
4. Harvey Hotel	Substantive Review	Keeper Beth Boland 5/16/88
		Attest _____
5. Chief Theater	Substantive Review	Keeper Beth Boland 5/16/88
		Attest _____
6. Grand Hotel	Substantive Review	Keeper Beth Boland 5/16/88
		Attest _____
7. Lebanon Lodge No. 22	Substantive Review	Keeper See nomination for Signature 2/14/89
		Attest _____
8. Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Depot	Substantive Review DOE/OWNER OBJECTION	Keeper Beth Boland 8/8/88
		Attest _____
9.		Keeper _____
		Attest _____
10.		Keeper _____
		Attest _____

RESUBMISSION

WASO Form - 177
("R" June 1984)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

El Morro Theater (Downtown Gallup MRA)
McKinley County
NEW MEXICO

Substantive Review

Working No. NOV 30 1987
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/7/89
Date Due: 5/16/88
Action: ✓ ACCEPT 5-16-88
____ RETURN
____ REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

- [x] resubmission
- [ ] nomination by person or local government
- [ ] owner objection
- [ ] appeal

Substantive Review: [ ] sample [x] request [ ] appeal [ ] NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria Accept - A & C
Reviewer Boland
Discipline Historian
Date 5/16/88
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? [ ] yes [ ] no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
[ ] excellent	[ ] deteriorated	[ ] unaltered	[ ] original site
[ ] good	[ ] ruins	[ ] altered	[ ] moved date _____
[ ] fair	[ ] unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- [ ] summary paragraph
- [ ] completeness
- [ ] clarity
- [ ] alterations/integrity
- [ ] dates
- [ ] boundary selection

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance *(in one paragraph)*

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____

GPO 918-450

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet

Ferrari
Keepsake DIAMOND
CENTER
BERRY GORDYS
THE LAST DRAGON
1 3 5 7&9 PM
GALLUP
UPHOLSTERY

EL MORRO THEATER DOWNTOWN GALLUP MRA
GALLUP NM
GREG HICKS 1985
NM-SHPD
CAMERA FACING SOUTH

Please refer to the map in the Multiple Property Cover Sheet for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 645000511

Resub

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION
VILLA RIVERA, ROOM 101
228 EAST PALACE AVENUE
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87503
(505) 827-8320

GARREY CARRUTHERS
GOVERNOR

THOMAS W. MERLAN
DIRECTOR

HELMUTH J. NAUMER
CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICER

March 28, 1988

Jerry L. Rogers
Associate Director
Cultural Resources and Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Post Office Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Enclosed please find the revised nominations and return sheets for El Morro Theater, U.S. Post Office and Palace Hotel (Downtown Gallup Multiple Resource Nomination), McKinley County, New Mexico, which we are resubmitting.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Merlan
State Historic Preservation Officer

TWM/

Enclosures

APR 1 1988