

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

NOV 1986  
NPS/HR

**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

*Historic name:* Federal Building

*Other name/site number:* 1903

**2. LOCATION**

*Street & number:* 341 Pine

*not for publication:* N/A

*City/town:* Abilene

*State:* TX     *County:* Taylor

*code:* 441     *zip code:* 79601

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

*Ownership of Property:* Public-Federal

*Category of Property:* Building

<i>Number of Resources within Property:</i>	<i>Contributing</i>	<i>Noncontributing</i>
	<u>  1  </u>	<u>      </u> buildings
	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
	<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u> Total

*Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:* 0

*Name of related multiple property listing:* Historic and Architectural Resources in Abilene, Texas

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

*Curtis J. Russell*

*2-12-92*

Signature of certifying official

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

*Antonieta J. Bee*

*7/20/92*

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain):

*fa* Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

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*Historic:* Government                      Sub: Courthouse

*Current:* Government                      Sub: Courthouse

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

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*Architectural Classification:* Art Deco

<i>Materials: foundation</i>	concrete
<i>walls</i>	brick; terra cotta
<i>roof</i>	asphalt
<i>other</i>	aluminum

*Describe present and historic physical appearance.  See continuation sheet.*

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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*Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally*

*Applicable National Register Criteria:* C

*Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) :* N/A

*Area(s) of Significance:* Architecture

*Period(s) of Significance:* 1935-1936

*Significant Dates:* 1935-1936

*Significant Person(s):* N/A

*Cultural Affiliation:* N/A

*Architect/Builder:* Castle, David S.

*State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.  See continuation sheet.*

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

*\_x\_ See bibliography for associated historic context.*

*Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A*

- \_ 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:*

- x State historic preservation office (Texas Historical Commission)*
- \_ Other state agency*
- \_ Federal agency*
- x Local government (City of Abilene Planning Department)*
- \_ University*
- x Other -- Specify Repository: Abilene Preservation League*

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

*Acreage of Property:* Less than one acre

*UTM References: Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing*

<i>A</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>431200</i>	<i>3590580</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>__</i>	<i>__</i>	<i>__</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>__</i>	<i>__</i>	<i>__</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>__</i>	<i>__</i>	<i>__</i>

*Verbal Boundary Description:*

Abilene Original Townsite, all of Block 20

*Boundary Justification:*

The boundary includes the area that has been historically associated with the property and that retains its historic and architectural integrity.

**11. FORM PREPARED BY** (assisted by Amy E. Dase, Historian, THC staff)

*Name/Title:* David Moore, Historian

*Organization:* Hardy Heck Moore

*Street & Number:* 2112 Rio Grande

*City or town:* Austin

*Date:* June 1989; January 1992

*Telephone:* 512/478-8014

*State:* TX *Zip:* 78705

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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Historic and Architectural Resources  
of Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

## Description:

The Federal Building in Abilene is a massive 3-story brick, Art Deco building with a square main block flanked by side and rear wings. The concealed roof is flat. The building encompasses much of a city block and its front extends almost the entire length of the block facing North Third and North Fourth streets. Although additions were built onto the south and rear sides, the front section is virtually unaltered.

The front (west) elevation is symmetrically composed with eight vertical bays. The end bays project slightly from the main block and contain the primary entrances. Applied cast stone or terra cotta facing with Art Deco motifs mark the entrances that are set within 2-story tall openings. The six inner bays are delineated by 3-story vertical elements that resemble pilasters and have stylized aluminum sash windows with patterned spandrels between the floors. The parapet contains rich Art Deco detailing including chevron motifs along the cornice.

## Statement of Significance:

The Federal Building, built in 1935-1936, is nominated under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, as one of Abilene's best examples of Art Deco architecture. The building was erected when the local construction industry suffered the effects of the Great Depression and, as a consequence, relatively few buildings were erected in Abilene during the 1930s. This is the largest and most significant building of the era. The building is associated with the historic context "The Railroad and Abilene's Development into a Wholesale and Distribution Center in West Texas, 1881-1939." The building is in good condition and retains its integrity.

While Abilene was still a young community, local leaders lobbied to have a federal building erected in their city. In 1902 when such a building was constructed, it became an important symbol to all Abilenians who proudly boasted that their community had a federal building before their sister city in Kansas.

The 1902 building satisfactorily met Abilene's needs for many years but by the early 1930s a new building was deemed necessary to meet growing demands as well as to provide jobs in the Depression era. On March 22, 1935 Mayor C.L. Johnson broke ground for the new federal building, designed by local architect David S. Castle. The A. Smith Company of Chicago, Illinois served as general contractor and built the building for \$267,500. The Federal Building opened in 1936 and is still used today.

The Federal Building exhibits elements typical of Art Deco architecture, which was a popular design for public buildings. Art Deco design highlights smooth wall surfaces and stylized motifs that are generally geometric.