National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Main Library
Other names/site number: The Public Library Albuquerque and Bernalillo County
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 501 Copper Avenue NW
City or town: Albuquerque State: NM County: Bernalillo Zip Code: 87102

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national X statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___B X C ___D

Dr. Jeff Pappas, New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer

Signature of certifying official/Title: Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official: Date

Title: State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) ____________________

______________________________
Signature of the Keeper

______________________________
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: [ ]
Public – Local [x]
Public – State [ ]
Public – Federal [ ]

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

Building(s) [x]
District [ ]
Site [ ]
Structure [ ]
Object [ ]
Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

<table>
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<th>Contributing</th>
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<th>Structures</th>
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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Education: library

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Education: library
Main Library
Name of Property

Bernalillo, New Mexico
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Other: Brutalism

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Concrete

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph
The Main Library in Albuquerque was designed in the Brutalist style by George Pearl of Stevens, Mallory, Pearl and Campbell Architects (SMPC) and completed in 1975. The three-story 104,577-square-foot library occupies the south half of the city block bounded by Copper and Tijeras avenues and 5th and 6th streets in downtown Albuquerque. The library is built of concrete-floor slabs supported by a grid of concrete columns placed at thirty-six feet on center. The building is clad in brown brick, with floor-to-ceiling tinted glass on most elevations. The building is an east-to-west-oriented rectangle with large, open public spaces which can be reconfigured by moveable walls along tracks integrated into the system of coffered light modules. Offices, meeting rooms, and stairs are located along perimeter walls. Second-floor cantilevered projections house service functions. These projections are defining features of the design. The projection at the corner of Copper Avenue and 5th Street shades the main entrance, which is also denoted by a bush-hammered concrete sign. Basement-level courts are located at each corner for outdoor reading, with the northwest court designed for truck deliveries. Space around the library that is dedicated to Southwest plantings. The interior is organized around the
open public spaces, which are dominated by the system of coffered lights. The walls are brown brick and brown vertical paneling, and many original furnishings remain in public and administrative spaces.

**Narrative Description**

The Main Library was designed by the Albuquerque architect George Pearl in the Brutalist style and completed in 1975. The library occupies the south half of the city block bounded by Copper and Tijeras avenues and 5th and 6th streets in downtown Albuquerque, one block north of the Central Avenue, the city’s principal commercial street. The library was a central component of the 1970 comprehensive plan for urban renewal that includes the Albuquerque Police Department, Albuquerque City Hall, Albuquerque Convention Center, and Civic Plaza.

The Main Library is a three-level concrete-framed building with concrete-floor slabs supported by a grid of concrete columns placed at thirty-six feet on center. The building, which is clad in brown brick, is rectangle-shaped, oriented east to west, with cantilevered projections on each elevation. The grand scale and bold massing are characteristic of the Brutalist style. The main entrance is located at the corner of Copper Avenue and 5th Street in the shade of a cantilevered projection. A bush-hammered concrete sign directs patrons to the entrance.

The library’s three floors feature flexible plans with moveable walls that allow for large, open public spaces. The walls slide along tracks that are integrated into the system of coffered light modules. Second-floor cantilevered projections house service functions. Offices, meeting rooms, and stairs are located along perimeter walls. The building encloses 104,577 square feet on mostly open floors that provide space for the public, administration, and the growing collection.

The first floor is mostly open public space with the circulation desk, stairs, elevators, and bathrooms located along the south wall and offices and meeting rooms situated along the north wall. This floor, which includes space for reading, computers, and stacks, is characterized by the egg-crate appearance of the coffered ceiling lights. The second floor is equally divided between public and administrative spaces by a moveable wall. Large cantilevered projections on each side contain ventilation equipment, administrative offices, and the staff lounge. Small cantilevers at the northeast and southeast corners serve as reading nooks.

The lower level is divided among a meeting room, a children’s section, an auditorium, and space for book storage. This level includes three courts for out-of-doors reading. The courts, which are located at the northeast, southeast, and southwest corners of the library, are set below street level and are sheltered from the noise and “danger of the street.” A fourth service court provides vehicle access to the library.
The interior finishes include brown-brick perimeter walls and interior wall panels of brown vertical boards. Some these panels are moveable. The concrete-slab floors are carpeted. Many of the original furnishings remain, including brightly colored wood-and-vinyl chairs on the first floor and throughout the public spaces of the library. Administrative areas include Eames Aluminum Group Executive Chairs, Eames Sofa Compact, Eames Tulip chairs and tables, and Eames Walnut Stools, manufactured by Herman Miller. The acquisitions department includes original steel desks and cabinets.

The library grounds, as the architect intended, were planted with native plants and deciduous trees. These are most apparent on the south side with thick plantings of yucca, chamisa, native grasses, and pine trees. A sycamore tree is located on the northeast corner and locust trees are planted along most elevations. The courts are planted with pine and cedar trees, butterfly bushes, and native grasses.

In 2006, the main entrance was modified by Cherry/See/Reames Architects to include a tinted-glass entrance lobby. In 2010, the firm reconfigured the space to include a coffee shop. Later, a small, steel bus shelter, a large ART bus shelter with a canvas canopy, and a tall, steel sculpture were added to the library grounds.

Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

Main Library is counted as one contributing building.
Albuquerque Public Library sign is counted as one contributing object.
Landscape features are counted as one contributing site.
Furniture purchased when the library was completed is counted one contributing object.

Sculpture on the library grounds is counted as one noncontributing object.
ART bus shelter is counted as one noncontributing structure.
Metal-and-glass bus shelter on south side is counted as one noncontributing structure.

8. **Statement of Significance**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [x] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years
Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Architecture
Community Planning and Development
Politics/Government
Education

Period of Significance
1975

Significant Dates
1975

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Pearl, George (architect)
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900     OMB No. 1024-0018

Main Library                   Bernalillo, New Mexico
Name of Property                County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Main Library is significant at the state level under National Register Criterion C in the area of architecture because the library, designed by Albuquerque architect George Pearl of the firm Stevens, Mallory, Pearl, and Campbell, is an excellent example of Brutalism, a style of architecture popular in the 1960s and 1970s that emphasized monumental forms built of brick and especially concrete. The Main Library is significant at the state level under National Register Criterion A in the areas of community planning and development and politics/government because the library was a central component of urban renewal plans in Albuquerque in the 1960s and 1970s that reshaped downtown to include Civic Plaza, a new city hall, police department, convention center, and the demolition of blocks of so-called blighted buildings. The Main Library is significant at the state level under National Register Criterion A in the area of education because it incorporates late-20th-century scientific principles of library design and because it represents the city’s commitment to public educational institutions in response to the population boom in the decades after the Second World War. The Main Library meets criteria consideration G because it achieved significance within the last fifty years and is of exceptional importance.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Main Library is significant at the state level under National Register Criterion C in the area of architecture because the library, designed by Albuquerque architect George Pearl of the firm Stevens, Mallory, Pearl, and Campbell, is an excellent example of Brutalism, a style of architecture popular in the 1960s and 1970s that emphasized monumental forms built of brick and especially concrete. The rectangular-shaped building is punctuated by second-floor cantilevered projections and surrounded on all sides by lower-level courts. Its large size, grand scale, and sculptural form belies an interior planned around the needs of the public and library administration, with open floor plans, moveable walls, and clearly located library functions. Where many buildings of this style feature cold concrete interiors, the Main Library is finished with brown brick, brown-wood paneling, and wall-to-wall carpet.

The Main Library is located in one of only two small concentrations of Brutalist buildings in the state. These Brutalist nodes include downtown Albuquerque and the campus of the University of New Mexico. Downtown includes: Albuquerque City Hall, designed by James Liberty and completed in 1968; Albuquerque Police Department, designed by William Ellison and completed in 1972; the Albuquerque Convention Center, completed in the 1960s; and the Main Library.

The University of New Mexico has a significant concentration of Brutalist buildings. UNM and universities across the nation were adding new infrastructure in anticipation of increased in
enrollment as the Baby Boom generation reached college age. In 1966, New Mexico voters passed a bond issue for over $42 million for new academic buildings, land purchases, and other campus improvements for the university system. At UNM, George Pearl designed the Faculty Office and Classroom Building in 1971 as a fortress-like building with battered walls and cantilevered forms. Brutalist buildings on campus also include the Physics Building, designed by the firm Pacheco and Graham and completed in 1971; the Psychology Building completed in 1972; and the Farris Engineering Building, built in 1969. Smaller cities built one or more examples of the style, including Santa Fe with the Manuel Lujan Sr. Building built in 1974, and Taos, with the Courthouse and Administration Complex built in 1970.

The Public Library System in Albuquerque

The first public library in Albuquerque opened in 1901 and was housed in Perkins Hall, a building donated to the city by prominent residents Joshua and Sarah Raynolds with collections provided by local business leaders. After fire damaged this building in 1923, the main library was moved to a new Pueblo-Revival style building on the corner of Central Avenue and Edith Boulevard in 1925. In the decades following the Second World War, the city of Albuquerque experienced significant growth and development. Although manufacturing jobs in Albuquerque lagged behind other western cities, Kirtland Air Base and Sandia Lab continued to grow and employ thousands of residents. Effective booster campaigns promoting the clean air, pleasant climate, rugged beauty, and cultural attractions of New Mexico continued to draw people to Albuquerque throughout the mid-20th century. The remarkable pace of residential development in the city led to the rapid expansion of city services, including new roads, hospitals, public transportation, recreation, schools, and libraries. To keep pace with this growth, the Albuquerque Public Library opened new branches in several newly built suburban neighborhoods, beginning with the Ernie Pyle Memorial Library in 1947, and followed by other satellite branches in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1970, city officials recognized the need for a new downtown branch and issued bonds in 1971 for construction of the Main Library.

The Promise and Problems of Brutalism

The Main Library is a highly visible public building constructed in the avant garde Brutalist style. Brutalism emerged in the United Kingdom and France after the Second World War as a reaction to the delicate and uniform buildings of the International Style. Concrete is its central element because in the war-ravaged economies of Europe, poured-in-place concrete buildings were cheap to build. In Marseilles, Swiss architect Le Corbusier designed a massive, box-framed apartment block. Its solidity is part and parcel of its method of construction. Where the

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3 Ibid.
International Style emphasizes the steel frame that supports a glass curtain wall, Brutalist buildings have no separate structure. The cast-concrete walls are the frame of the building. Some Brutalist buildings are built of brick, but the rough concrete exterior is its defining characteristic. The term, Brutalism derives from the French beton brut, meaning raw concrete. Another popular treatment was hand hammering or bush hammering the concrete into corrugated razor-sharp edges.

In the United States in the early 1960s and 1970s, Brutalism was promoted by a small group of mostly university architecture professors before the style was embraced by the public. Designed by Paul Rudolf, the Yale School of Architecture from 1963, with its soaring towers, is an early example of basic geometry and dramatic scale sometimes described as heroic or monumental. Cantilevered forms became a common feature of the style, as seen the FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C. Floor plans of Brutalist buildings were unique to each structure and were often expressed on the exterior, such as the façade of Boston City Hall.

Brutalism challenged the hegemony of the International Style and it represents a period of experimentation and risk-taking in American architecture. Brutalism embraced individual expression that catered to specific design programs, rather than the repetitive glass boxes of the International Style. In New Mexico, Brutalist buildings appear like those throughout the nation, with their solid, heavy, and monumental forms. The Manual Lujan, Sr. Building in Santa Fe was features a low profile, battered walls, narrow windows, and port cullis-style entrance are reminiscent of 16th-century Spanish star forts.

Brutalism is not without its critics. Inveighing against the style, Prince Charles said, "You have to give this much to the Luftwaffe, when it knocked down our buildings, it didn't replace them with anything more offensive than rubble." Architecture critic Paul Goldberger said of the FBI headquarters, “This building turns its back on the city and substitutes for responsible architecture a pompous, empty monumentality that is, in the end, not so much a symbol as a symptom—a symptom of something wrong in government and just as wrong in architecture.” The public came to dislike the concrete architecture of the 1960s and 1970s, which it regarded as stark, uninviting, intimidating, and antagonistic. Its emphasis on concrete, especially interior spaces, made the buildings cold, dank, and unpleasant places to work.

Many Brutalist buildings were difficult to negotiate because of their complex floor plans. The Yale School of Architecture includes over thirty terraced floor levels, frustrating generations of architecture students. And Brutalist buildings do not usually include ceremonial entrances, but instead the entries are subordinate to the plan. That is, they are often located in unlikely places, resulting in frustrated visitors. The Yale school entrance is discretely tucked away in shadowy cleft on the front of the building and Boston City Hall is entered through a series of brick barricades. The rare architect, such as Louis I. Kahn, designed monumental forms in concrete, but used scale, materials, and light to create warm and inviting interior spaces.
Main Library

Design of the Main Library

In his design for the Main Library, George Pearl focused on the needs of the library administration and the public, which obviated many of the problems that are characteristic of Brutalism. Rather than interior cast-concrete walls, Pearl designed a system of moveable walls for flexibility. Each floor is readily navigated with large, open public spaces and easy-to-locate stairs and elevators. Library functions, such as the circulation desk, reference desk, and the stacks, are obvious and intuitive to visitors. The interior finishes are not concrete, but brown brick, wood paneling, and wall-to-wall carpet for a warm, inviting environment. And the architect included courts for patrons to enjoy the New Mexico sun and read in the out-of-doors. The Main Library is a monumental, but its interior design transcends the problems of most, and the most famous, buildings built in the Brutalist style.

The architect, George Pearl, spent his career in Albuquerque blending modernism and traditional New Mexico architecture. Pearl arrived from Texas in 1949 and quickly embraced the state’s building traditions and culture. He spent his forty-year career as the principal designer for Stevens Mallory Pearl & Campbell, now known as SMPC Architects. Among his early designs was the Albuquerque Civic Auditorium in 1957 in which he used a sand hill to form the massive poured-in-place concrete dome. Later projects include the National Radio Astronomy Observatory on the New Mexico Tech campus in Socorro, Simms Fine Arts Center and theater at Albuquerque Academy. His Brutalist buildings include the college of business on the campus of Eastern New Mexico University in Portales and the Faculty Office and Classroom Building on the campus of the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.4

Main Library and Urban Renewal in Albuquerque

The Main Library is significant at the state level under National Register Criterion A in the areas of community planning and development and politics/government because the library was a central component of urban renewal plans in Albuquerque in the 1960s and 1970s, which reshaped downtown to include Civic Plaza, a new city hall, police department, convention center, and the demolition of blocks of so-called blighted buildings. The Main Library was commissioned in accordance with the 1968 Tijeras Urban Renewal Project. Urban renewal efforts in the United States from the late 1960s to early 1970s provided Albuquerque with $20 million in federal funds to revive the downtown-central business district with modern public facilities. In 1971, the city issued bonds to finance and support the construction of the new downtown library.

The Main Library was to be completed as part of the first phase in a series of urban renewal projects to revitalize the city’s flagging downtown. Albuquerque’s downtown core was the heart of New Town, established after the arrival of the AT&SF Railway in 1880. For roughly eighty years downtown served as the residential, commercial, and civic center for most residents in

Albuquerque. The rapid expansion in population following the Second World War led to a boom in residential construction on the undeveloped mesas to the northeast and west of the central business district. Residential neighborhoods sprang up in these outlying regions, and downtown maintained its status as the central district for shopping, dining, and conducting business through the 1950s as seen in prominent hotels, department stores, and curio shops.  

However, the shift in population to the surrounding mesas, combined with downtown’s narrow streets, traffic congestion, and limited parking drove many city businesses to relocate to the suburbs by 1960.

The pattern of urban flight to the suburbs happened later in Albuquerque than in many Eastern cities, but the city’s response to the deterioration of its downtown with a program of urban renewal was the same as elsewhere in the nation. Urban renewal was a practice established by the Federal Housing Act of 1949 to provide funding for the improvement of cities plagued with any number of undesirable conditions that fell under the blanket of “blight.”  

Max Boruff of the University of New Mexico, School of Architecture and Planning explains:  

> Often blight was used to describe otherwise healthy urban neighborhoods inhabited by a single ethnic group; historic and dilapidated buildings whose owners were either uninterested in renovation or unable to secure funding to do so; heavy, poor, or inefficient traffic flow through central business districts; and nearly any other sociological or psychological issue that was affecting the urban area. A blunt instrument, “blight” provided ready justification for planners’ redevelopment aspirations in the postwar period.  

By the early 1960s downtown Albuquerque was showing signs of deterioration as businesses followed the residential flight to the suburbs. High vacancy rates and neglect of the city’s oldest buildings gave downtown a “blighted” appearance. In 1962, Albuquerque established the City Building Removal Team to address the issue of deteriorated buildings. The Team surveyed approximately ninety buildings and condemned thirty-one. By 1963, the city had demolished twenty-four downtown buildings. Several casualties were local landmarks, which were demolished to make way for parking lots and new development.

The close partnership between city boosters and the city commission had helped to drive the sprawling growth in the years immediately after the Second World War. The chamber of  

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7 Ibid.  
9 Lazzell and Payne, 64. Demolitions included the Hotel Franciscan (1923) and the Alvarado Hotel (1902), built by the Fred Harvey Company.
commerce pursued a strategy of annexation to include the emerging suburbs with the city’s rapidly increasing boundaries. Albuquerque boosters had also embraced the construction of the Interstate highways that crisscrossed the city in the 1960s as another “big city” improvement. This decades-long partnership between business and government contributed to the pattern of Albuquerque’s rapid suburban development and the resulting deterioration of the central business district. Disagreements over the management of Albuquerque’s growth led to a reconfiguration of city government to include a mayor and city council structure in 1972, but the pro-growth partnership survived. The tension between the allied local business owners and city government and the primarily Hispanic downtown residents reached a climax over the issue of urban renewal in the 1960s.

Local business owners funded a study of the downtown area in 1957, seeking to improve traffic congestion and access to the local businesses, which resulted in an unimplemented plan that would have accommodated high pedestrian traffic and displaced the traditionally Hispanic residential population in the Tijeras neighborhood. With the continuing decline of downtown in the years that followed, the city commission established the Albuquerque Metropolitan Development Committee in 1964 to “study the issue of ‘sprawlitis,’ in relation to ‘core’ development.” The Committee published a plan for the redevelopment of downtown in 1966, but resistance from local businessmen prevented its implementation.

Many cities accepted federal urban renewal funds for urban revitalization projects by the 1950s, but Albuquerque initially declined to seek these grants, in part because local politicians and business owners resisted federal involvement in the city’s development. By 1968, despite these objections, and after considerable debate, the city finally received $25 million in federal urban renewal funds for the “Tijeras Urban Renewal Project.” In Albuquerque, city officials targeted the historically Hispanic ethnic neighborhood of Tijeras for urban renewal, labeling it a slum. The plan called for the city to acquire most residential buildings in the downtown Tijeras neighborhood and raze them for commercial development. In response to this plan, residents of Tijeras formed the Citizen Improvement Committee and successfully petitioned for a voice in the Urban Renewal Agency. Their resistance altered plans for downtown and resulted in the retention of most of the Tijeras neighborhood.

Criticism of the Tijeras plan led city planners to quickly rework their initial plans, creating a comprehensive plan in 1970 that focused on the renewal of the central business district. The city plan identified several goals, including the creation of Albuquerque as a leading metropolitan center, catering to pedestrians, developing a sense of place in the downtown region through the use of gateways, and “stimulate interaction between government and citizens to form a better

12 Ibid., 262.
13 Ibid., 268.
14 Ibid., 257.
functioning downtown.”¹⁵ Central to the plan was a large Civic Plaza “fronted by government and institutional buildings that would invite community interaction with city officials.”¹⁶ The first phase of the plan called for the construction of a new main library and parking garage and a pedestrian bridge to the Civic Plaza. This comprehensive plan reflects a modernist planning philosophy based on the goal of restoring the downtown to its former central role in commerce, government, finance, and residential activities.¹⁷ A study by the city in 1972 elaborated on the 1970 plan, adding goals to encourage lifelong learning, promote tourism, and preserve culturally significant architecture.¹⁸

Many aspects of the 1970 comprehensive plan were not realized, but the Main Library, city hall, police department, convention center, and the Civic Plaza were built. In preparation for the remaining projects outlined in the 1970 plan, the city demolished many buildings in the downtown corridor, including half-a-dozen local landmarks. When these projects failed to get implemented, downtown was left with even less potential to entice businesses and residents to return.

The Science of Libraries in the Late 20ᵗʰ Century

The Main Library is significant at the state level under National Register Criterion A in the area of education because it represents the leading edge of library science in the third quarter of the 20ᵗʰ century. The parameters of the design space for 500 patrons and 500,00 volumes. After visiting “twenty of the most conspicuous new libraries in the country,” the architects “talked to librarians, the architects, and library users about the good and the bad aspects of their libraries.” The principal issue shared by these libraries was that “change in library media was rapid and omnipresent and that flexibility of interior space is the preeminent requirement for providing continuously adequate and creative library services.”¹⁹

The architects responded with secondary and administrative functions placed along the perimeter walls, leaving a block-long open, public space interrupted only by structural columns set at thirty-six feet on center. Many of the walls were designed to be moveable for greater flexibility. The coffered ceiling lights included tracts for the walls, air supply and return, and connections to electrical, telephone, and video systems. Flexibility provides patrons with the choice to read out-of-doors in one of three lower-level courts “sheltered from the noise and danger of the busy streets.” The fourth court is devoted to vehicular services, including bookmobiles. The building’s flexible design includes space for future growth in the lower level for collections and

¹⁵ Boruff, “Downtown Urban Renewal.”
¹⁶ Ibid.
¹⁸ Boruff.
in the second floor for administrative functions. The architects provided for a future third floor with adequate structural support and stairs to the roof, which are now concealed. 20

Criteria Consideration G: Properties that achieved significance within the last fifty years

The Main Library in Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, New Mexico meets National Register Criteria Consideration G because the property has achieved significance within the past fifty years. The library is an exceptional example of the Late Modern architectural style known as Brutalism. The bold, monumental forms constructed of brick and concrete were sensitively incorporated into a modern library with flexible, open floor plans to accommodate a variety of educational functions and lower-level courts to permit reading out-of-doors. The library, a centerpiece of the city’s urban renewal efforts in the 1970s, is a rare example of Brutalism in New Mexico. It is located in one of only two small concentrations of Brutalist buildings in the state. These Brutalist nodes include downtown Albuquerque and the campus of the University of New Mexico and total roughly a dozen Brutalist buildings.

20 Ibid.
9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)


“George Pearl, Albuquerque Public Library, ca. 1972,” Albuquerque Public Library: Bound sketch book preliminary sketches, diagrams and notes, Box 6, Folder 8, George Pearl Papers (MSS 782 BC), Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico.


Smith, Dean P. Interview with authors. Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2017 October 6.
Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____________________________________

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): ____________

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property __1.72 acres__

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)
Datum if other than WGS84: __________
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 35.086156   Longitude: -106.653127
2. Latitude:          Longitude:
3. Latitude:          Longitude:
4. Latitude:          Longitude:
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The National Register boundary appears on the sketch map as a red line drawn to scale and corresponding with the point of latitude and longitude in Section 10.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The National Register boundary includes the intact property historically associated with the Main Library.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Katie Dix, Heidi Pierce, and Alex Rodriguez
organization: University of New Mexico, School of Architecture and Planning, Certificate Program in Historic Preservation and Regionalism
street & number: 1 University of New Mexico
city or town: Albuquerque state: NM zip code: 87131
e-mail: N/A telephone: N/A
date: December 2017

State Historic Preservation Office
name/title: Steven Moffson, State and National Register Coordinator
organization: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division
street & number: 407 Galisteo Street, Suite 236
city or town: Santa Fe state: New Mexico zip: 87501
e-mail: steven.moffson@state.nm.us telephone: 505.476.0444
date: July 30, 2018

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- Maps: A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)
Maps

1. Location Map

2. National Register Boundary Map

Figures

Figure 1. Site Plan and Street Level Plans, “Albuquerque Public Library.” *New Mexico Architecture* 17 (September-October 1975): 16.

Figure 2. Upper and Lower Plans, “Albuquerque Public Library.” *New Mexico Architecture* 17 (September-October 1975): 17.

Figure 3. Section A-A (North-South), “Albuquerque Public Library.” *New Mexico Architecture* 17 (September-October 1975): 15.

Figure 4. George Pearl, Albuquerque Public Library, ca. 1972. “Albuquerque Public Library: Bound sketch book preliminary sketches, diagrams and notes,” Box 6, Folder 8, George Pearl Papers (MSS 782 BC), Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM.

Figure 5. East and north sides, “Albuquerque Public Library.” *New Mexico Architecture* 17 (September-October 1975): 14.

Figure 6. West and south sides, “Albuquerque Public Library.” *New Mexico Architecture* 17 (September-October 1975): 14.

Figures 7. First floor (above) and second floor, *New Mexico Architecture* 17 (September-October 1975): 13

Figure 8. Downtown Albuquerque, 1940s.

Figure 9. Urban Renewal in Downtown Albuquerque.


Figure 13. Civic Plaza (center), one block northeast of Main Library, with Convention Center (upper right), Albuquerque Inn (upper left), Plaza del Sol upper left corner), and City Hall (lower left), 1980s.

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Main Library

City or Vicinity: Albuquerque

County: Bernalillo  State: NM

Photographer: Harvey Kaplan

Date Photographed: July 17, 2017
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 31. South and east sides, photographer facing northwest.

2 of 31. South side with glass entrance additions from Copper Avenue, photographer facing northwest.

3 of 31. Northeast corner from 5th Street, photographer facing southwest.

4 of 31. North side with service court in foreground, photographer facing south east.

5 of 31. Rear (west) elevation with landscaping from 6th Street, photographer facing east.

6 of 31. South side with ART bus shelter, photographer facing north.

7 of 31. Southwest corner with court in foreground, photographer facing northeast.

8 of 31. Southwest corner, with court and landscaping, photographer facing northwest.

9 of 31. Southwest court along Copper Avenue, photographer facing east.

10 of 31. Main entrance with entrance sign, photographer facing northwest.

11 of 31. Interior, first floor, reading room, photographer facing northwest.

12 of 31. Interior, first floor, reading room, photographer facing east.

13 of 31. Interior, first floor, reading room, offices and meeting rooms, photographer facing north.

14 of 31. Interior, first floor, meeting room with original furniture, photographer facing southwest.

15 of 31. Interior, first floor, reading room, circulation desk, photographer facing south.

16 of 31. Interior, first floor, stairs to second floor, photographer facing west.

17 of 31. Interior, second floor, reading room, photographer facing north.

18 of 31. Interior, second floor, administrative offices with moveable walls, photographer facing northwest.
19 of 31. Interior, second floor, window above main entrance, photographer facing southeast.

20 of 31. Interior, second floor, acquisitions department with original desks, photographer facing southwest.

21 of 31. Interior, second floor, acquisitions department with projecting window and original chairs, photographer facing southwest.

22 of 31. Interior, second floor, administration with original furnishings, photographer facing southwest.

23 of 31. Interior, second floor, administration with moveable wall, photographer facing east.

24 of 31. Interior, second floor, administration, conference room, photographer facing east.


26 of 31. Interior, lower level, auditorium, photographer facing southeast.

27 of 31. Interior, lower level, meeting room, photographer facing west.

28 of 31. Lower level, northeast court, photographer facing north.

29 of 31. Lower level, southeast court, photographer facing east.

30 of 31. Lower level, southwest court, photographer facing southwest.

31 of 31. Lower level, northwest service court, photographer facing west.
Main Library
Bernalillo County, New Mexico

Location of Property

Approximate Scale: one inch = 2,300 feet
Main Library
Bernalillo County, New Mexico

National Register boundary

Approximate Scale: one inch = 100 feet
Figure 1. Site Plan and Street Level Plans, “Albuquerque Public Library.” *New Mexico Architecture* 17 (September-October 1975): 16.
Figure 2. Upper and Lower Plans, “Albuquerque Public Library.” New Mexico Architecture 17 (September-October 1975): 17.
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Main Library
Name of Property

Bernalillo, New Mexico
County and State

Figure 5. East and north sides, “Albuquerque Public Library.” *New Mexico Architecture* 17 (September-October 1975): 14.

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Figure 8. Downtown Albuquerque, 1940s.

Figure 9. Urban Renewal in Downtown Albuquerque.
Figure 10. “Central Avenue and Fourth Street Mall,” 1970. City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Downtown Plan (City of Albuquerque Planning Department, 1970).
Figure 11. “Staging of Central Ave. Area,” 1970. City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Downtown Plan (City of Albuquerque Planning Department, 1970).
Figure 13. Civic Plaza (center), one block northeast of Main Library, with Convention Center (upper right), Albuquerque Inn (upper left), Plaza del Sol upper left corner), and City Hall (lower left), 1980s.
Photographs

1. South and east sides, photographer facing northwest.

2. South side with glass entrance additions from Copper Avenue, photographer facing northwest.
Main Library
Name of Property

3. Northeast corner from 5th Street, photographer facing southwest.

4. North side with service court in foreground, photographer facing south east.
5. Rear (west) elevation with landscaping from 6th Street, photographer facing east.

6. South side with ART bus shelter, photographer facing north.
7. Southwest corner with court in foreground, photographer facing northeast.

8. Southwest corner, with court and landscaping, photographer facing northwest.
9. Southwest court along Copper Avenue, photographer facing east.

10. Main entrance with entrance sign, photographer facing northwest.
11. Interior, first floor, reading room, photographer facing northwest.

12. Interior, first floor, reading room, photographer facing east.
13. Interior, first floor, reading room, offices and meeting rooms, photographer facing north.

14. Interior, first floor, meeting room with original furniture, photographer facing southwest.
15. Interior, first floor, reading room, circulation desk, photographer facing south.

16. Interior, first floor, stairs to second floor, photographer facing west.
17. Interior, second floor, reading room, photographer facing north.

18. Interior, second floor, administrative offices with moveable walls, photographer facing northwest.

20. Interior, second floor, acquisitions department with original desks, photographer facing southwest.
Main Library
Name of Property

Bernalillo, New Mexico
County and State

21. Interior, second floor, acquisitions department with projecting window and original chairs, photographer facing southwest.

22. Interior, second floor, administration with original furnishings, photographer facing southwest.
Main Library
Name of Property

23. Interior, second floor, administration with moveable wall, photographer facing east.

24. Interior, second floor, administration, conference room, photographer facing east.
Main Library
Name of Property

Bernalillo, New Mexico
County and State

25. Interior, lower level, children’s area, photographer facing south.

26. Interior, lower level, auditorium, photographer facing southeast.
27. Interior, lower level, meeting room, photographer facing west.

28. Lower level, northeast court, photographer facing north.
Main Library
Name of Property

Bernalillo, New Mexico
County and State

29. Lower level, southeast court, photographer facing east.

301. Lower level, southwest court, photographer facing southwest.
Main Library
Name of Property

Bernalillo, New Mexico
County and State

31. Lower level, northwest service court, photographer facing west.