UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Pima County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

115 North Church

CITY, TOWN

Tucson

STATE

Arizona

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

X BUILDING(S)

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

OWNERSHIP

X PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

STATUS

X OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

COMMERCIAL

PARK

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Pima County Board of Supervisors

STREET & NUMBER

131 West Congress

CITY, TOWN

Tucson

STATE

Arizona

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Pima County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

115 North Church

CITY, TOWN

Tucson

STATE

Arizona

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL

STATE

COUNTY

LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE
The Spanish Colonial Revival courthouse has many characteristics of the style: low-pitched red tiled roof, arches, plastered walls, elaborate ornamentation around doorways, doors flanked by pilasters, balconies, and arcaded post-and-lintel type portales.

The building is U-shaped with the two wings connected by an arcade with bracketed beams to form a quadrangle. The entry, both from the street and from the courtyard, is churrigueresque. Balconies have carved ornamentation. First and second story arcades look onto the courtyard.

The most prominent feature of the building is its elegant blue-tiled dome which tops a large central tower. The base of the tower is octagonal with a carved parapet decorated with finials and there are finials at the base of the dome. The parapet cornice is denticulated. On top of the dome is a copper lantern with finial.

Pima County is presently in Phase II of a three-phase renovation of the Court House. The philosophy behind the renovation has been to alter the interior for increased functional capabilities while keeping the exterior appearance intact except for minor restorations.

The north and south wings of the building are two stories high. The center is three stories high. It supports a dome that is 32 feet in diameter and towers 100 feet over downtown Tucson. The dome is covered with blue, yellow and green tile. There is also a 55-by-128-foot basement.

Constructed by general contractor Herbert Brown for a cost of $300,000, the external walls and floor are built of reinforced concrete and plaster on the outside. The exterior ornamental work is done in cast stone. The windows are steel-framed.

Essentially, the Court House has undergone three remodelings since it was built. In 1956, a south wing was added on to accommodate the expanding courts function at a cost of $460,000. The south wing addition, designed by Blanton and Cole, was constructed by the M.M. Sundt Construction Company.

In 1965, the north wing of the Court House was remodelled for removal of the jail to make more room for courtrooms. In November 1975, Pima County completed Phase I of a three phase remodelling program. This was done at a price of $875,665. Architects for this renovation are the Anderson Associates. The general contractor is Metz Construction.

Currently, the Court House provides office space for three departments of Pima County: assessor, treasurer, and recorder. The justice courtrooms are here as well as the County Grand Jury. The Grand Jury will soon be relocated in the Pima Governmental Center.
Most of the county courthouses in Arizona resemble those throughout the country and are based on European architectural design. The design for the Pima Courthouse, however, developed from the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego and is the most outstanding Spanish Colonial Revival building in Arizona.

Roy Place (1889-1950), prominent local architect, designed a great number and variety of buildings in Tucson including hotels, theaters, office buildings, stores, houses, clinics, schools, a convent, and 25 buildings for the University of Arizona. He also designed the Cochise County Courthouse and a number of public buildings in other Arizona cities. His Spanish Colonial Revival design for the Pima County Courthouse is far more appropriate to its setting then the boxy modern office buildings which now surround it.

Bonds for the new courthouse were put up for sale in December of 1928. The general contractor was Herbert F. Brown of Tucson who bid $180,876 for the job. J. Knox Corbett's bid of $18,249 for the plumbing and heating was accepted, and the electrical contract went to the Grabe Electric Company, which bid $4,234. The County Board of Supervisors was overjoyed that the bids were lower than expected and used the surplus to pay for the copper lantern and the tile for the dome.

The old courthouse on the same site was left intact until enough of the new offices were completed for the county employees to move into. The old building was then demolished and the new one was completed in December of 1929.

During construction, portions of the city wall of 1776 were unearthed beneath the southeast corner of the foundation. The wall had been constructed under the direction of Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza when the presidio garrison was transferred from Tubac to Tucson. Part of the old city wall was saved and is displayed on the second floor directly above where it was excavated.
**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Lew Place. Correspondence. 1977
Pima County. Records
Tucson Citizen. 1928, 1929.

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY** 1.04

**UTM REFERENCES**

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project Arizona R-8 Block 503 Lot 6. Bounded on the North by Alameda, on the South by Pennington, on the East by Church Avenue. West boundary is the lot containing the City Council Chambers.

**STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

**STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE**

[Signature]

**TITLE**

[Title]

**DATE**

9-21-77

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

**DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

[Signature]

**DATE**

6-23-78

**ATTEST**

[Signature]

**DATE**

6-23-78

**KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER**

[Signature]

**DATE**

6-23-78
Adult Probation Department

J.P. Court Functions
Sheriff's Civil & Constables
Assessor's - Auditing-Deeds-Mapping

Phase I completed
Step 2 - Construction

Location - 2nd Level - Pima County Courthouse
Location - 3rd Level - Pima County Courthouse

Note: This is a continuation of previous sheet
Construction to begin on connection to El Presidio Plaza

Former Superior Court

Former Auditing-Deeds-Mapping

Former Superior Court

Location - Ground Level Pima County Courthouse

Phase II

CONSTRUCTION

In progress
Renovation Basement Level

Connection to central plant utility system

Location - Basement Level Pima County Courthouse
Pima County Parking Garage
Construction in final phase of project least priority

SUCCEEDING CONSTRUCTION
Location - 4th Level Pima County Courthouse
Dome Pima County Courthouse