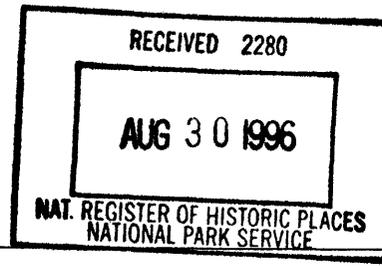


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Aztec Ruins Administration Building/Museum

other name/site number: Earl Morris Residence, American Museum Field Station; Aztec Ruins Visitor Center

2. Location

street & number: Aztec Ruins National Monument

not for publication: n/a

vicinity: west bank of the Animas River, on outskirts of Aztec, New Mexico

city/town: Aztec

state: New Mexico

code: NM

county: San Juan code: 045

zip code: 87410

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide x locally. (    See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*\* see cover letter \**

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

National Park Service

State or Federal agency or bureau

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

*Shelley W. Shelley / SHPO*

Signature of commenting official/Title

*6/20/96*

Date

New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  
see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register  
see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register  
see continuation sheet
- other (explain)

Signature of the Keeper

*Beth Boland*

Date of Action

*10/11/96*

Name of Property

County and State

**5. Classification**

<b>Ownership of Property:</b> Public - Federal	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<b>Category of Property:</b> Building	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
<b>Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:</b> NA	<u>1</u>	_____
<b>Name of related multiple property listing:</b> NA	_____	_____
	<u>2</u>	_____
	_____	_____
	<u>3</u>	_____
		building(s)
		sites
		structures
		objects
		Total

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions:** Domestic/single dwelling; Education; Government/government office; Recreation and Culture/museum

**Current Function:** Government/government office; Recreation and Culture/museum

**7. Description****Architectural Classification:**

Other (Pueblo Revival with Spanish Colonial details)

**Materials:** concrete, stucco

**foundation:** concrete

**walls:** concrete; stone; adobe brick

**roof:** felt, tar, gravel

**other:** prehistoric *vigas*, *latillas*, juniper splints

**Narrative Description****Summary**

Aztec Ruins National Monument (AZRU) is located in San Juan County, New Mexico, on the northern outskirts of the city of Aztec. The Anasazi ruins from which both the town and the monument derive their name occupy a gravel terrace above the west bank of the Animas River. When first established, the monument lay a considerable distance north of Aztec. Today, however, residential subdivisions associated with the community of Aztec border the south edge of the monument. Three commercial trading posts are located immediately outside the entry to the monument's parking lot. Aztec Ruins Trading Post and Monument Trading Post both are located adjacent to the west side of the north/south access road that leads to the monument. The Kiva Trading Post is located on the south side of Ruins Road. The National Park Service now owns both Aztec Ruins Trading Post and Monument Trading Post; both properties are operated by previous owners under a lease agreement. A remnant of a once extensive orchard is located north of Aztec Ruins Trading Post, along the west edge of the original monument boundary. The administration building/museum is located directly adjacent to the west edge of the archaeological component known as the West Ruin--at the southwest corner of the original monument boundary. Stabilized archaeological ruins surround the north and east sides of the building and the north (rear) patio.

The Aztec Ruins Administration Building is a one-story, irregularly shaped building, that currently reflects the Pueblo Revival style of architecture. This building and its associated landscape elements have been modified a number of times since Earl Morris designed and directed the construction of its original component between 1919 and 1925. The following outline delineates the major construction events at this property:

1919	Morris residence (four rooms over a basement) constructed
1924-25	Display room constructed adjacent to west wall of residence: completes original design
1931	Adobe comfort station constructed east of the residence/display room

See continuation page; Section 7, p. 1

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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:**

**Applicable National Register Criteria:** A

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):**

**Significant Person(s):**

**Cultural Affiliation:** NA

**Areas of Significance:** Government; Recreation and Culture

**Period(s) of Significance:** 1916-1946

**Significant Dates:** 1919, 1925, 1931, 1933, 1934

**Architect/Builder:** Earl Morris; Clark Wissler; Jack Lavery; NPS Branch of Plans and Design; NPS Office of Design and Construction; Cecil J. Doty

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

### Summary

While prehistoric Anasazi occupation and construction clearly form the nucleus of Aztec Ruins National Monument's significance, historic use, occupation, and interpretive effort are significant subthemes represented in the built environment of the monument. The monument as it exists today reflects not only an ancient community but also modern attempts to understand this community, and to preserve, reconstruct, and interpret the remains in a manner that will benefit and educate the public. The Aztec Ruins Administration Building/Museum stands as a central component of this effort. (Additional historical resources associated with site interpretation include the reconstructed Great Kiva, the North Wing rooms used historically as a museum facility, and the series of constructed pathways within the ruin proper.)

The construction of the American Museum field office/residence, in which Earl Morris lived and worked, made possible a degree of excavation effort and familiarity duplicated only by Richard Wetherill at Chaco Canyon. And, in the most symbolic tie between the prehistoric and the historic, the Earl Morris residence incorporated not only aboriginal construction strategies and design features, but also field stone and timbers cut and harvested by the prehistoric builders and occupants of Aztec Ruins.

Subsequent expansion of the building by the National Park Service, using New Deal funding, allowed for inclusion of administrative offices and of a large public lobby/museum space: the interpretive core of the site. A reconstructed access road, parking lot, and pedestrian pathways allowed manipulation of traffic flows to the ruins themselves, "recreating" the original (Chacoan) front door.

The Aztec Ruins Administration Building/Museum is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the State level of significance, for its association with American Government and Recreation and Culture (criterion A). The building's period of significance extends from initial construction in 1919 until the end of the historic period as defined by the National Register (1946).<sup>1</sup>

See continuation page; Section 8, p.6

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<sup>1</sup> In 1988, the NPS contracted for the preparation of a nomination for the archaeological site included within Aztec Ruins National Monument. That nomination contains an in-depth discussion of Earl H. Morris's contributions to the study of archaeology. Lister and Lister's 1990 administrative history of Aztec Ruins National Monument, further expands upon the significance of Morris to southwestern archaeology.

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**9. Major Bibliographic References**


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**Secondary Sources**

Garraty, John A. *The Great Depression*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1986.

Lister, Florence C. and Robert H. Lister. *Earl Morris and Southwestern Archaeology*. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1968.

Lister, Robert H. and Florence C. Lister. *Aztec Ruins National Monument; Administrative History of an Archeological Preserve*. Southwest Cultural Resources Center Professional Papers No. 24. Santa Fe: NPS Division of History, 1990.

See continuation page; Section 9, p. 16

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

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**10. Geographical Data**


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Acreage of Property: Approximately 1.75 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	A 13	2 32500	40 80500

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary for this property is formed by a line drawn adjacent to the exterior edge of the stuccoed walls and, in areas where the building is not surrounded by landscape walls, by the edge of the building itself. See attached map.

**Boundary Justification**

The administration building and the stuccoed walls are the only resources being considered for nomination at the present time.

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**11. Form Prepared By**


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name/title: Janene Caywood/Archaeologist; Ann Hubber/Historian  
 organization: Historical Research Associates, Inc. date: 5/17/1996  
 street & number: P.O. Box 7086 telephone: 406 721-1958  
 city or town: Missoula state: MT zip code: 59807-7086

**Additional Documentation**

see attached documentation

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**Property Owner**


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name/title: National Park Service  
 street & number: Aztec Ruins National Monument telephone: 505 344-6174  
 city or town: Aztec state: NM zip code: 87410

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### 7. Narrative Description, continued

- 1933 Parking lot completed (including stuccoed perimeter walls and island), and rear patio walls
- 1934-35 Adobe and stone "Lobby" constructed to fill in space between east wall of residence/display room and west wall of comfort station.
- 1958 A. 1931 adobe comfort station removed to make way for new concrete block display room/museum constructed adjacent to the southeast corner and the east wall of the lobby  
B. Concrete block furnace room constructed on northeast end of lobby  
C. Concrete block restroom wing on southwest corner of building  
D. Concrete block library/work room constructed on northwest corner of building
- 1984 New concrete block collections facility added to the west elevation of the 1958 library/work room
- 1987-88 Concrete block addition to west elevation of restroom--adds handicapped accessible stalls to men's and women's restroom. Also, front walkway reconstructed to accessible standards.

Due to the complex nature of the building, each of the major building components is described separately in the following paragraphs.

#### Morris residence and display room (1919-1925):

The nucleus of the administration building consists of a rectangular block that included a dwelling for the Morris family (two bedrooms, a kitchen and a living area), and a large display room for exhibiting artifacts. The dwelling (constructed over a concrete basement) was completed first, followed by the display room, which was added to the west elevation of the dwelling. The walls of this original rectangular component are constructed of stone recovered from the excavated ruins; some of the large *vigas* used in construction of the roof also came from the ruins. Following a desire to mimic the prehistoric architecture of the adjacent West Ruins, the house/display room incorporated a band of green stone just below the crenelated parapet of the flat roof. The exterior walls were not stuccoed during this early phase, indeed the mortaring technique used in their construction was designed to mimic the weathered character of the adjacent prehistoric ruins, and was meant to be exhibited. (Stuccoing of the exterior walls occurred in 1934, when a lobby (a.k.a. museum) was added to the east wall of the original component. At that time, the crenelated parapet was removed from the roof of the original component, and the entire exterior wall surface was stuccoed.)

The south elevation of the original component contained two entries (one at the east end and one at the west end of the wall) with a pair of six-light casement windows (that opened inward) in between. The entire length of the elevation was protected by a *portale*, the roof of which was supported by inverted juniper posts that rested in turn upon a low stone wall. This wall was open at the west end, and had two openings placed opposite the two entries. Today, the original west entry (which accessed the display room) is still identifiable, and consists of a central opening that contains the door, with a ribbon of three fixed lights adjacent to the upper two-thirds of the each side of the door (a pattern reminiscent of the "T"-shaped entries prevalent in some Anasazi ruins). Currently, this entry has a wood door made with diagonal ship-lap boards, with one square light. The original casement windows also remain but a heavy metal screen has been added to the exterior. The original entry at the east end of the wall has been replaced with a set of French doors, each of which has six lights, flanked on either side by a vertical ribbon of three fixed lights that extend down the entire length of the door. This modified entry now serves as the main public entrance to the building. The *portale* roof consists of *vigas* with *latillas* laid in a herringbone pattern. (The concrete *portale* floor dates to a 1988 construction project that made the administration building and the restrooms handicapped-accessible. During September of 1995, park service personnel repaired portions of the east and central lintels and replaced some of the *canales* on the south edge of the south *portale*.)

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As originally designed, the west elevation of the original component contained two pair of inward-opening, wood-frame, three-light casement windows. Although these windows remain in place, the southern-most window is no longer functional; the original casement sashes have been removed to accommodate a portable air conditioner that occupies the bottom third of the window opening. A single fixed light is located above the air conditioner. Both windows are covered with heavy metal shade screens.

On the north elevation of the original component, another "T"-shaped entry provided access to the display room. Two pair of six-by-six-light casement windows (that open inward) were located in the wall to the east of this entry. The windows remain visible from the exterior, however the entry is now surrounded by the workroom/library addition constructed on the northwest corner of the original display room. (The old exterior entry now functions as an interior doorway leading from an office to the library/work-room.) A steep concrete stair with a metal pipe railing is located below the two casement windows. The stair leads to the basement (under the original Morris dwelling) and the old cistern that has been converted to a store room. A low stuccoed wall divides the stairwell from the cement floor of the open rear *portale*.

Although the original east elevation is currently covered by additions, its appearance can be determined from historical photographs, which show a single pair of six-by-six-light casement windows located in the south half of the elevation and an entry in the north half. When a lobby was added in 1934 (see below), the east exterior elevation of the original component became an interior wall. The original entry was filled in, and a new double door opening was cut in place of the window opening.

When Morris occupied the original component, his quarters consisted of two bedrooms, a kitchen and a living room; the exhibit room ran the entire length of the west elevation with no partitions. Today, the Morris dwelling/exhibit room houses the main entrance to the administration building (with several display cases and the visitor information desk), and three offices for National Park Service personnel. The information desk and the display cases are located at the east end of this component, in the former living area. The original, stuccoed corner fireplace has been remodeled to serve as a donations box. (A low wing wall that projected from the east side of the fireplace was removed in 1958 as part of the Mission 66 construction program.) Two of the offices are located within the old display room, having been created by the addition of an interior dividing wall. The third office is located between the entrance/information desk and the offices in the old display room, on the south side of the building. An old entry between this central office and the south end of the display room has been infilled. The floors throughout this component are carpeted. An original construction feature that has been retained are the *latilla* door and window lintels. The plaster walls are painted in two colors; a band of reddish brown along the lower one-third of the wall with off-white above and on the ceilings. Light fixtures include modern fluorescent fixtures as well as the round wrought-iron fixtures added during the 1934 remodel. The ceilings in this component have not been modified; they consist of the original *vigas* (some of which were recovered from the West Ruin by Earl Morris), with *latillas* laid perpendicular to the *vigas*, and juniper splints laid perpendicular to the *latillas*. (According to monument staff, it is likely that the majority of the *latillas* and juniper splint came from the ruins.)

The basement has a concrete floor and walls. A water heater is located there, as well as portable shelving around the perimeter walls that is used for storage of office supplies. A doorway in the north end of the east wall of the basement leads via a set of steep concrete steps to the old cistern. The walls, floor and pyramidal ceiling of the cistern are all concrete. Sinks and artifact drying racks are located against the south wall of the cistern. (The sinks are no longer functional.)

### 1934 Lobby (a.k.a. "old museum," "video room")

The first major modification to the administration building occurred in 1934, when construction crews built walls to fill the space between the Morris house/display room and the adobe comfort station that had been constructed in 1931 about 30' east of the house. The walls of this addition consisted of two parts. An exterior wall of adobe brick was constructed to fill the space between the two buildings. At the same time, masons constructed a mortared stone wall around all four interior elevations of the new room.

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The south elevation of the lobby contained one pair of six-by-six-light casement windows that open outward. This window and the others in the lobby have *latilla* lintels. Modifications made to the south *portale* during the 1934 addition included: knocking out the east end and constructing a new section of wall to the edge of the old restrooms; filling the opening opposite the west entry; widening the opening opposite the modified east entry; and, plastering the entire length of the wall. The new segments of the *portale* wall were constructed of adobe brick rather than stone. (A few segments of this wall are made with cinder block, a result of a 1960 remodel during which the entry to the porch was moved slightly farther west--opposite the double door.)

The north side of the lobby originally contained an entry at the west end of the new wall, flanked on the east by two, six-by-six-light casement windows, that open outward. Today, this entry contains a set of French doors (each with six lights). The eastern most casement window is no longer visible from the exterior (having been covered by the 1958 furnace room) however it is visible from the interior. A *portale* constructed in 1958 now covers the north side of the original component and the 1934 lobby addition. Its flat roof is supported by log columns (adzed at the top), which rest on the concrete floor.

The interior of the 1934 lobby has been modified little. The open ceiling displays the large spruce log *vigas*, overlain by 4" aspen *latillas* and finally by juniper splints<sup>2</sup>. A stone fireplace with a concrete lintel is located on the east wall. The interior of the fire box is finished with firebricks inlaid in a herringbone pattern. Built-in stone seats are located on the north side of the fireplace and extend around to the north wall of the lobby. The west interior wall of the lobby contains several features including a built-in interpretive display that incorporates a stone metate, as well as a metal vent and a drinking fountain. Monument staff report that the mortar used in the interior stone wall incorporates pottery shards that were probably obtained from the West Ruin. A doorway in the east end of the south lobby wall now leads to the interior of the 1958 exhibit room. Wall-to-wall carpet covers the floor. The original light fixtures, circular wrought iron with cut-outs in the shapes of arrow heads and thunderbirds, are suspended from the ceiling *vigas*.

### Mission 66 Structural Additions, 1958

In 1958, with funding derived from the Mission 66 program, NPS architects fashioned several structural additions to the administration building including a new exhibit room, a furnace room, a restroom and a library/workroom. All of these additions are constructed of concrete blocks and are finished on the exterior walls with colored stucco. Wooden *canales* are visible at intervals along the exterior walls, and provide drainage for the roof.

The exhibit room wraps around the southeast corner and covers the entire east wall of the 1934 lobby. (The 1931 adobe restrooms were removed prior to the construction of this addition.) The only exterior features are an entry with a modern steel door located at the north edge of the east elevation (cut sometime after the original construction), and a window in the short west-facing wall that opens onto the south *portale*. This window has two rows of three fixed lights, with a bottom panel of three lights that opens awning style. The interior of the exhibit area contains one large room with painted plaster walls, and an acoustical tile ceiling with recessed fluorescent lighting. Carpet covers the floor, and a variety of display cases are placed within the interior. The window that opens onto the south *portale* is set at the exterior edge of the wall, creating a deep interior sill finished with wood.

The furnace room is a small addition located on the northwest corner of the exhibit room. A single entry with a vertical board door accesses the entry in the west-facing wall that opens onto the north *portale*.

The restroom wing is attached to the southwest corner of the original display room. Entries to the restrooms are located in the east facing wall, at the west end of the south *portale*. These entries (one for the men's restroom and one for the women's

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<sup>2</sup> Drawing #NM-AR 3103-A, refers to the *latillas* and juniper splints as *savinos* and *rajas* respectively.

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restroom), both contain steel swinging doors. The south and north elevations of the restroom each contain a ribbon of three, four-over-four-light, double-hung windows, centered within the wall. These windows are glazed with opaque, marbled glass, and have wood-frame exterior screens. Features on the west elevation of the restroom addition include a centrally placed, narrow entry with a vertical board door. This entry accesses a plumbing alley between the men's and women's restrooms. A wood *canale* is centered over the entry.

The interior of the restroom wing is divided longitudinally into three rooms. The men's restroom (located on the north side) is divided from the women's restroom by a narrow plumbing alley. Interior finishing materials include small mosaic tile on the floors, 5"-square ceramic tile on the first six feet of the wall, with plaster above this and on the ceiling. Windows and doors have wood trim. The restrooms have metal stall partitions, porcelain sinks and toilets, and modern light fixtures.

The library/workroom is attached to the northwest corner of the original (1925) display room. The north elevation of this addition contains two pair of six-by-six-light casement windows and a small metal vent at the east end of the wall. The library is accessed from the exterior by an entry in the south end of the addition's east wall. This entry has a wood door with four lights and two panels (paired with a metal screen door), and is flanked on the north side by another six-by-six-light casement window. The windows in this room open outward and have wood-frame screens on the interior.

The interior of the library has only one room, with bookshelves and storage cabinets along the perimeter walls. The walls and ceilings are painted; the latter has recessed fluorescent lighting. The door to the exterior has 4" wood trim, while the walls have plastic baseboard trim. A double steel door in the south half of the west wall of the library leads to the curatorial storage facility.

### Post-Mission 66 Modifications.

In 1984, a curatorial facility or "collections room" was constructed along the west elevation of the library/workroom. This addition is constructed of concrete blocks on a concrete foundation. The walls and ceilings are painted plaster, with fluorescent lighting. This building component has no exterior windows or doors; the only access is via the library/workroom. Various storage cabinets line the perimeter of the single room, which currently has a work table in the middle. This room is used to house archaeological materials as well as the AZRU photographic collections and microfiche.

In 1988, the west wall of the restroom wing was extended to accommodate two handicapped accessible stalls (one for the men's restroom and one for the women's restroom). The roof of this addition is slightly lower than that of the first restroom addition; a decorative stepped buttress extends west from the southwest corner of the 1988 addition, softening the definition of the wall.

During the winter of 1995/1996, the NPS installed a wet-charge fire suppression system in the visitor center.

### Landscape Elements.

Prominent landscape elements adjacent to the Aztec Ruins Administration Building include stuccoed walls that define the parking area on the south side of the building and those that enclose the patio on the north side of the building. Like the administration building, these structures have been repeatedly modified since the first segments were constructed in 1933. The parking lot, with the central planting island and the stuccoed walls that define its perimeter, date to 1933. Another component of the original parking lot design was a short discontinuous segment of wall that defined the entry to two pedestrian pathways. The paths converged north of a roughly triangular shaped planting island adjacent to the north side of the free-standing wall. This path led to an opening in the south *portale*. These landscape walls have a stone rubble core, covered on the exterior with concrete plaster. For most of their length, these walls are approximately 3.5 feet in height, and about 21 inches thick, except where two stepped pilasters mark the entrance to the parking lot. The first step of the pilaster is 6 feet in height; the second is 9 feet high.

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Routed wooden signs with the words "Aztec Ruins" are supported by wooden brackets that extend at a right angle from each of the pilasters. (At one time electric light fixtures were located atop the pilasters. However these are no longer present and do not appear in early photographs of the parking lot taken soon after completion.) The planting island in the middle of the parking lot currently contains juniper shrubs and cottonwood trees.

Several modifications and additions to the parking lot and front yard of the administration building site plan were made in 1960. A site development plan drawn in 1959 called for raising the height of the north 80' of the north/south wall adjacent to the west side of the administration building. The new height of 5'3" was achieved by adding concrete blocks to the top of the wall, and then stuccoing the entire wall surface. Another part of the plan called for moving the opening in the south *portale* wall slightly farther west, to be directly opposite the main public entry into the building. A portion of the front walkway was obliterated and reconstructed to lead to the new opening. This reconstruction resulted in a slightly asymmetrical plan (see attached drawing NM-AR 3108-A). Two new concrete walls were also included in this plan and include; a 5'3" wall that encloses the front yard of the administration building between the southeast corner of the building and the original parking lot wall, and a short east/west wall segment that enclosed the area between the west wall of the restroom addition and the west perimeter wall. In 1987/88, as part of the plan to make the building handicapped accessible, the front walkway and the floor of the front *portale* was completely reconstructed. The front walk was reconstructed to five percent and eight percent grade and the concrete steps at the front *portale* were removed. The new walkway design also incorporated a planting island, although it is larger than the former island. The old stucco wall was replaced with a new wall (2' wide) with a sloping sidewalk between the wall and the south edge of the planter. Finally, the planting plan developed in 1959 called for removal of much of the shrub vegetation, to be replaced with a grass lawn. The large cottonwood trees in the parking lot island were retained.

The poured concrete walls around the rear patio date to 1934. (A site development plan drawn in 1959 refers to these walls as "simulated adobe.") In the early 1930s, this area contained a concrete fish pond, however this was removed in 1961 as part of the Mission 66 development funding. After removal of the fish pond, the rear patio was reconstructed to include an oval planting area bounded by paved walkways, with additional planting areas between the sidewalk and the perimeter walls. In order to direct pedestrian traffic more directly to the ruins, another opening was cut in the east side of the then-existing wall. Today, plantings in the area outside the oval include sagebrush and other native shrubs as well as several large cottonwood trees. The central oval is planted with grass; a pathway has been constructed through the middle of the grassy oval. This path leads directly from the north *portale* to the opening in the north perimeter wall and on to a trail through the ruins.

### Integrity

Although the administration building/museum has been modified since the historical period, the design of the additions is compatible with the appearance of the building in 1934, at the end of the first major remodel. This property possesses integrity of location, and, for the most part, setting, and association. Integrity of materials, workmanship, and feeling has been compromised to a degree by the later use of stucco-covered, concrete block additions which have altered the scale of the building. However, the changes to the building reflect its continuous administrative use, as the monument's museum and visitor center. ✓

### Resource Count

For purposes of this nomination, the administration building/museum is counted as one contributing building. The parking lot walls and the north patio walls are counted as two contributing structures. The modern segments of walls are not included in the contributing/non-contributing resource counts since they are relatively small in comparison with the wall sections that date to the historical period.

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### 8. Statement of Significance, continued

#### Historical Development

In their comprehensive *Aztec Ruins National Monument Administrative History of an Archeological Preserve*, Archaeologists Florence and Robert Lister write that "few Southwestern archeological sites are more identified with a single individual than is Aztec Ruins with Earl Halstead Morris."<sup>3</sup> Morris had explored these and neighboring ruins as a child, from his home base in nearby Farmington. In 1916 -- just out of school and armed with the accolades of his mentor Nels Nelson -- he was hired by American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) director Clark Wissler to head the museum's planned excavation and study of Aztec Ruins. Here "one of the most promising of the great old pueblos [ay] waiting for the trained and authorized explorer."<sup>4</sup> Morris's formal association with Aztec Ruins would not end until 1935, when he directed the complete reconstruction of the Great Kiva. His informal legacy continues to this day: a plaque in his honor adorns a wall of the administration building, his ashes lie in a room of the ruin's West Wing, and his reports of findings on Aztec Ruins remain seminal works on San Juan Basin prehistory, providing both a point of departure and of debate for current archaeologists.<sup>5</sup>

The Earl Morris residence, which forms the core of the visitor center, stands as tangible evidence of Morris's close association with the site. In 1918, after leasing the rights of excavation for two years, the AMNH successfully negotiated with owner H. C. Abrams for ownership of a portion of the ruin, contingent on AMNH development of an appropriate repository for the artifacts recovered from the site.<sup>6</sup> In 1919, acting museum director Clark Wissler authorized construction of a field office at Aztec Ruins, to include a "display room" and to provide Morris with a residence and office from which he could guard the ruins from vandals, organize his field notes and specimens, and prepare his reports of findings at Aztec.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert H. Lister and Florence C. Lister, *Aztec Ruins National Monument; Administrative History of an Archeological Preserve*, Southwest Cultural Resources Center Professional Papers No. 24, (Santa Fe: NPS Division of History), 1990, p. 9.

This extensively researched, thirteen-chapter, 257-page document provides an exhaustive study of the American Museum of Natural History's involvement with the ruins; federal acquisition, management, and development of the monument (including chapters on the Great Depression and Mission 66); the details of and scientific discoveries associated with eighty years of excavation; changes in the interpretive program; and the acquisition/evolution of the monument's artifact collection and of the collection's display. This administrative history should form the centerpiece of any interpretive efforts or reconstruction plans associated with the monument's historic resources.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell Prudden (1903), quoted in Florence C. Lister and Robert H. Lister, *Earl Morris and Southwestern Archaeology*, (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press), 1968, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> USDI NPS, *Draft General Management Plan, Development Concept Plan, Environmental Assessment, Aztec Ruins National Monument*, Denver, Colorado: NPS Denver Service Center, n.d. (ca. 1989), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> The convoluted and confusing chain of ownership and lease agreements between H. C. Abrams, the American Museum of Natural History, and the National Park Service is covered in great detail in the Listers' *Administrative History*. It is not repeated here.

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Wissler and Morris chose a construction site proximate to the West Wing of the ruin. Wissler reportedly sketched a hurried building plan, and Morris (with the help of local mason Jack Lavery) began construction, utilizing engineering skills, architectural acumen, and an aesthetic preference acquired in years of archeological excavation. Lister and Lister report that

the men agreed that the exterior style of the new house should harmonize with the old one . . . . The profile should be low, blocky, and flat-roofed. The exterior walls should be of unplastered banded masonry in the Chaco style using salvaged stones from the rubble of the ruin not needed for repair. Several decorative bands of green stone would increase the similarity to adjacent portions of the West Wing of the Anasazi house.<sup>7</sup>

To Morris's surprise, he and Wissler had chosen a construction site atop an aboriginal trash dump; the loose deposit, of a "variety of substances," complicated construction of a solid foundation. Intentionally borrowed influences included not only the bands of green stone laboriously collected and culled from the adjacent ruin, but also T-shaped doorways, *latilla* door and window lintels (using new but scorched and distressed wood) and *viga* with *latilla* ceilings, constructed of salvaged ancient timbers. Exterior walls constructed "without any mortar showing on the outer surface . . . [heightened] the similarity to the weathered portion of the ruins." Conversely, the top courses of stone in the front *portale* wall and in the upper reaches of the primary walls were crudely mortared, with exaggerated amounts of cement, thus "imitat[ing] repaired walls in the ruin."<sup>8</sup>

Of less apparent or appropriate extraction were the masonry parapets around the ridge line, for which the Listers found "no known regional counterpart," the front-elevation *portale* -- "a concept foreign to the Anasazi," -- and the distinctive inverted-juniper columns that supported the *portale* roof. Morris recounted that he patterned the columns after 17th-century columns found in the Gobernador region (east of Aztec Ruins) during his excavations of 1915; post-dating Aztec Ruins habitation and construction by over 500 years, the columns were an architectural anachronism that would none the less find great favor with the visiting public.<sup>9</sup>

The east two-thirds of the interior contained a living room with plastered corner fireplace (like the juniper columns, an architectural allusion to the Gobernador region), two bedrooms (one of which was inhabited by Morris's mother), and a kitchen. Whitewashed plaster covered the interior walls, and pine planks covered the floors. Water was stored in a large rain-cache cistern dug to one side of the basement; a water conveyance and filter system carried the rainfall to the cistern and a hand pump lifted the water to the kitchen sink. In 1922, the basement was finished with concrete, providing dry storage for museum specimens. A

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<sup>7</sup> Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, p. 65.

<sup>8</sup> Morris, quoted in Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, pp. 66, 67; Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, p. 66.

<sup>9</sup> Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, p. 67; Anonymous, "Visitor Center, Aztec Ruins National Monument," n.d. [ca. 1957], p.1, Folder D34 AZRU: Buildings, Visitor Center 1957, Box 2, AZRU Archives; Hanson, AZRU Superintendent, to the Regional Director, Nov. 22, 1958, Folder D3415-a AZRU 1956-1958, Box 38, General Corresponding and Planning Program 1953-1961, Southwest Regional Office, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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rough storage shed, erected first in the courtyard of the ruins and later moved to the yard near the field office, served as the site's first museum.<sup>10</sup>

An outhouse, garage for Morris's Model-T Ford, and a blacksmith shop completed the residential complex. Morris fashioned these secondary structures from three rooms of the "old house" (West Wing of the ruin). A modern flat roof covered and visually linked the three rooms. Doors were fashioned from abandoned milled-lumber barn doors.<sup>11</sup>

The exhibit hall planned for the west third of the field office/residence was not completed until the summer of 1925 when Morris excavated sufficient prehistoric timbers to complete the ceiling and roof structure.<sup>12</sup>

The exhibit hall never served its intended function. In late 1922, the AMNH donated most of its Aztec Ruins land holdings (retaining the house site and the West Wing) to the federal government, initiating almost a decade of "joint custody." On January 24, 1923, President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed the ruins a national monument, to be administered by the National Park Service. Earl Morris retained his position with the AMNH, as their site representative, and simultaneously accepted a nominal position with the NPS at a salary of \$12 per annum. Morris would later describe the NPS custodian's job as "the guarding of the ruin against vandalism, the keeping of a daily record of the number of visitors, and the sending of a report at the close of each month giving the total to Mr. Frank Pinkley, Superintendent of Southwestern Monuments."<sup>13</sup> Federal budget constraints, NPS lack of interest in and commitment to the Aztec Ruins site, and confusion over the ownership of Aztec specimens and over the responsibility for site interpretation delayed development of an official NPS museum facility until 1927.<sup>14</sup>

In December of 1926, three years after Coolidge signed the Executive Order creating the Aztec Ruins National Monument, Congress appropriated sufficient funds for a full-time custodian at the ruins. In 1927, George L. Boundey assumed this position. Morris, although working elsewhere in the southwest and beginning the process of disengagement from Aztec Ruins, retained his rights to the museum field office/residence; in his absence, the house -- and its exhibit hall -- sat empty. During the winter of 1927, Boundey cut new interior doorways in North-Wing (ruin) rooms No. 197, 198, 141, 142, 199, 200, 201, creating a continuous passageway and a rough display facility. Although damp, cold, and dimly lit, these prehistoric rooms would serve as the official Aztec Ruins National Monument Museum until 1937.

During this decade of joint ownership, as many as 18,000 visitors toured the facility each year. The *Saturday Evening Post*, *Rocky Mountain Motorist*, *Literary Digest*, *Denver Post*, and the local papers carried pictographic essays celebrating the ruins. In 1930,

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<sup>10</sup> Anonymous, "Visitor Center, Aztec Ruins National Monument," n.d. [ca. 1957], p.1, Folder D34 AZRU: Buildings, Visitor Center 1957, Box 2, AZRU Archives; Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, p. 66.

<sup>11</sup> Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, p. 68.

<sup>12</sup> Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, pp. 66-69.

<sup>13</sup> Morris, quoted (1925) in Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, p. 85.

<sup>14</sup> Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, pp. 81-94.

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the Conoco auto-tour report, aired Sunday mornings on radio stations across the country (and the quintessential advertizing venue of America's burgeoning auto-touring rage), featured Aztec Ruins in its tour of the Southwest.<sup>15</sup>

In this climate of increased public interest in America's pre-history, increased automobile ownership, and increased vacation travel, the AMNH deeded all of its Aztec holdings, including the field office/residence, to the federal government. Released from the encumbrance of joint ownership, faced with woefully inadequate administrative facilities, with crumbling ruin walls, and with a cluttered, overgrown, and aesthetically unpleasing site, NPS officials prepared a list of priorities for Aztec Ruins maintenance and development. The onset of the Great Depression and the passage of emergency-spending/work-relief legislation associated with Roosevelt's New Deal greatly facilitated this building program.<sup>16</sup>

Soon after acquisition of the AMNH property in 1930, NPS Director Stephen Albright requested Congressional approval of a \$6,900 appropriation "to cover cost of the four most needed improvements for the benefit of [Aztec Ruins] staff and visitors."<sup>17</sup> The appropriation was apparently granted, for in his 1931 Annual Report Aztec Custodian Johnwill Faris reported that ". . . construction and improvements during the year 1931 have probably played a bigger part in our program than any year yet. New construction consists of Residence, Tool and Implement shed, Comfort Stations, and [a] small pump house" associated with the new well drilled northwest of the residence. Faris described the comfort stations as "thoroughly modern," "well built," and "comparable with any in the country. The well house, "or pump house as the case might be," was "built on the same general construction ideas as the other buildings and [was] warm even in the most severe weather."<sup>18</sup> The residence, comfort stations and pump house have been removed from the site.

Enlargement of the parking lot and site cleanup, however, stood as the "paramount" improvements. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, visitors to the monument had been compelled to "[circuit] what was thought to be an ancient trash dump, [cross] the side yard of the [Morris] house, and [go] past the Anasazi rooms with modern roofs [privy, garage, blacksmith shop]. Typically materials and tools used in ruin repair were strewn about."<sup>19</sup> Moreover, "disagreeable weather in wet seasons" often turned the small parking lot to a mud sump "and help was needed getting people out of our parking lot."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Johnwill Faris, AZRU Custodian, to Frank Pinkley, Superintendent Southwestern Monuments, Jan. 5, 1931 [sic, 1932 since letter describes improvements completed in 1931], p. 3, Folder A2621: AZRU Monument Report 1931 [sic], Box 1, AZRU Archives, Aztec Ruins, New Mexico; Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, p. 108.

<sup>16</sup> Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, p. 82.

<sup>17</sup> Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, p. 107.

<sup>18</sup> Faris to Pinkley, Jan. 5, 1931 [sic (1932)], p. 2, Folder A2621: AZRU Monument Report 1931 [sic], Box 1, AZRU Archives, Aztec Ruins, New Mexico.

<sup>19</sup> Boundey, quoted (1928) in Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, p. 90.

<sup>20</sup> Johnwill Faris, [AZRU] Custodian, to The Director, NPS, April 27, 1934, Folder CWA Projects: Final Report 1934, Final Summary 1934, Box 2, AZRU Archives.

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As part of the 1931 construction, a "semi-dumping ground and weed garden" gave way to a fenced and enlarged parking area, nearly double the size of the inadequate original. "Strong fences" -- an apparent precursor to the stone rubble and concrete walls constructed in 1933 -- separated the lot from the monument. Most importantly to Faris, however, the new lot provided

a better impression of the entire Monument. . . . The Entrance was changed making it possible to come in the "front door" so to speak. The entrance now enables visitors easy access to the comfort station, to approach the Ruins from the original front and also enables a more detailed and complete lecture or explanation, with greater ease in pointing out features that have in the past been somewhat neglected. The ramada, of course, was moved to the entrance off the parking grounds. The gateway . . . will provide a double gate in white and green, making a very pleasing approach.<sup>21</sup>

The planned completion of a formal entry to the monument grounds was realized in 1933, with the help of a percentage of the \$3.3 billion Civil Works Administration funds, allocated under the terms of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), the cornerstone of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal.

### Civil Works Administration Program, 1933-1934

Local crews initiated Aztec's Civil Works Administration Program on December 6th, 1933. Upon official termination of the program in April of 1934, Custodian Faris voiced confidence that the program "contributed to the goal of our President, aiding the unemployed" and that site improvements would prove "of a lasting and durable nature and the thousands of visitors who will come to our Monument in future years will recall accomplishments of the Civil Works Administration."<sup>22</sup> These accomplishments, as described by Faris in his final report, included:

\* Project 1: barn removal.

Removed Abrams barn and rebuilt at a less unsightly location outside the Monument boundary.

\* Project 2: fencing monument boundary

On our twenty six acres we had a number of unsightly cross fences which we had hoped for a number of years to eradicate. . . . [Fences were constructed] of high-grade post and woven wire. . . . Only two gates exist where entrance to our Monument area can be gained. . . . All cross fences were removed.

\* Project 3: parking area construction.

A great deal of grading and leveling, . . . cuts and fills . . . was necessary. This area was surrounded by a cement wall two feet thick and it was our plan to pave the entire area. . . . Curtailment of Civil Works program, however, made this impossible . . . we have yet to pave our parking area.

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<sup>21</sup> Faris to Pinkley, Jan. 5, 1931 [sic (1932); letter describes improvements completed in 1931], p. 2, Folder A2621: AZRU Monument Report 1931 [sic], Box 1, AZRU Archives, Aztec Ruins, New Mexico.

<sup>22</sup> Johnwill Faris, [AZRU] Custodian, to The Director, NPS, April 27, 1934, Folder CWA Projects: Final Report 1934, Final Summary 1934, Box 2, AZRU Archives.

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The "cement wall," constructed of a rubble stone core and stuccoed on the exterior with cement, extended beyond the parking lot to form a west boundary wall<sup>23</sup>. Separate sections of wall encircled the rear (north) yard of the Morris residence and the southwest corner of the ruins.

\* Project 4: general clean-up and landscaping.

Several thousand yards of dirt were moved, fills made, washes filed, etc. which on its face cannot be noticed. . . . Old deposits . . . dead trees, brush etc. [were cleared away]. . . . The entire Monument was plowed and harrowed, unsightly masses of debris surrounding ruin walls were gone over for building stone and large ricks of such stone are now available for ruins repair. . . . On the areas plowed and leveled we have set out some four hundred trees and plants. Several hundred feet of irrigation ditch was rocked, presenting a neat appearance and doing away with the unsightly old dirt ditch.

Although not identified as part of the CWA program, the concrete-lined fish pond once located behind the Morris residence is shown in an October 1934 photograph (prior to initiation of the PWA program [see below]) and may have been incorporated within the CWA wall-construction and landscaping projects.

The sudden termination of the CWA program slowed the Aztec improvement program only briefly. In 1934, Congress funded the Works Progress Administration and the Public Works Administration, which together employed millions of Americans in building bridges, roads, schools, and other public structures. In 1934, monument officials petitioned sufficient PWA funds to construct "a suitable museum building which would also contain rooms for the custodian and his helpers to transact their business and keep their records." The plans for the administration site had been drawn years earlier:

Our approved scheme of development makes [the Morris residential site] the administrative area and puts the residential area some distance to the southeast. We have an approved plan of an administration building which utilizes th[e] stone residence by making it a part of the much larger structure. It is a unit of this approved plan which we wish to construct with the above [emergency-appropriation funds].<sup>24</sup>

These federal funds were desperately needed not only by Aztec Ruins officials but also by the local work force, much of which was unemployed and destitute. After hearing rumors of a \$32,000 appropriation for Aztec Ruins, F. M. Burt, president of the Aztec Chamber of Commerce, telegraphed the Director of the National Park Service: "We have large and growing list unemployed no relief in sight and winter approximately only sixty days away therefor earnestly implore you to start above work immediately if possible."<sup>25</sup> The Director's representative Tolson regretted to inform Burt that the public works program budget had been reduced

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<sup>23</sup> The height of this wall was raised 21 inches in 1960.

<sup>24</sup> NPS, "Justification for Individual Cost Projects: Project No. 400, Administration Building, Aztec," 1934, folder D34 AZRU: Buildings, General 1932-1935, Box 2, AZRU Archives.

In justifying conversion of the Morris residence to an administrative facility, NPS officials argued that the building was "well built and artistically constructed but is in the wrong place for residential development in our final development plans."

<sup>25</sup> Telegraph, F. M. Burt, President Aztec Chamber of Commerce, to the Director, NPS, Sept 6, 1933, Folder D34 AZRU: Buildings, General 1932-1935, Box 2, AZRU Archives.

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from 32 million dollars to 17 million dollars, and Aztec Ruin's appropriation therefore reduced to \$10,000 -- a sum for which Burt nonetheless voiced his "deep appreciation" and which he and the community of Aztec pleaded be spent quickly:

We sincerely trust work may be started without undue delay. The unemployment situation here is serious with a steady and growing demand for assistance from local and Federal Relief agencies, and we fear there will be much suffering and misery, especial among the children, unless employment is provided without great delay.

Permit us, therefore, to urge with all the earnestness at our command and in the name and behalf of humanity that nothing be permitted to delay starting work at Aztec National Monument at the earliest possible moment and before winter comes.<sup>26</sup>

Legal challenges delayed the building program for over a year. In October of 1934, local crews and contractors and NPS supervisory architects finally broke ground on the much-anticipated Aztec Ruins Administration Building and Museum, Federal Public Works Project No. 319.14.

### Public Works Administration Building Program, 1934-1941

NPS Junior Landscape Architect Charles A. Richey designed the new administration building to include a new lobby, connecting the Morris residence and the comfort stations constructed in 1931, and a museum wing (20'6 x 45') to be added to the west elevation of Morris's original exhibit room. This museum wing was ultimately omitted "so as to bring the contract price within the authorized allotment" of \$9,000. The five-rooms of the AMNH field station/Morris residence were converted to a custodian's office, clerk's room, work room, and naturalist's room. Contractor Harry Gedney of Durango, Colorado, was awarded the contract and was supervised in the field by Assistant Architect William Gebhardt of the NPS Western Field Office, who remained on site from November of 1934 until February of 1935.<sup>27</sup>

Upon completion, Gebhardt described the new building as being designed

in the Pueblo type of architecture, with concrete foundation, first story walls of stone and adobe brick finished on the exterior with cement plaster painted a sand color. Extending across the entire front of the building is a covered porch 8' wide with a colored cement floor and roofed with a ceiling constructed of large *vigas* supported on cedar columns on one side. Over these large *vigas* are laid smaller *vigas* laid up in panels of various patterns.

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<sup>26</sup> Burt to Tolson, September 13, 1933; Telegraph, Tolson (on behalf of Director, NPS) to Burt, Sept. 7, 1933, Folder D34 AZRU: Buildings General, 1932-1935, Box 2, AZRU Archives.

<sup>27</sup> Charles A. Richey, Junior Landscape Architect, to W. G. Carnes, Acting Chief Architect, December 14, 1933, Folder P34 AZRU: Buildings General, 1932-1935, Box 2, AZRU Archives; William Gebhardt, Assistant Architect, *Final Report to the Chief Architect on Construction of Administration and Museum Building Aztec Ruins National Monument, New Mexico*, Public Works Project F.P. No. 319, May 1, 1935, (report submitted to the Office of Deputy Chief Architect, Branch of Plans and Design Western Division San Francisco, California), Folder P34: Buildings, General, 1932-1935, Box 2, AZRU Archives.

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Inverted juniper posts, in the style introduced by Morris, supported this front porch extension. In a significant deviation from Morris's Anasazi-inspired design, the entire building was stuccoed and the roof line parapets removed. Adobe bricks used in construction of the addition and "for filling in of certain openings in the existing porch rail" were manufactured on site.<sup>28</sup>

Along the rear (north) elevation, Gedney's crews constructed a *ramada*, roughly mirroring that along the front elevation: "extending across the entire north side of the building on the exterior is a gravel walk with stone coping at the outer edge. This walk is roofed over with a trellis formed of various size [aspen] vigas supported on log posts." A change order, dated February 1935, resulted in installation of a gravel floor, concrete steps, and stone coping under the north elevation trellis.<sup>29</sup>

Gebhardt described the finished lobby as "consisting of . . . walls of stone veneer, a colored cement floor and [a] ceiling constructed of large [spruce] vigas supported on the side walls and spaced approximately six feet apart. These large vigas support smaller ones running in the opposite direction and are spaced in random widths which in turn support a split cedar ceiling"; this ceiling design mirrored that utilized by Morris in the original residence, although the timbers were new. Interior modifications to the original residence included plastering of the original *latilla* window sills; the addition of French doors in the custodian's office (originally the living room); the addition of log trim to interior doorways; and the construction of concrete stairs from the basement to the old cistern, which had been "cleaned out," fit with a door, and thereby converted to a store room.

Display cases for the lobby/museum finally arrived in the summer of 1937, at which time the majority of the collection long housed in the North Wing of the ruins was finally moved to an official museum facility. By September of 1938, as the Depression waned, Custodian Miller proudly reported that 2,569 visitors had toured the new facility during a one-month period.<sup>30</sup>

Although completion of the administration building/museum and reconstruction of the Great Kiva<sup>31</sup> stand as the hallmark of Depression-era reconstruction efforts, work relief funds and standard maintenance appropriations also resulted in substantial changes to the designed landscape. In 1935, local crews funded by the PWA completed the parking lot construction initiated under the Civil Works Administration: they laid asphalt, constructed the curbed central island, and planted the island with native shrubs and grasses (which provided an effective screen between the parking lot and the visitor center). In 1936, a small crew of National Youth Administration enrollees, funded with a Roads and Trails appropriation and supervised by Miller, planted the administration building yard with sage, chamiza, chico, rabbit brush, yucca, juniper, and native grasses. Larger plants were located near the walls, "sloping toward the building."<sup>32</sup> Additional landscape work, although "retarded due to insufficient funds," ultimately included

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<sup>28</sup> Gebhardt, *Final Report*, May 1, 1935; Negative No. AZRU 441, ca. 1935, Aztec Ruin National Monument Photo Collection, Aztec, New Mexico.

<sup>29</sup> Gebhardt, *Final Report*, May 1, 1935, AZRU Archives.

<sup>30</sup> T. C. Miller, Custodian, Monthly Report, December 23, 1936, p. 2, Folder A2615: Monthly Narrative Reports 1936-1939, Box 1; Gebhardt, *Final Report*, May 1, 1935; Negative No. AZRU 441, ca. 1935, Aztec Ruin National Monument Photo Collection, AZRU Archives.

<sup>31</sup> See Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, pp.129-134.

<sup>32</sup> Memorandum for the Regional Landscape Architect, April 11, 1949, folder H14: Administrative 1944-1951, Box 1, AZRU Archives; Negative No. AZRU 335, 1934; Negative No. AZRU 914, October 1934, Aztec Ruin National Monument Photo Collection; T. C. Miller, Custodian, Monthly Report, December 23, 1936, p. 2, Folder A2615: Monthly Narrative Reports 1936-1939, Box 1, AZRU Archives; Lister and Lister,

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"much clean up work," weed eradication, maintenance of the ditch system (allowing irrigation of the "few hundred" trees planted on the monument grounds) and maintenance and repair of the bitadobe-surfaced trail system leading from the administration building to the ruins.<sup>33</sup> In 1938, in a long-delayed response to pleas first voiced in the 1920s, county crews reconstructed the "cowpath" of an approach road between the town of Aztec and the ruins, ending the challenge of reaching the ruins during the rainy season. Simultaneously, the state paved New Mexico Highway 50 from Farmington to Aztec. Monument visitation increased accordingly, to a new high of 20,000 in 1938.<sup>34</sup>

Between 1938 and 1957, monument crews initiated only minor changes to the administration building and surrounding grounds. By 1949, the grounds planted in 1936 presented an "over-grown appearance," prompting general pruning, clean-up, introduction of "young" nursery stock, and replacement of the mature sage with saltbush and greasewood. Again, in 1951, the grounds were scheduled for "grading, planting, and seeding."<sup>35</sup> In the most obvious change, the "vine-covered," north-elevation *ramada*, constructed in 1934-35, was slowly dismantled, as the aspen *vigas* and poles rotted and threatened to collapse. The last section of *ramada* was removed in 1953, to be replaced with an open *portale* in 1958 as part of the Mission 66 program.<sup>36</sup>

### Mission 66 Development

In 1956, in anticipation of its 50th anniversary (1966) and in response to deteriorating infrastructure and dramatically increased traffic to America's national parks and monuments, the park service initiated a massive reconstruction program targeting concession, administrative, and residential compounds throughout the national park system.

Aztec Ruins -- burdened with unprecedented popularity, with a rapidly expanding local population, an outdated administrative facility, a too-small museum facility, a rapidly-deteriorating residential complex, and deteriorating ruins -- was substantially reconstructed during the course of the Mission 66 program. The historic residential and utility areas were replaced with modern facilities and the grounds were relandscaped. At the center of the Mission 66 effort, however, was construction of the large museum that had defined Aztec development goals since 1916. Lister and Lister write that "ideally, it was where the goods of daily life demonstrated Anasazi adaptation to this particular setting and to each other. The great house behind the modern building was a mere backdrop, sterile in its excavated state."<sup>37</sup>

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*Administrative History*, 1990, p. 146.

<sup>33</sup> Miller, Monthly Report, September 23, 1938, p. 4; Miller, Monthly Report, March 23, 1938, pp. 2-3, Folder A2615: Monthly Narrative Reports 1936-1939, Box 1, AZRU Archives.

<sup>34</sup> T. C. Miller, Custodian, Monthly Report, July 23, 1937, p. 1, Folder A2615: Monthly Narrative Reports 1936-1939, Box 1, AZRU Archives.

<sup>35</sup> Memorandum for the Regional Landscape Architect, April 11, 1949, folder H14: Administrative 1944-1951, Box 1; USDI NPS, "Buildings and Utilities Program 1951 Fiscal Year," October 4, 1951, p. 1, Folder D34 AZRU: Buildings, General, 1938-1953, Box 2, AZRU Archives.

<sup>36</sup> Kenneth M. Saunders, Architect, to Regional Chief of Planning and Construction, Region 3, June 22, 1950, Folder D34 AZRU: Buildings, General, 1938-1953, Box 2; Anonymous, "Visitor Center, Aztec Ruins National Monument," n.d. [ca. 1957], p.1, Folder D34 AZRU: Buildings, Visitor Center 1957, Box 2; Negative No. AZRU #513, 1960, Aztec Ruin National Monument Photo Archives.

<sup>37</sup> Lister and Lister, *Administrative History*, 1990, p. 162.

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In 1958, the Morris residence/administration building -- newly christened the visitor center -- was enlarged by the construction of a new, large museum to the south and east elevations. Designed by NPS architect Cecil J. Doty, this museum addition incorporated the site of the 1931 comfort stations, which were dismantled during the course of construction. Additional construction included a work room addition to the northwest corner of the original (1925) exhibit room; a restroom addition to the southwest corner of the original exhibit room; and a small furnace room addition to the northeast corner of the 1934 lobby/museum. A coat of new stucco over the entire building "blended" the new building with the old. The interior of the original components (1916-1934) were remodeled and reconfigured as part of the general reconstruction. Retained from the original residence were the unaltered ceiling of the residential component, the door and window lintels, the corner fireplace, and the replacement inverted juniper *portale* columns. (The fireplace and columns were retained only after protest from monument staff and the San Juan Archeological Society that the features were closely tied to Earl Morris; NPS Western Office of Design and Construction architects had initially proposed to remove the fireplace to make way for a display counter and to replace the juniper poles -- "considered by many as a badly proportioned curiosity rather than an appropriate good design" -- with standard timbers.)<sup>38</sup>

Administration building landscape changes enacted during this period include removal of the aboriginal trash mound at the center of the lawn (1966), the infill (1961) of the fish pond once centered in the north lawn and its replacement with a grassy island rimmed by concrete walks, construction of a river-rock and brick flagpole base, replacement of the bitadobe-surfaced trails with new concrete and asphalt walks, spot repair of the 1930s stuccoed walls, cutting an opening in the east side of the rear patio wall to create another access to the ruins trail, and construction of a new, east/west-oriented wall between the new bathrooms and the west boundary wall (constructed in 1933). This west wall was also "recapped," increasing the height from the original 3'6" to 5'3". The new planting plan calling for replacement of the native grasses and shrubs with a grass lawn, bordered by assorted plantings of pinon pine, prickly pear, yucca, myrtle, and Utah Honeysuckle -- "plants important to the life of the early Indians".<sup>39</sup>

The final changes to the historic complex were completed in the 1980s. In 1984 a collections room was added to the west wall of the library/work room. Finally, in 1988, the building was made handicapped-accessible through construction of additional stalls at the west end of the men's and women's restrooms, and the reconstruction of the front walkway to accommodate wheelchairs. A wet-charge fire suppression system was installed in the visitor center during the winter of 1995/1996.

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<sup>38</sup> NPS Western Office, Division of Design and Construction, "Preliminary Cost Estimate, Aztec Ruins National Monument," Oct. 15, 1957, Drawer: Buildings, Structures, Map File, AZRU Archives; Hanson, AZRU Superintendent, to the Regional Director, Nov. 22, 1958; Lyle E. Bennett, Supervisory Architect WODC, to the Regional Director, Sept. 12, 1958, Folder D3415-a AZRU 1956-1958, Box 38, General Corresponding and Planning Program 1953-1961, Southwest Regional Office.

<sup>39</sup> John W. Fisher, AZRU Superintendent, to Regional Director, Southwest Region (attn: Regional Chief, Division of Maintenance), April 19, 1967, Folder D32a 1965-1967 AZRU, Box 38, General Administration Files 1965-1967, AZRU Archives; Negative Nos. AZRU 513-517, 1960; 1098, ca. 1961; 1104, ca. 1961, Aztec Ruin National Monument Photo Archives; E. W. Watkins, Acting Regional Director, to John W. Fisher, AZRU Superintendent, June 29, 1966; Fisher to Watkins, June 23, 1966, Folder D32a 1965-1967 AZRU, Box 38, General Administration Files 1965-1967, Southwest Regional Office; Planting Plans #NP-AZ 3108, 3108-A and 3108-B, Technical Information Center, Denver Service Center, Denver, Co;

Watkins reported that previous archaeological tests had revealed the general contents and period of use of the trash mound. Removal was not an official archeological "dig" but an "orderly" removal in which items of value could be salvaged.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number        9        Page 16        Aztec Ruins National Monument Administration Building/Museum,  
San Juan County, New Mexico

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### 9. Bibliographic References, continued

#### NPS Reports

Corbett, John M. *Aztec Ruins National Monument*, National Park Service Historical Handbook Series No. 36. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1962.

Faris, Johnwill. *Final Construction Report, CWA Projects, 1933-1934*, April 27, 1934. Folder CWA Projects: Box 2, AZRU Archives, Aztec Ruins, New Mexico.

Gebhardt, William. USDI NPS. *Final Report To the Chief Architect On Construction of Administration and Museum Building Aztec Ruins National Monument New Mexico*, Public Works Project, F.P. No. 319, Physical Improvements. Aztec Ruins, New Mexico.

USDI NPS, *Draft General Management Plan, Development Concept Plan, Environmental Assessment, Aztec Ruins National Monument*, Denver, Colorado: NPS Denver Service Center, n.d. (ca. 1989)

USDI NPS, "Resources Management Plan Aztec Ruins National Monument, Fiscal Year 1992" recommended by Charles Cooper, AZRU Superintendent, and approved by Jo. ?, Regional Director, Southwest Region, 12/4/1991, AZRU Archives.

USDI NPS. *Aztec Ruins National Monument, New Mexico; Land Protection Plan*, March 1993. On file at Headquarters, Aztec Ruins National Monument, Aztec, New Mexico.

#### Manuscript Collections

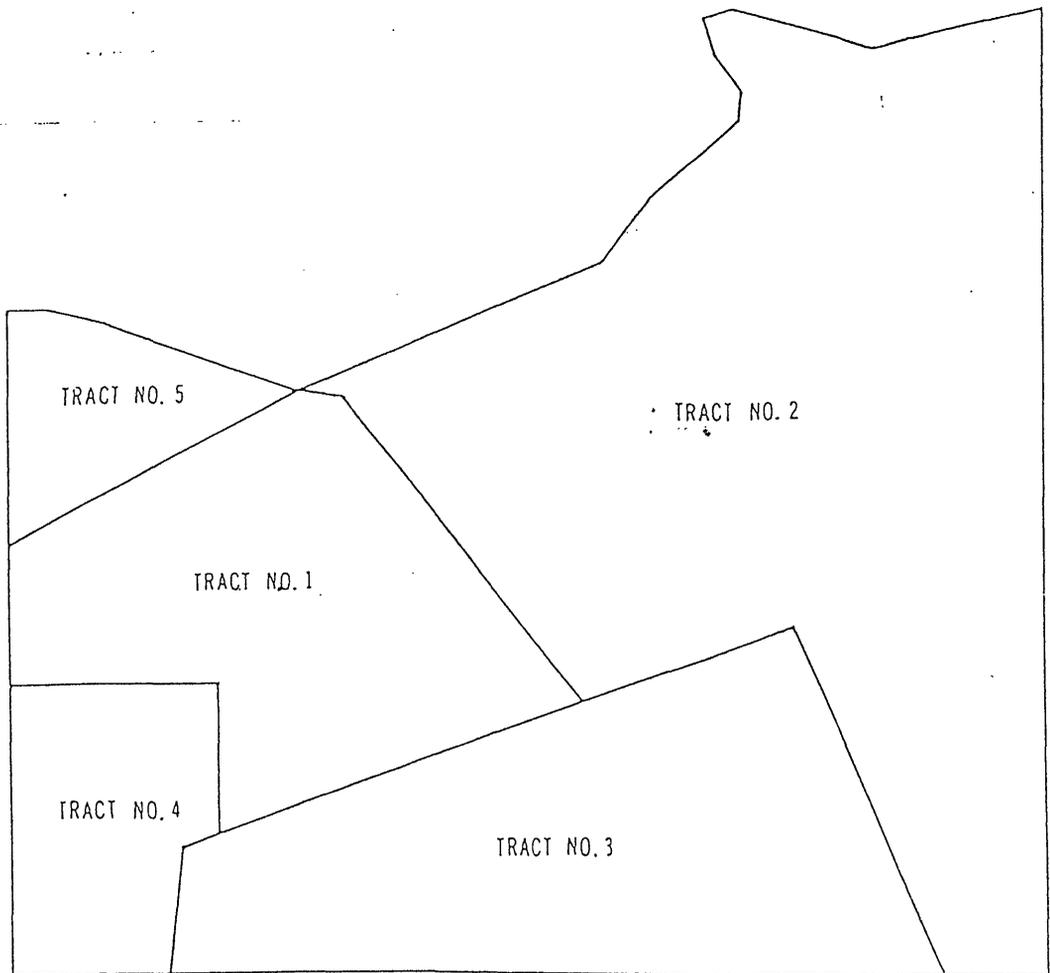
Aztec Ruins National Monument Archives and Photo Archives, Aztec Ruins, New Mexico.

National Archives, Rocky Mountain Region, Denver, Colorado.

Southwest Regional Office Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Technical Information Center, Denver Service Center, National Park Service, Denver, Colorado (see additional documentation).

- Drawing #: AZ 322-B, Preliminary Sketch for Administration Building, 3/19/1931
- Drawing #: AZ 322-F, Museum Cases for Administration & Museum Building, 11/3/1934
- Drawing #: AZ 322-E (3 sheets), Administration Building & Museum, 4/2/1934
- Drawing #: AZ 300?-A, Adobe Walls, Seats, Gates & Foot Bridge, 10/2/1935
- Drawing #: AZ 319, Map Showing Location Ditch and Other Works. . ., traced from original 11/5/1974
- Drawing #: NM-AZT 2030, Museum Bench, 9/9/1941
- Drawing #: NM-AZT 5304, AZRU Headquarters Area, Master Plan Utilities, 1942
- Drawing #: NM:AZT 2100-B, AZRU General Development Plan, 2/1950
- Drawing #: NM:AR 2100-D, AZRU General Development, 7/12/1956
- Drawing #: NM-AR 3105-A (5 sheets), Visitor Center Additions and Improvements, 5/2/1958
- Drawing #: NM-AR 3108-A, Site Development [landscape], Visitor Center Area, 3/18/1953
- Drawing #: NM-AZT 3108-B, Planting Plan - Rehabilitation, Visitor Center and Ruins Trail, 4/1967
- Drawing #: NM-AZT 2301-G, Roads and Trails Systems As Maintained, 4/1968
- Drawing #: NM 319-80016, Front Entrance Planter-Plantings, 7/1988
- Drawing #: NM 319-20023A, Existing Conditions Floor Plan, 7/1989



Tract No. 1, Establishment of Aztec Ruins National Monument. Deed No. 1, American Museum of Natural History. Presidential Proclamation by Warren G. Harding, No. 1650 -- Jan. 24, 1923 -- 42 Stat. 2295. 4.6 acres.

Tract No. 2, Enlargement of Monument. Deed No. 2, American Museum of Natural History. Presidential Proclamation by Calvin Coolidge, No. 1840 -- July 2, 1928 -- 45 Stat. 2954. 12.6 acres.

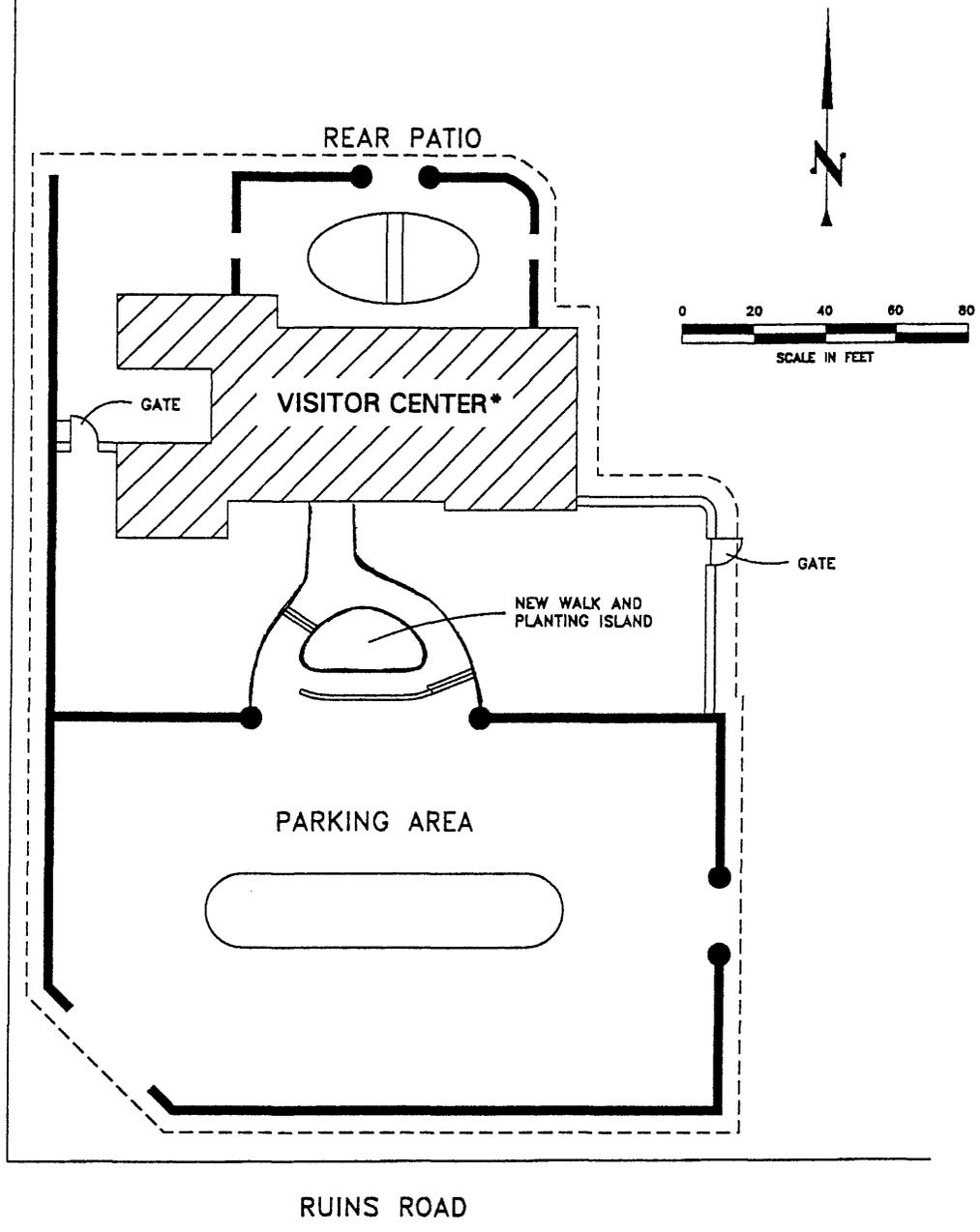
Tract No. 3, Enlargement of Monument. Deed No. 3, Purchase by Government. Presidential Proclamation by Herbert Hoover, No. 1928 -- Dec. 19, 1930 -- 46 Stat. 3040. 6.8788 acres.

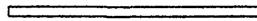
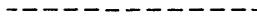
Tract No. 4, Enlargement of Monument. Deed No. 4, American Museum of Natural History. Presidential Proclamation by Herbert Hoover, No. 1928 -- Dec. 19, 1930 -- 46 Stat. 3040. 1.8 acres.

Tract No. 5, Enlargement of Monument. Deed No. 6, Southwestern Monuments Association. Presidential Proclamation by Harry S Truman, No. 2787 -- May 27, 1948 -- 63 Stat. 1513. 1.255 acres.

Total acreage, Aztec Ruins National Monument, 27.1338 acres, rounded

Robert H. Lister and Florence C. Lister, *Aztec Ruins National Monument; Administrative History of an Archeological Preserve*, Southwest Cultural Resources Center Professional Papers No. 24, (Santa Fe: NPS Division of History), 1990, Figure 5.1, p. 78.

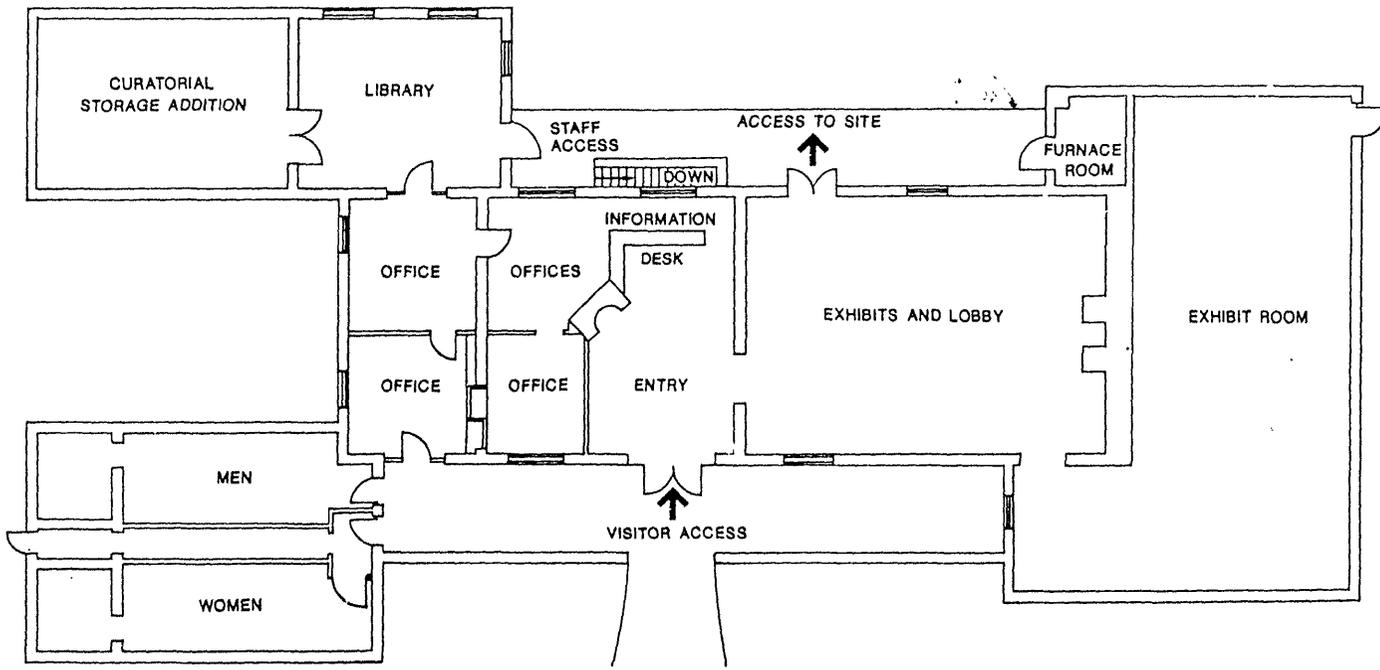


-  HISTORICAL WALL SEGMENT  
CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES
-  NEW WALL SEGMENTS  
NONCONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES
-  PROPERTY BOUNDARY

HRA PROJECT\448\AZTEC.DWG 5/22/98 BDL

\*OLD ADMINISTRATION BUILDING/MUSEUM

AZTEC RUINS NATIONAL MONUMENT



**EXISTING CONDITIONS**  
**VISITOR CENTER FLOOR PLAN**  
 GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN  
 AZTEC RUINS NATIONAL MONUMENT  
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 96001041

Date Listed: 10/11/96

Aztec Ruins Administration Bldg.-Museum  
Property Name

San Juan Co., NM  
County State

Multiple Name

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*Beth Dolan et*

*10/31/96*

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

The nomination uses "function" terminology for areas of significance. The correct areas of significance are Politics/Government, Entertainment/Recreation, and Conservation. This SLR has been discussed with and approved by Kathy McKoy of the Rocky Mountain Field Office of the National Park Service.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)



AZTEC RUINS NM VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/95

VIEW TO: NORTH SOUTH ELEVATION OF 1958  
MUSEUM ADDITION

LOCATION OF NEGATIVE: NPS, DENVER, CO.

photo 2



AZTEC RUINS NM VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CLYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: NW, South Entrance.

LOCATION OF NEGATIVE: NPS, DENVER, CO.

Photo 1



AZTEC RUINS VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: NORTH; south elevation of restroom  
additions (1958 and 1988)

LOCATION OF NEGATIVE: NPS, DENVER, CO

photo 3



AZTEC RUINS NM VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: EAST, SOUTH ELEVATION PORCH

LOCATION OF NEGATIVE: NPS, DENVER, CO

photo 4



AZTEC RUINS NM VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: (WNW); EAST ELEVATION of 1958  
museum addition

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: NPS, DENVER, CO

photos



AZTEC RUINS NM VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: SW - REAR (NORTH) ELEVATION PORCH

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: NPS, DENVER, CO

photo 6



AZTEC RUINS NM VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS, NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: SW - NORTH ELEVATION OF LIBRARY &  
CURATIONAL STORAGE ADDITIONS

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: NPS. DENVER, CO

photo 7



AZTEC RUINS NM VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: EAST - STAIRWELL TO BASEMENT ON  
NORTH ELEVATION

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: NPS, DENVER, CO

photos



**CHILDREN**  
Earn a badge  
Ask ranger how

Donations will help  
preserve and interpret  
Aztec Ruins National Monument

Wheelchair Available

No Smoking Please

Informational display area featuring a counter with brochures and a rack of materials. The rack contains various brochures and pamphlets, some with images of the monument. A man in a plaid shirt is standing at the counter, looking at the items.

Display case containing various artifacts, including pottery and other items. A large map or poster is visible on the wall behind the display case.

AZTEC RUINS NM VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: NW- INTERIOR OF LOBBY  
INFORMATION COUNTER

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: NPS, DENVER, CO

photo 9



AZTEC RUINS NM VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: NE - INTERIOR OF <sup>3</sup><sub>R</sub> LOBBY/VIDEO ROOM

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: NPS, DENVER, CO

photo 10

## EXCAVATION

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THE EXCAVATION OF THE TOMB OF THE VIRGIN MARY

THE EXCAVATION OF THE TOMB OF THE VIRGIN MARY



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MUSEUM OF  
UNCLAN  
RELIGION

AZTEC RUINS NM VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: NORTH - INTERIOR OF EXHIBIT ROOM  
MUSEUM CONSTRUCTED IN 1958

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: NPS, DENVER, CO

photo 11



AZTEC RUINS NM VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: NE - INTERIOR OF LIBRARY / WORK ROOM

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: NPS, DENVER, CO

photo 12



AZTEC RUINS NM VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: SW - INTERIOR OF WOMEN'S RESTROOM

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: NPS, DENVER, CO

photo 13



CAUTION

23

AZTEC RUINS NM VISITOR CENTER

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: WEST - INTERIOR OF CISTERN

LOCATION OF NEGATIVE: NPS, DENVER, CO

photo 14



AZTEC RUINS NM PARKING LOT AND  
PERIMETER WALL

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

PHOTOGRAPHER: J. CAYWOOD (HRA) 9/17/1995

VIEW TO: NE

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: NPS, DENVER, CO

PHOTO 15



AZTEC RUINS NM, Rear Landscaped area

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

Photographer: J. Caywood, 9/17/1995

View to: SSW

Location of negatives: NPS, Denver CO  
photo 16



AZTEC RUINS NM - REAR LANDSCAPING

AZTEC RUINS NM, SAN JUAN CO., NM

photographer: J. Caywood 9/17/1995

View to: West

Location of negative: NPS Denver, CO  
photo 17