

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Registration Form**

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Federal Office Building
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: J. J. "Jake" Pickle Federal Building

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 300 East 8th Street **NOT FOR PUBLICATION**
CITY OR TOWN: Austin **VICINITY**
STATE: Texas **CODE:** TX **COUNTY:** Travis **CODE:** 453 **ZIP CODE:** 78701

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

John Savage Federal Preservation 3/11/11
Signature of certifying official / Title Officer, GSA Date

State or Federal agency / Bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark Wolfe 3/4/11
Signature of commenting or other official Date

SHPO, Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the 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.
- removed from the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- other, explain
 See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

James McWilliam 4-20-11

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY

contributing	noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: GOVERNMENT/government offices

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: GOVERNMENT/government offices

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: MONERN MOVEMENT: New Formalism

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION CONCRETE
 WALLS CONCRETE, STONE/granite
 ROOF STONE, ASPHALT
 OTHER

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-8)

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

X	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
X	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
	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 CONSIDERATION: G (less than 50 years of age or has achieved significance within the past 50 years)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Politics/Government

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1965-1971

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1965, 1966

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: Johnson, Lyndon Baines

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT / BUILDER: Page Southerland Page; Brooks and Barr (architects)
More, Gail Linkey (designer, presidential suite interior)

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-9 through 8-13)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-14)

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

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

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

- State historic preservation office: *Texas Historical Commission, Austin*
- Other state agency
- Federal agency: *General Services Administration, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library and Museum*
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: Less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
1.	14	621320	3349100

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The Federal Office Building is located in Lots 1-6, comprising the entire south half of Block 95 in the original plat of Austin.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: The nomination consists of the property historically associated with 300 East 8th Street, Austin, Texas. The plaza to the north of the building is not included in the nomination.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: Andrew J. Schmidt/Senior Architectural Historian

DATE: September 2010

ORGANIZATION: Summit Envirosolutions, Inc., prepared for the U. S. General Services Administration

STREET & NUMBER: 1217 Bandana Blvd. N.

TELEPHONE: 651-842-4202

CITY OR TOWN: St. Paul

STATE: MN

ZIP CODE: 55108

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-15)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: U. S. General Services Administration, Region 7

STREET & NUMBER: 819 Taylor Street

TELEPHONE: 817-978-4229

CITY OR TOWN: Fort Worth

STATE: Texas

ZIP CODE: 76102

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Federal Office Building
Austin, Travis County, Texas

Description

The 1964 Federal Office Building is located at 300 East 8th Street in downtown Austin, Travis County, Texas. It is a nine story New Formalist style building constructed of concrete, using both pre-cast and site-cast elements. Stylistic elements include a rectangular single-volume form set on a podium-like ground floor level, slender concrete window surrounds, and concrete panels that simulate a projecting cornice. The significant aspects of the building are its interior spaces, specifically the western half of the ninth floor that served as a presidential office suite for Lyndon Baines Johnson.

The Federal Office Building is located within the city's central business district and occupies the southern half of the block bounded by East 8th, East 9th, Trinity, and San Jacinto streets. An outdoor plaza occupies the northern half of the block. A former United States Post Office (now United States Courthouse) occupies the block north of the plaza, as well as the section of 9th street that once ran underneath the cantilevered building (it has since been closed to traffic). The former post office building dates to the same period as the Federal Office Building, but it has been modified and is not nominated at this time. The Federal Office Building site slopes to the south, and as a result, the first floor is at the plaza level, whereas the ground level fronts onto 8th Street. The building is encircled at the first floor level by a concourse with a concrete wall approximately 6 feet high. On the street front elevations, the building's setback is the width of the sidewalk and the concourse. The building has a single volume, rectangular massing that is oriented on an east-west axis. The elevations are punctuated by grid-patterned openings, formed by concrete window surrounds constructed with T-shaped sections. The main entrances are set within the grids and are discernable only from approaching stairways.

The Federal Office Building houses nine stories of office space. Its ground level combines additional office space and an open-sided parking area tucked under the east end of the first floor. A penthouse level houses the building mechanical equipment, and a basement level garage has 64 parking spaces. The building is concrete-framed with concrete floors and foundation. The flat roof is divided into upper and lower levels and is finished with asphalt and gravel. With a rectangular floor plan, the first through ninth floors are each organized with office space around the perimeter, a central space with elevators, stairwells and additional offices, and corridors between the outer and central spaces. Each floor contains over 13,000 square feet of floor space.

The Federal Office Building was designed in 1962 and 1963 by the architectural firms Page, Southerland, Page and Brooks & Barr for the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). The GSA maintains a set of original drawings in electronic (CADD and Adobe.pdf) format. The building was completed in 1964, and there have been no additions to the building since that time. The ninth floor served as a presidential office suite from 1965 until President Johnson left office in January of 1969. As former president, Johnson continued to use the office space from 1969 to 1971, when the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library and Museum opened. The function of the building as office space has not changed since construction. The west end of the ninth floor is unique, differentiated by window sash with bullet-proof glass installed for presidential security and a higher quality of architectural finishes, and has changed little. Other office spaces within the building have been modified to meet tenant needs and up-date restrooms and lighting.

Besides the ninth floor executive suite, other features installed in the Federal Office Building specifically for use by the President have been removed over the years. A steel-reinforced concrete helipad, which allowed the President of the United States to fly via helicopter from Bergstrom Air Force Base in Austin to the Federal Office Building, was located on the roof until it was removed in the 1980s. An elevator, also removed in the 1980s, connected the rooftop helipad with the ninth floor presidential suite in the former press room area. A secure sally port and parking area for the presidential limousine located in the basement has been converted to general parking. In 2000, the Federal Office Building was

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renamed the J.J. "Jake" Pickle Federal Building in honor of Texas Congressman J.J. Pickle, who served 31 years in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Exterior

The predominant material of the exterior walls is concrete, though the ground level walls and areas below first floor windows are faced with polished granite. The façade arrangement of the north and south elevations and the east and west elevations are nearly identical from the first floor through penthouse level. Each façade is a grid of window and door openings—450 openings on the north and south elevations and 150 openings on the east and west elevations. The openings are full height equivalent on each floor. The openings are framed by rows and columns of T-shaped pre-cast concrete sections fit together to create the grid. The concrete sections taper at each point, giving each opening an oblong hexagonal shape. On the first through ninth floors, all openings are for windows except for three doorways on the first floor of both the north and south elevations. All window openings contain pivoting aluminum sash with aluminum spandrel panels set above and below. However, below the first floor windows are granite spandrel panels. The six first floor entryways have aluminum-framed glass doors with windows above them. The penthouse level openings contain metal louvers.

Due to the slope of the building site, the ground level on the south elevation is exposed. These ground level walls are faced with polished granite. There is an entrance with three glass and aluminum doors on the ground level, and the entry is flanked by bands of fixed aluminum sash windows. The windows, in turn, are flanked by a pair of stairways leading to the first floor concourse. The ground level entries are accessed by a half flight of unpolished granite stairs and are offset from the street by a low unpolished granite-faced retaining wall. The east one-third of the ground level is an open sided parking area. Three rows of four square concrete columns support the first floor, which forms the ceiling of the parking area. Approximately 10-foot-high concrete walls faced on the street side with unpolished granite enclose the parking area under the building. Within the parking area, there is a loading dock and a row of fixed sash windows opening to the enclosed portion of the ground level. There is an additional open-air parking area to the north. On the north elevation, the concourse wall opens to a half flight of granite stairs that provide access to the three first floor entries. An ADA access ramp leads off of the stairs to the east. A flagpole stands to the east of the stairs.

Interior

In 1965, President Johnson and his staff occupied the 13 rooms encompassing the western end of the Federal Office Building's ninth floor. Separate from this area, the Secret Service, the FBI, the CIA, and a regional civil service investigator used the office space in the eastern half of the ninth floor. Because the significant space of the Federal Office Building is the western half of the ninth floor, the narrative description of the interior will focus on that area.

The suite of offices in the western half of the ninth floor comprised President Johnson's private quarters, the executive office suite, and a press room. Many of the rooms include a news broadcast monitor that offered several local radio stations. The south side of the presidential suite includes President Johnson's private quarters, whereas the executive office is located in the northwest corner, and staff offices are along the north side. The private quarters and executive office feature two-inch-thick, bullet-proof glass in the exterior window sash.¹

¹ John Russick, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form : Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Office Suite," unpublished manuscript prepared by the Texas Historical Commission, Austin, 1996.

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The elevator lobby, which is located at the approximate center of the ninth floor, is typical of lobbies throughout the Federal Office Building (except the first floor). The flooring is covered with industrial-grade carpet, and the walls are painted drywall. The ceiling consists of suspended plastic panels with wood molding and flush-mounted fluorescent lighting. There are four elevators, two facing east and two facing west. To the south of the elevators, an east-west running corridor served as the main entrance to the presidential suite. This corridor is finished with wood plank flooring, a board-and-batten type wood paneling on the walls, and drywall ceiling. At the end of the corridor, a slightly recessed entry has corbelled wood surrounds and a wood and glass paneled door. This entry leads to the reception area of the executive office suite.

The executive office suite, originally laid out for a reception area; a foyer and secretary's office; staff offices; and the executive office currently houses the local offices of United States Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. The reception area has been remodeled since the 1960s, but it retains its curved wall corners and some original finishes, including a decorative wood-slat ceiling with recessed lights and wood plank flooring. The reception area is connected to the foyer via a double doorway with wood surrounds and a narrow transom with a louvered wood grille. The foyer has curved corners and wood flooring like the reception area. On the west wall of the foyer, a double doorway with a louvered wood transom leads to an office with a decorative wood ceiling similar to the reception area. A door in the west wall of the foyer opens to a short corridor leading to the executive office.

The executive office is located in the northwest corner of the Federal Office Building. The windows in this office are full height, floor to ceiling, and there are four windows each on the north and west walls. During the 1960s when Lyndon Johnson occupied the space, these windows provided views of the state capitol building, the University of Texas, and the hill country beyond; those views are now largely blocked by modern high-rise buildings. The decorative feature that remains intact is the main light fixture. Centered in the ceiling, the square light fixture is recessed and edged with a corbelled wood frame; its bank of fluorescent lights is covered by suspended plastic panels. Additional ceiling lighting is provided by individual, recessed circular light fixtures. Other original features include wood paneling shaped to mirror the oblong hexagonal shape of the exterior window openings, featuring built-in display shelves.

Two staff offices are located along the north exterior wall to the east of the executive office. These offices are plainer than the other spaces in the executive suite, and they each include a bank of three windows, plain wood paneling on the walls, and a suspended acoustical tile ceiling with recessed fluorescent lights. To the west of these offices, additional office space and the former press room are located in an area now partitioned off from the presidential suite. These offices have been remodeled for use by other federal agencies. The elevator that led to the heliport on the roof, once located in the northeast corner of the press room, has been removed.

The rooms comprising President Johnson's private quarters are located along the south exterior wall of the presidential suite, and include a conference/dining room, a sitting room, a kitchen, a private office/library, and bathroom/dressing room area. The main entrance to this area was originally through a set of double doors in the foyer of the executive office suite. The doors now lead to an unadorned vestibule, which has drywall walls, narrow wood door surrounds, and an acoustical tile ceiling. The vestibule opens to an access corridor on the east, the conference/dining room on the south, and a restroom and closet on the west. The restroom, though limited to a toilet, a sink with marble countertop, and a mirror, is nonetheless notable because the presidential seal adorns the sink basin. The corridor is a relatively narrow hallway that provides access to the kitchen and to the private office and bathroom/dressing room.

The conference/dining room and sitting room are located in the southwest corner of the Federal Office Building. The two rooms form an L-plan that can be partitioned by a sliding door housed in a pocket in the west wall of the dining room. The entryway from the vestibule leads into the conference/dining room through an open doorway that can be closed off

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with a sliding door housed in a pocket in the north wall of the conference/dining room. The sitting room is to the west of the conference/dining room. There are six floor-to-ceiling windows along the south wall and four windows along the west wall. Flanked by two windows on either side, a fireplace with a copper hood extends from the west wall and is open on three sides. A stone hearth is suspended a few inches above the floor. The floors are covered with gold carpet, and the walls are painted drywall. The coffered ceiling consists of wood-framed square and rectangular coffers offset by plain drywall on both planes of the ceiling. News monitors, panels with on/off/volume knobs preset to local radio stations, are mounted on the north wall of the conference/dining room and the east wall of the sitting room. An opening with a double pocket door in the north wall of the sitting room opens to the foyer near the reception area. A swinging door leads out of the dining/conference room to the kitchen on the east wall. Some original pieces of furniture remain in these two rooms, including a number of armchairs, end tables, lamps, and a television console.²

The kitchen is located to the east of the conference/dining room and may be accessed from that room or from the corridor. The one window in the room is located on the south wall. The floor is covered with one-foot-square linoleum tiles, and the ceiling consists of suspended acoustical tiles. An intermittent countertop and wooden cupboards are positioned along the south, west, and east walls of the kitchen. All of the replacement appliances in the kitchen have a stainless steel finish, including a dishwasher under the counter on the south wall, an ice maker under the counter on the west wall, a stove on the east wall with a range hood, and two refrigerators, one on the east wall, and one on the north. In addition, there is a double sink on the south wall and another double sink on the west wall. One news monitor is mounted on the west wall.

East of the kitchen, a small suite of rooms includes Lyndon Johnson's private office/library, a bathroom, and a dressing room. The office has four windows along the south wall about 30 inches above the floor level and stained wood paneling on the walls with decorative raised vertical slats. The floor is covered with the original orange carpeting. A door on the west wall leads to a dressing room, which consists of a vestibule with a window and a walk-in closet with double wood doors. A full bathroom with shower, toilet, and sink is located west of the dressing room. The shower is marble surfaced with four special, high-pressure spigots, two high and two low, and the sink has a marble countertop. In addition, there is a floor-mounted news monitor and a weighing scale built into the east wall.

Throughout the rest of the building, typical office and corridor spaces have industrial-grade carpeting covering the concrete floors, drywall walls, and suspended acoustical tile ceilings. The first floor lobby, however, includes granite tile flooring, full-height marble veneer on the walls, and a plaster ceiling.

² GSA property management staff indicated that much of the furniture dates to Lyndon Johnson's occupancy of the suite, which was confirmed by photographs archived at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library.

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Statement of Significance

The 1964 Federal Office Building in Austin, Travis County, Texas, is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and B in the area of Politics/Government, and meets Criteria Consideration G (Properties That Have Achieved Significance within the Past 50 Years) for its close association with President Lyndon Baines Johnson during the period 1965-1971. The presidential suite on the ninth floor of the Federal Office Building served as an office for President Johnson during the considerable amount of time he spent in central Texas during his presidency. In addition to its general association with President Johnson, the suite was the site of important national policy discussions, including a critical meeting on December 6, 1966, that established a policy of negotiation between the United States and the Soviet Union regarding nuclear weapons that established the United States' position regarding the Soviet Union's Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) defense system, and set the stage for the future Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT). This change in stance would lead to negotiations and eventual signing of the SALT agreement, which was the first formal agreement between the two countries limiting the numbers of nuclear weapons. The decisions made during this and other meetings are of national significance. President Johnson continued to use the suite after his presidency, beginning in January 1969, through 1971 for the planning of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library in Austin, and in the preparation of his memoirs. The building retains a high degree of all aspects of integrity.

Historic Context: Construction of Federal Buildings and the Federal Office Building in Austin

The late-nineteenth century was a time of growth for the federal government, as institutions were established or expanded to administer the growing national economy. The number of federal civilian employees grew five-fold from the 1860s to the 1890s. To house the growing federal workforce, the United States Treasury Department constructed U.S. mints, post offices, and courthouses in cities and towns around the country during the second half of the nineteenth century. The Office of Supervising Architect, established within the Treasury Department in 1864, oversaw design and construction of the federal civilian facilities. Federal buildings were the public façade of the federal government; they embodied the federal presence at the local level, and Supervising Architects consistently sought to convey dignity and refinement in their designs through the proportions, siting, materials, and overall solidity of the buildings.³

From 1895 through World War I, the federal government grew at an even faster pace than previously, due to Progressive Era reform efforts. As the role of the federal government increased, so too, did the number of buildings built to house it. In 1899, the Supervising Architect's Office was responsible for 399 buildings, and by 1912, the number had grown to 1,126.⁴ During this period of expansion, Beaux Arts Neo-Classical and, to a lesser extent, revival styles executed in formal, symmetrical Neo-Classical forms, dominated public building design. James Knox Taylor, who served as Supervising Architect from 1897 to 1912, viewed Neo-Classical designs, particularly the monumental and highly ornamented façades, as symbols of federal authority and architectural sophistication in local communities.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, federal buildings were based on individual plans and designs. The Public Buildings Act of 1913, however, directed the Treasury Department to economize costs and led to the standardization of plans, specifications, and materials for different classes of federal buildings. After 1916, standardized plans were

³ Lois Craig, ed., and the staff of the Federal Architecture Project, *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and Symbols in the United States Government Building*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1979; Beth M. Boland, *National Register Bulletin 13: How to Apply the National Register Criteria to Post Offices*, originally published 1984, revised 1994, document available on the internet: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb13/>.

⁴ Craig, *The Federal Presence*, 1979.

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commonly used under the direction of Acting Supervising Architect James Wetmore, and they typically retained the basic Beaux Arts style, massing, and plan, but with fewer architectural details on the smaller buildings.⁵

The trend of standardized designs continued during the 1920s and 1930s. With the onset of the Great Depression, the Public Works Administration (PWA) was established in 1933 to oversee planning and construction of public works projects. Under the PWA, government architecture was designed in a simplified classical revival style, which often featured murals or sculptures.⁶ The Reorganization Act of 1939 created the Public Buildings Administration within the Federal Works Agency (FWA), removing control of federal architecture from the Treasury Department and abolishing the title Supervising Architect. Civilian federal building design and construction slowed during the World War II years.

The Public Buildings Act of 1949 established the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), which included the Office of the Supervising Architect and absorbed the design function of the Federal Works Agency. In addition, the Act allowed the Office of the Supervising Architect to rely on private architecture firms to carry out public building designs. When the Office employed its standard designs, the result was extremely utilitarian with the emphasis on stripped modern design, functionality, and automobile access.

The Federal Office Building is a fine example of the GSA using private – and in this case local – architectural firms to design federal buildings. During 1961 through 1962, the firms Page Southerland Page and Brooks & Barr designed the Federal Office Building, as well as the plaza to the north and a former post office building, now the Homer Thornberry Judicial Building. The complex, which encompasses two entire city blocks, was designed to centralize federal operations in Austin. Page, Southerland & Page was founded in 1898 and had a solid record of designing buildings, including the Brown Building (1938) and Ernest O. Thompson Building (1940) in Austin. Brooks and Barr, now Brooks Barr Graeber White & Partners, had long ties with Johnson and would later design several buildings on the University of Texas campus. The firm Warrior Construction Inc. of Houston constructed the Federal Office Building during 1963 through 1964. The total constructed cost of the Federal Office Building was \$9,800,739.⁷

In November 1963 while the Federal Office Building was under construction, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated and Johnson was sworn in as President. Originally, the west half of the ninth floor was planned to house the GSA regional offices, including regional director Sidney Hughes. In mid-1964, however, President Johnson selected the ninth floor of the new Federal Office Building to serve as his local office. Gail Linkey Moore, a GSA interior designer, designed the space that would serve as the presidential suite. By December of 1964, the Federal Office Building was ready for occupancy, and in the spring of 1965, President Johnson held his first official function in the Federal Office Building—a press conference in the Press Room.⁸

Historic Context: The Presidency of Lyndon Baines Johnson

Lyndon Baines Johnson was born in 1908 in the hill country west of Austin, Texas, and after growing up in the small town of Johnson City, he graduated from Southwest Texas State Teachers College in 1930. After a year of teaching, the call of politics was too strong, and Johnson took a position as aide to United States Congressman Richard Kleberg. In

⁵ Emily Harris, "History of Federal Policy Concerning Post Office Construction, 1900-1940," draft report for the National Park Service, printed by the United States Postal Service as "History of Post Office Construction, 1900-1940," July 1982, page 11.

⁶ Ibid., 20, 25.

⁷ John Russick, "Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Office Suite," Unpublished manuscript prepared by the Texas Historical Commission, 1996, 12-13; "Page Southerland Page," brief biography of the firm is available at: www.emporis.com.

⁸ Russick, 1996, 13.

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1935, Johnson was named Texas state director of the National Youth Administration, one of President Franklin Roosevelt's federal relief programs. Two years later in 1937, Johnson was elected to the United States House of Representatives, beginning a career in the U.S. Congress that would extend more than 20 years. Although Lyndon Johnson rose in influence during his 11 years in the House of Representatives, after his election to the United States Senate in 1948, he began a rapid ascent in leadership. With only two years in the Senate, Johnson was named the Democratic Party Whip, and two years after that, he was named Minority Leader. After the Democrats regained control of the Senate in the 1954 elections, Lyndon Johnson became Majority Leader and began a five year period in which he utterly dominated the Senate.⁹

Lyndon Johnson ran a low-key campaign for President in 1960, and when John F. Kennedy was nominated by the Democratic Party, Johnson accepted the nomination of Vice President. Serving as Vice President was a difficult period for Lyndon Johnson because he had given up his position of power in the Senate and was in the shadow of Kennedy. President Kennedy's assassination on November 22, 1963, however, unexpectedly elevated Lyndon Johnson to the office of the presidency. Determined to use the tragedy to advance an ambitious agenda of social reform, Johnson pushed for major civil rights legislation and for a host of programs known as the Great Society, including anti-poverty programs, improvements in housing and transportation, environmental protection, and educational reform. While Lyndon Johnson promoted these social reforms, was elected in his own right, and oversaw myriad new federal offices to carry out the programs during 1964-1966, foreign policy increasingly took center stage. The growing involvement of the United States in Vietnam took increasing amounts of the President's attention. The containment of Communism drove all of the United States foreign policy initiatives during this period, and countering perceived threats from the Soviet Union, particularly nuclear aggression, was of utmost importance to the Johnson Administration.

Beginning during Johnson's years in the Senate and continuing during his presidency, his ranch, known as the LBJ Ranch and located in the hill country about 60 miles west of Austin, served as a refuge for Lyndon Johnson and became known as the "Texas White House." Lyndon Johnson spent significant amounts of time at the ranch while President, and many official functions and meetings were held there.¹⁰ After the Austin Federal Office Building was completed in early 1965, it provided formal office space for Johnson and his staff, and there are records of many meetings in the Federal Office Building.¹¹ The most significant meeting at the Federal Office Building was held on December 6, 1966, in which the President, several senior advisors, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided the future of United States antiballistic missile (ABM) defense and set the stage for the future Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT).

United States-Soviet relations regarding nuclear weapons during the period from the early 1960s to the late 1960s evolved from a determination to maintain or gain superiority over the other to acceptance of a rough parity in nuclear capabilities and defenses. Once this acceptance was reached, the two sides could begin to negotiate limitations on nuclear weapons and defenses. The idea of nuclear parity stemmed not from maintaining equal numbers of missiles and warheads, but from the concept of mutually assured destruction, which asserted that each side needed just enough offensive capability to withstand a nuclear attack by the other side, or "first strike," and be able to launch a retaliatory strike. The threat of a retaliatory strike would deter the other side from launching a first strike. The counterpoint to the theory of assured destruction was the development of a damage limiting capability, which would reduce the dependence on offensive weapons.

⁹ Here and below, see generally, Robert Dallek, *Lyndon B. Johnson: Portrait of a President*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

¹⁰ Hal K. Rothman, *LBJ's Texas White House: "Our Heart's Home,"* College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2001; Russick 1996, 4-5.

¹¹ Russick 1996, 14-15.

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The development and deployment of a Soviet ABM system in the mid-1960s provided the Soviets with some protection against a United States first strike, but it also could allow the Soviets to consider a first strike confident that their ABM system would counter United States retaliation. The response of the United States was to begin development of multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRV), which would allow multiple warheads to be mounted on a single missile, larger missiles that could carry MIRV, as well as an ABM system. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, however, argued that deployment of an ABM system by the United States would only encourage the Soviets to further increase their offensive capacity, and thus lead both sides, after great expenditure and a period of international instability, back to the approximate status quo before the deployment of ABMs. Therefore, Robert McNamara argued that neither side should deploy ABMs but should depend on the deterrent of mutually assured destruction. The other school of thought, promoted by the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and others, argued that the United States should develop and deploy a large-scale ABM system as quickly as possible because the Soviets likely would become increasingly aggressive in all levels of conflict due to their strategic advantage in the nuclear theater. The result of this policy debate would change the course of United States-Soviet relations.

While the direction of the United States nuclear strategy during the 1960s would have been determined over the course of many meetings, several sources cite meetings held at the Federal Office Building as particularly important. Robert McNamara had a series of meetings with President Johnson in Texas during November and December 1966 regarding the defense budget and appropriations for an ABM system. President Johnson's national security advisor Walt Rostow wrote that, "The critical meeting took place December 6, 1966, on the ninth floor of the Federal Office Building at Austin, Texas, as Lyndon Johnson was arriving at final decisions on the FY 1968 budget."¹² Attending this meeting were President Johnson, Robert McNamara, Walt Rostow, Deputy Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, General Earle Wheeler, General Harold Johnson, and General John McConnell. According to John Newhouse, this meeting was the "decisive meeting" regarding funding of an ABM system, and more significantly, it led to a change in the United States' position toward negotiating nuclear arms limitations with the Soviets. "The die was cast in the form of a... compromise worked out by Robert McNamara and Cyrus Vance in the meeting with Lyndon Johnson [and the Joint Chiefs] in Austin [at the Federal Office Building]."¹³ Robert McNamara's compromise was that the next year's federal budget should include funding for ABM procurement, but that the Administration should delay spending the money or making a decision as to the type of ABM system to deploy until every possible effort was made to negotiate an agreement with the Soviets to limit strategic arms. As a result of decisions made at this meeting, the United States would take a position of negotiation regarding nuclear weapons and defenses against them. John Newhouse states that, "The days and weeks that followed [the meeting] marked the precise beginning of SALT."¹⁴ Following the meeting in Austin, Lyndon Johnson decided to request funding for only a limited ABM system, and within one month (January 1967), he increased pressure on the Soviets for SALT talks. Although Lyndon Johnson was rebuffed several times over the next year and a half, by July 1968, the United States and the Soviet Union had agreed to begin SALT talks. Administration staff began working on a United States negotiating position immediately, reaching an internal consensus within weeks.¹⁵

The SALT negotiations would not be led by the Johnson Administration, however, as he had announced in the spring of 1968 that he would not seek a second full term as President. After seven rounds of formal negotiations over four years, President Richard Nixon and Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev signed the SALT agreement on May 26, 1972. Lyndon Johnson, meanwhile, had retired after Richard Nixon was inaugurated in January 1969 to the LBJ Ranch. During

¹² W. W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power: An Essay in Recent History*, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972, 386.

¹³ John Newhouse, *Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973, page 85.

¹⁴ Newhouse 1973, page 86.

¹⁵ Rostow 1972, page 387.

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retirement, Lyndon Johnson continued to use the ninth floor of the Federal Office Building for office space as he compiled his memoirs and staff sorted through documents to be archived in the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library. Lyndon Johnson's health deteriorated after 1970. Debilitated by a heart condition, he died on January 22, 1973.

Summary of Significance

The 1965 Federal Office Building is significant for its association with the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson. From its completion in early 1965 through 1969, the presidential suite on the ninth floor of the building provided office space for the President while he was in Texas. He held numerous meetings in the building, the most significant of which was a meeting on December 6, 1966, that established a policy of negotiation between the United States and the Soviet Union regarding nuclear weapons. This change in stance would lead to negotiations and eventual signing of the SALT agreement, which was the first formal agreement between the two countries limiting the numbers of nuclear weapons. The decisions made during this and other meetings are of national significance. Johnson continued to actively use the office suite through 1971, as he compiled his memoirs and prepared for the opening of his presidential library on the nearby campus of the University of Texas at Austin. Although the building is less than 50 years old, because of its exceptionally significant associations, it meets Criteria Consideration G and is eligible for listing in the National Register. Several properties in central Texas are listed or are eligible for listing at the national level of significance for their association with Johnson's life, including his childhood home in Johnson City, and nearby Johnson Ranch, which are now part of Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Park; the Johnson Presidential Library (not yet listed); and the Santa Rita Courts public housing project in east Austin, the construction of which Johnson championed during his first term as a congressman. The Federal Office Building compliments these resources for its active use by Johnson in his capacity as President of the United States, and in the years immediately following his term, as he continued to shape his legacy.

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Federal Office Building
Austin, Travis County, Texas

Name of Property: Austin Federal Office Building

City or Vicinity: Austin

County: Travis

State: Texas

Photographer: Andrew J. Schmidt

Date Photographed: March 2007

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 17. SOUTH FAÇADE, EAST 8TH STREET, FACING NORTHWEST.
- 2 of 17. SOUTH ENTRANCE, EAST 8TH STREET, FACING NORTHEAST.
- 3 of 17. NORTH AND WEST FAÇADES, FACING SOUTHEAST.
- 4 of 17. PLAZA, FACING SOUTHEAST.
- 5 of 17. NORTH AND EAST FAÇADES, FACING SOUTHWEST.
- 6 of 17. DETAIL OF WINDOWS.
- 7 of 17. INTERIOR, ELEVATOR LOBBY.
- 8 of 17. INTERIOR, NINTH FLOOR ELEVATOR LOBBY.
- 9 of 17. INTERIOR, NINTH FLOOR RECEPTION AREA.
- 10 of 17. INTERIOR, NINTH FLOOR NORTH CORRIDOR.
- 11 of 17. INTERIOR, NINTH FLOOR STAFF OFFICE.
- 12 of 17. INTERIOR, NINTH FLOOR SITTING ROOM.
- 13 of 17. INTERIOR, NINTH FLOOR SITTING AND DINING ROOM.
- 14 of 17. INTERIOR, NINTH FLOOR DINING ROOM.
- 15 of 17. INTERIOR, NINTH FLOOR KITCHEN.
- 16 of 17. INTERIOR, NINTH FLOOR LIBRARY.
- 17 of 17. INTERIOR, NINTH FLOOR EXECUTIVE OFFICE.



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J.J. JAKE PICKLE
FEDERAL BUILDING

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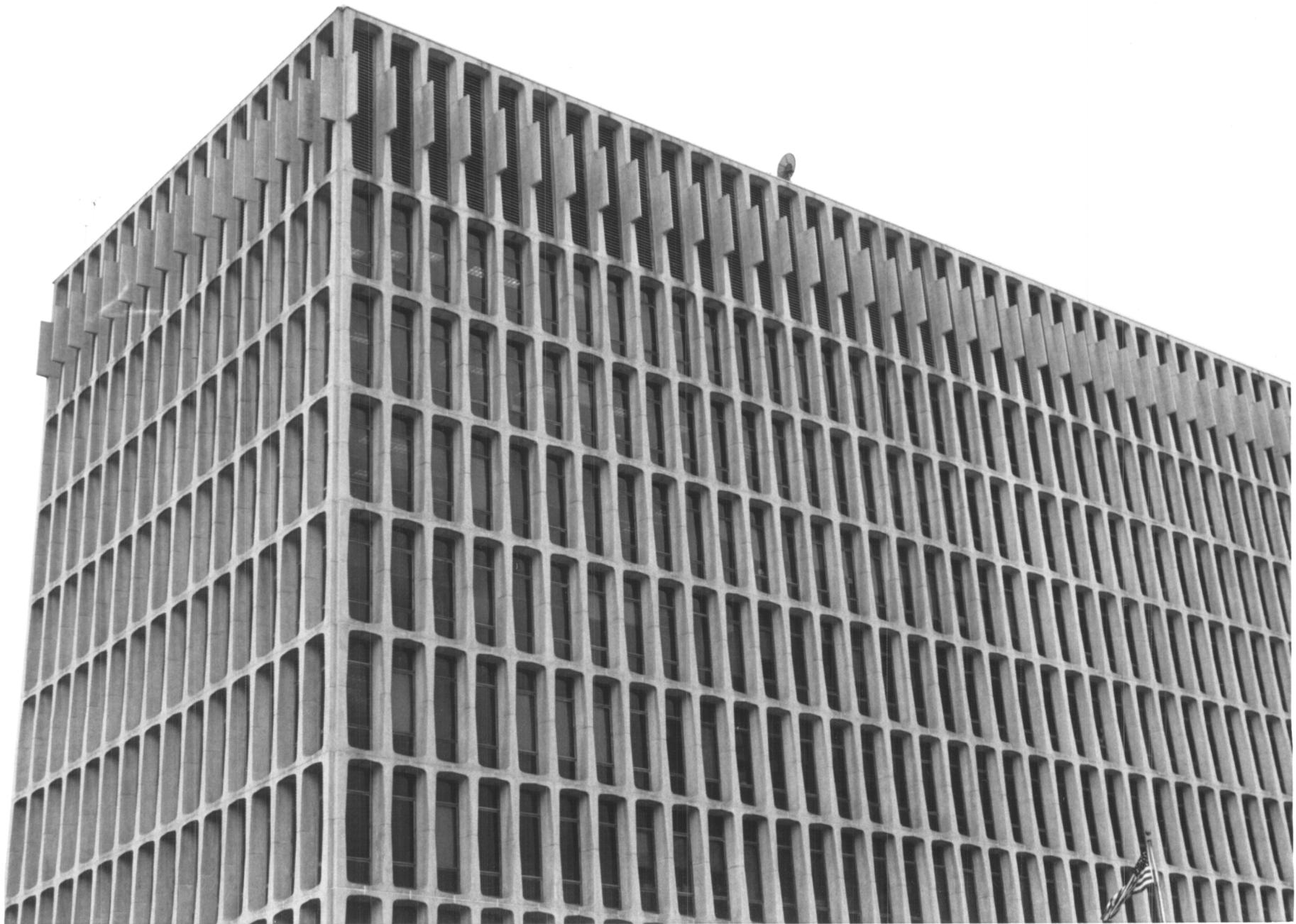
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