

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0667676

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DATE ENTERED

JUN 29 1978

DATA SHEET

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

The Rosenwald Building

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

320 Central Avenue S.W.,

CITY, TOWN

Albuquerque

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

NM 1

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New Mexico 8710235Bernalillo001 ✓**CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY**☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☐ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☒ WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE**☐ YES: RESTRICTED☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☒ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER:**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Rosenwald Brothers, a corporation Sidney Uhlfelder, President

STREET &amp; NUMBER

622 Dartmouth N.E.

CITY, TOWN

Albuquerque

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico 87106**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Bernalillo County Clerk's Office

STREET &amp; NUMBER

505 Central Ave. N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Albuquerque

STATE

New Mexico**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

January 20, 1978☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDSNew Mexico State Library

CITY, TOWN

303 Don Gaspar, Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico 87503

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built at the corner of Fourth Street and Central Avenue in the downtown business district of Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1910, the Rosenwald Building was Albuquerque's first reinforced concrete structure, and was billed at opening as the first fireproof structure in the state. The three-story building, originally a department store, was probably designed by the El Paso architectural firm Trost and Trost, who were responsible for many of Albuquerque's fine structures, including the Occidental Insurance Company Building (NR, 1-30-78) and the Berthold Spitz House (NR, 2-22-77).

Central Avenue, then called Railroad Avenue, was Albuquerque's main street, linking the New Town built around the railroad tracks with the adobe Old Town a mile and a half away. As the national highway system developed, Central Avenue became part of Route 66, and Fourth Street was incorporated in Highway 85, the Pan American Highway, so that the Rosenwald Building stood at the junction of two of the nation's most important automobile roads. In 1910, the building was towards the edge of an expanding city center; now it is closely surrounded by other Central Avenue buildings in a decaying commercial zone that provides the city's only urban context.

The three-story 50-foot building was originally designed to carry two more stories; mention of the possibility of adding them is made in a lease agreement as late as 1935. The poured-in-place concrete frame of the 75' by 142' building is extremely massive, with two-foot-square columns forming the interior supports. Reinforcement in the structure is provided by undeformed wire and iron bars. Finished floor to ceiling height in the stories above grade level is approximately seventeen feet; floor to ceiling height in the basement, which extends under the sidewalk on the north and west sides, averages eight feet. The interior floors are poured concrete, about four inches thick reinforced with a latticework of steel wire. The original interior partitions, some of which are still standing, are hollow gypsum tile; later space divisions were framed in wood. Interior finishes are plaster and paint.

The exterior design of the Rosenwald Building emphasizes the massiveness and solidity of the material structure. The north facade features columned windows and strong sill courses which have a flavor of the Prairie School, while the coigning at the building corners and segmented arch over the central bay reflect the influence of the Chicago School of Architecture. The entrance bay, originally two stories tall, now cut off by a straight store front on the first floor, underlines the squareness and mass of the building. The west facade continues the same style of fenestration, but the scale of the third story windows is moderately decreased in height, and weight is given to the facade by a string course above the windows. The east facade, which has always overlooked other structures, has few windows; windows on the south, or alley, end of the building are randomly placed, indicating that the windows may have been left over units at the time of original construction, or that various windows and mechanical openings have been added in the course of later renovations. The original ground level windows and details have long been obscured by commercial renovations, including the addition of new entrances, bonded glass panels on the north facade, and filling in of the openings between exterior columns on the west facade. The exterior finish, which appears to be original, is a spattered texture of stucco.

Originally, the building was entirely used as a department store. The Albuquerque Morning Journal for October 2, 1910, describes the appearance of the interior on opening day:

The building is four stories in height, including the basement, and covers three city lots. It is constructed of reinforced concrete and is the only absolutely fireproof building in New Mexico....The fixtures are the most modern obtainable and the general arrangement is perfect. The ground floor is devoted

(see continuation sheet 1)

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78

CONTINUATION SHEET

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to dry goods, jewelry, toilet articles, shoes, and gentlemen's clothing. The second floor is filled with ladies' ready-to-wear garments, millinery, and corsets. The offices, dressing rooms, fitting and alteration rooms, and a cosy and comfortable rest room are situated in the rear of the second floor. Carpets, rugs, and house furnishings occupy the third floor.

a

In 1921, a fire in/mattress in the third floor caused extensive smoke and water damage to the entire building, necessitating a total renovation which took six years to complete. Part of the renovation included the addition of a pedestrian entrance directly off Central Avenue to a staircase leading to the second floor; retail sales were restricted to the ground floor, and the upper stories were made into offices, except for one dress shop maintained by Sidney Rosenwald. During those years, the ground floor was divided several times along the Fourth Street frontage for various merchants, including Maisel's Jewelry which still does business on Central Avenue and Groc-A-Tote, Albuquerque's first self-service grocery store. McLellan's Stores, a New York based sundry retail chain, took its first lease on a portion of the ground floor in 1927, and in succeeding years occupied more and more of the building, until they took over the entire structure in 1950. Evidence of some building alterations are contained in a 1938 lease agreement between Rosenwald Brothers and McLellan's:

The Lessor further grants and gives unto the Lessee the right to extend Lessee's glass front now installed on the West Central Avenue front of the building between Lessee's show windows and the belt course of said building on the second floor thereof so that such glass front shall extend the entire width of the building along said Avenue, and such glass front may be extended downward to the ground so as to cover piers of pilasters at the lobby entrance to the building.

During McLellan's tenancy of the building, the second and third floors were increasingly converted to office use; during the Second World War they housed a unit of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, later became real estate, law and general offices. The upper two floors have been vacant for the last ten years. McLellan's vacated the building at the end of 1977; the lease and purchase option is now held by Jack Pickel, an Albuquerque developer, who plans a conversion of the building into small shops and restaurants on the ground floor, with office uses on the upper floors. He plans to restore many features of the original facade, including the ground floor entrance bay and an awning on the building's west side. The plans involve extensive interior remodeling designed around the bays formed by the large supporting columns; the uses planned are compatible with the building's original use, and with the downtown development plans of the City of Albuquerque.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1910

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Trost and Trost, architect  
Anders Anson, builder

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built as the culminating endeavor of successful merchant brothers, the Rosenwald Building stands massive and gray at the main crossroads of Albuquerque, New Mexico's central business district. At the time of its construction in 1910 New Mexico was anticipating statehood with the opening of the constitutional convention; the Rosenwald Building, Albuquerque's first department store, expressed the confidence of the Rosenwald family in the healthy commercial future of the city and soon-to-be state. With its use of the new technology of reinforced concrete and a strong and simplified facade influenced by the Prairie School, the structure was a forward-looking, progressive monument to the family who built it, and to the expansive hopes of the growing Territory of New Mexico.

With its square and still imposing facade, the Rosenwald Building aims to impress, and it certainly succeeded with the Albuquerque Morning Journal reporter who reviewed it on October 2, 1910, the day after its opening:

With the opening of the Rosenwald Brothers' store, at the corner of Fourth Street and Central Avenue, yesterday afternoon, Albuquerque gained the distinction of having within its boundaries the handsomest, most up to date, and most complete department store in the southwest. "In the southwest" covers quite an expanse of territory and includes El Paso and Denver. But the statement is made without fear of contradiction that not a department store in Denver, El Paso, or any other city of prominence in the Rocky Mountain region, nor in the valleys where the land begins to slope to the seas, is housed in a better building, nor houses a more complete and up to date stock of merchandise within its walls than the house of Rosenwald.

As well as a technologically and architecturally innovative structure, the Rosenwald Building is an expression of the commercial enterprise of one of New Mexico's central mercantile families, the Rosenwalds, and its history recapitulates in concrete that of Albuquerque's downtown, both in its days of greatest prominence and in its current decay.

The four Rosenwald brothers, Emanuel, Joseph, Aron, and Edward were born in Dietenhofen, Bavaria; Emanuel and Joseph were the first to come to the United States in 1853, and made their way from enterprise to enterprise until they arrived in Trinidad, Colorado in 1861 and Las Vegas, New Mexico in 1863, where they set up a successful mercantile firm. The two younger brothers, Aron and Edward, who were to run the Albuquerque enterprise, came to this country in 1866-67, and organized a gas company in Trinidad. In 1878 they moved to Albuquerque, where they established a store on the plaza in what is now Old Town. In 1880, with the coming of the railroad, they moved to a one-story adobe building at the northeast corner of Third Street and Central Avenue. By 1896 they billed themselves as Rosenwald Brothers at that location, though actual incorporation did not take place until 1908, after the death of both brothers.

Aron and his family (wife Elise, children Amanda, David S., Sidney U. and Jetty) lived on West Copper, an attractive tree-lined street at the edge of downtown, with Edward and his family (wife Helena, children Alma, Regina and David M.) next door. Edward died in 1903, Aron in September, 1908, leaving to their children the continuation and expansion of

(see continuation sheet page 7)

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Albuquerque City Directories, 1896, 1910, 1911, 1924 University of New Mexico Library  
Albuquerque Morning Journal, October 1, 2, 1910; March 26, 1911  
Bernalillo County Clerk's Records - Deed Books 43, 50; Lease Books 3, 5; Probate records, Book B.

Bernalillo County District Court, case no. 19,436.

Donald Dreesen, "Early Settlers of Albuquerque," Mss., University of New Mexico Library  
Floyd S. Fierman, ed., "Reminiscences of Emanuel Rosenwald," New Mexico Historical

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Review (XXXVII, 1962), pp. 110-117

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY

10,650 ± sq. ft.

(see continuation sheet pg. 3)

UTM REFERENCES

A 1 3 3 4 9 4 9 0 3 8 8 3 4 3 1  
C ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
D ZONE EASTING NORTHING

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Rosenwald Building occupies 10,650 square feet at the southeast corner of Fourth Street and Central Avenue in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The legal description is Lots Ten (10), Eleven (11) and Twelve (12) in Block numbered Seventeen (17) of the Original Townsite of the City of Albuquerque.

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Susan Dewitt, Administrative Coordinator

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Landmarks Survey of Albuquerque

STREET & NUMBER

4/6/78

TELEPHONE

217 Marquette N.E.

766-4720

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Albuquerque

New Mexico 87102

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Thomas W. Murlau

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

4-10-78

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

W. William H. Hovrich

DATE

6/29/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: W. William H. Hovrich

DATE

6/29/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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the family business.

In November, 1907, shortly before Aron's death, he and Edward's widow Helena bought the land where the Rosenwald Building now stands from James G. Darden; until this point the land was vacant. New Town in 1908 was just growing beyond its original area between the railroad tracks and Third Street; brick buildings had replaced the original frame and adobe of the 1880 railroad town; the foundations had been laid for a new federal Post Office one block away at Fourth and Gold; a few brick buildings had begun to appear beyond Third. Clearly the Fourth and Central location was one of the most strategic plots still empty.

Three months after Aron's death in September, 1908, Rosenwald Brothers first incorporated; plans for the store must have been already underway. Aron's son, David S., was the first president of the new corporation, and the first enterprise was the building and stocking of the Rosenwald Building. The Rosenwalds apparently chose as architects the El Paso firm of Trost and Trost, whose logo is superimposed on the building in a 1924 advertisement in the City Directory. The general contractor was Anders Anson, who also supervised the building of the U.S. Post Office; problems of flooding in the Rosenwald Building's basement and changes in contract specifications for the Post Office drove him into bankruptcy.

The Rosenwald Building, and other Prairie School influenced structures built in Albuquerque at this time (including the now demolished Ilfield Warehouse, 1911, NR 6-10-75, and the Berthold Spitz House, 1908, NR 12-22-77), respond to new prosperity in the city that came on the heels of completion of the Santa Fe Railroad's Belen Cutoff in 1908. This rail line from Texas tied into the Santa Fe lines a little south of Albuquerque and furnished the eastern arm of the east-west, north-south grid that centered on the city, confirming Albuquerque's commercial preeminence in the Territory. The Rosenwald Building is a clear expression of the city's growing self-confidence and prosperity as the "Dedication" published in the Albuquerque Morning Journal on opening day, October 1, 1910, makes clear:

The mind of man, almost infinite in possibility, is continually groping, always seeking for new means of expression. In the World of Commerce is this especially true. Compare, for instance, the stories of our forefathers with those of today. Yet the people themselves are the direct cause of this wonderful progress. It is you, the shopping public, who have made this store possible, who have made a reality of the dreams of years.

The Rosenwald Brothers' store billed itself through most of the 1920's as Albuquerque's "only department store"; the expense of renovations after the 1921 fire may have played a part in Rosenwald Brothers' decision to lease most of the ground floor to McLellan Stores Company in 1927, with Sidney Rosenwald keeping a store on the second floor. A second 1927 agreement leased the corner space at Fourth and Central to Albuquerque Pharmacy which went bankrupt in 1931, during the Depression. Subsequent agreements leased increased space to McLellan's, which took over the entire building in 1950.

As business along Central Avenue declined in the 1960's, many stores began to transfer from the central business district to space in the shopping centers of the new northeastern districts of the city. McLellan's was one of the few remaining general stores in the area until the end of 1977, when they closed their Albuquerque operation. For the past ten years, the upper floors have been vacant, the merchandise increasingly shabby, a sign of the commercial decay of the Downtown area.

(see Continuation Sheet page 2)

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#8 A lease with option to buy is now held on the building by an Albuquerque developer, whose plans involve the Rosenwald Building's use for small shops and restaurants, with office on the upper floors. He plans restoration of the facade, and remodeling of the interior for contemporary uses.

Both architecturally, as the expression of new technologies and styles, and historically as a focal building in Albuquerque's history as a commercial center, the Rosenwald Building merits sympathetic re-use and recognition as a key structure in Albuquerque's historic downtown core.

#9 New Mexico Cultural Properties Register, Anson Flats Form A.  
Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1898, 1908, 1924, University of New Mexico Library.