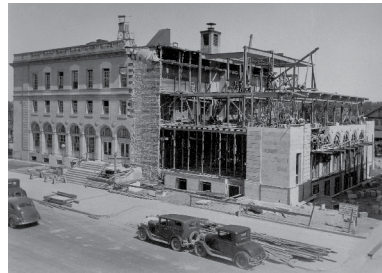


106 SUCCESS STORY

The Greenest Building: Wayne N. Aspinall Federal Building/Courthouse Grand Junction, Colorado



“As the late Congressman Aspinall of Colorado was an ardent supporter of energy self-reliance policy, it is fitting that his namesake building is the first target net-zero federal building on the National Register.”

— BETH SAVAGE
Federal Preservation Officer,
General Services Administration

THE STORY

The U.S. Post Office in Grand Junction, the largest city in western Colorado, was designed in the Second Renaissance Revival Style under the direction of James Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect, Department of the Treasury, and built in 1918. In 1939, a complementary extension was completed, doubling the size of the building and adding space for the courts. When the U.S. Postal Service vacated the building in 1965, the post office area and elevator lobbies had been heavily modified, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning improvements made. Nonetheless, numerous features, including a curved staircase, arched-windows, original flooring, and a historic mural, remained intact. The building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and renamed the Wayne N. Aspinall Federal Building and Courthouse.

THE PROJECT

In January 2010, the General Services Administration (GSA) received \$15 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to rehabilitate the remaining original spaces and the exterior of the Aspinall Building to bring it into compliance with accessibility and safety standards, and to modernize the building infrastructure. ARRA funding requirements called for project completion in 2015. GSA commenced construction in March 2011 via a design-build contract.

THE 106 PROCESS

GSA was responsible for conducting the Section 106 process under the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 requires that federal agencies identify historic properties and assess the effects of the projects they carry out, fund, or permit on those properties. Federal agencies also are required to consult with parties that have an interest in the fate of the property when adverse effects may ensue.

The design-build project delivery method, regularly employed in the private sector, has become popular among federal agencies. Under this method, typically a contractor is hired, who hires an architect; construction occurs in parallel with design refinement.

Photos: Above, light fixture, Wayne N. Aspinall Federal Building and Courthouse, front façade (Carol M. Highsmith Photography, Inc./GSA); Right, construction of the addition, 1939 (photo courtesy GSA); front façade (Carol M. Highsmith Photography, Inc./GSA)

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Photos: Left, rehabilitated postal lobby; Above, restored Works Progress Administration mural (Carol M. Highsmith Photography, Inc./GSA)

Agencies contract with the contractor, who is responsible for both design and construction subject to agency oversight.

GSA's contractor solicitation stated that rehabilitation needed to comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties, a requirement that would avoid adverse effects. During design, however, GSA determined there was potential for adverse effects and alerted the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the City of Grand Junction. The fast-tracked design-build schedule required close coordination with consulting parties to meet contract terms as well as the mandatory ARRA completion date. With support from the SHPO and the City, consultation occurred expediently and productively.

In responding to GSA's solicitation, contractors recommended that by utilizing interior storm windows, on-site geothermal wells, photovoltaic (PV) panels, and increased insulation, the project could achieve both Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum and "net-zero" energy performance. A relatively new concept, net-zero buildings utilize sustainable technology to produce as much or more energy than they would normally consume. Installing these innovative features in a historic public building, though, requires care and ingenuity.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), executed in spring 2011, included baseline approved concept drawings. Importantly, the drawings indicated that the rooftop PV panels would be reduced in size. Based on consultation and input from GSA's regional and national preservation staff, GSA sympathetically incorporated green technologies while achieving targeted performance goals and respecting the building's historic character.

THE SUCCESS

The rehabilitated Aspinall Building, completed in 2014, continues to play an important role in the vitality of downtown Grand Junction and houses many federal offices. The courtroom, postal lobby, and elevator lobbies were rehabilitated; hardwood floors refurbished; and a historic mural was restored and reinstalled. The historic building, which incorporated the contractor's recommendations, has achieved LEED Platinum certification and unprecedented operational savings with green technology. GSA's enlightened stewardship, informed by the Section 106 consultative process, has ensured the long-term use and viability of this significant building, which serves as a model for adapting historic buildings to meet contemporary energy conservation needs.

Consulting Parties:

General Services
Administration

ACHP

Colorado State
Historic
Preservation
Officer

City of Grand
Junction Historic
Preservation
Board

For more about
Section 106 and
the ACHP go to
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ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

401 F Street NW, Suite 308, Washington DC 20001

Phone: 202-517-0200 • Fax: 202-517-6381 • achp@achp.gov • www.achp.gov



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