

**APPENDIX A:  
SITE DOCUMENTATION & FEDERAL OVAL CONTEXT**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is the steward of the Federal Oval which is situated in the north end of historic downtown Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico. This property is unceded lands that the Federal government assumed under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Today, this property is defined by Federal Way, Grant Avenue, Paseo de Peralta and Washington Avenue (Attachment A, Figure 1). Its significance and integrity as a cultural landscape is visually represented by a park-like campus occupied by the Santiago E. Campos U.S. Courthouse and Joseph M. Montoya Federal Building and U.S. Post Office. It and the surrounding property was historically inhabited and cultivated by ancestral Tewa peoples. Subsequent interactions with other indigenous tribes, Spanish colonization, and the influx of Euromerican peoples contributed to creation of the large Santa Fe community that exists today. This cultural history is reflected locally in archaeological deposits associated with multiple occupations from the pre-contact ancestral Tewa villages; to the Spanish colonial structures and features; Fort Marcy military structures and features; and construction-related debris from the development of the built environment and from Santa Fe community activities. The latter includes the use of the Federal Oval for Santa Fe’s “Tertio-Millennial” celebration in 1883 (Attachment A, Figure 2). At the time of the celebration, the surrounding Federal grounds were cleared, and an oval racetrack, about 1/3 mile long, was constructed along the perimeter of the property.

Cultural resources that contribute to the historic character and integrity of the Federal Oval property have been identified previously as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in a 2003 study authored by Baker H. Morrow (Morrow, Reardon, Wilkinson, Ltd 2003). That study served as the basis of an updated investigation by consulting archaeologist/historians, Dr. Michelle Wurtz Penton, RPA and Ms. Tamara Stewart, MA (for GSA by Versar, Inc. 2024) (Table 1).

Table 1.  
Components of the Federal Oval

Element	Site Type	NRHP Eligibility
LA 114261 (refers to the entire Federal Oval)	Pre-contact and Historic	Eligible, Contributing
LA 143460	Pre-contact	Contributing
LA 174246	Historic	Contributing
U.S. Courthouse	Historic	Listed
Joseph M. Montoya Federal Building and U.S. Post Office	Historic	Listed
Stone Perimeter Wall	Historic	Contributing
Kit Carson Monument	Historic	Non-Contributing
Fountains	Historic	Contributing
Circulation/Concrete Pedestrian Pathways with Gates	Historic	Contributing
Lamp Posts	Historic	Contributing
Bench	Historic	Contributing

Table 1.  
Components of the Federal Oval

Element	Site Type	NRHP Eligibility
Trash Cans	Modern	Non-Contributing
Picnic Benches	Modern	Non-Contributing
Historic Trees and Shrubs	Historic	Contributing

The first of these components includes the pre-contact archaeological deposits beneath the Federal Oval. These contain intact cultural layers and features that hold significant potential for yielding valuable information about Ancestral Puebloan residential and agricultural practices during the late Developmental through early Classic periods. The site offers considerable potential to further our understanding of the pre-contact occupation and use of the Federal Oval before Spanish settlement and later development. Previous archaeological investigations in the area have shown that, although surface deposits have been heavily disturbed, intact archaeological features and structures remain.

According to the 2003 Cultural Landscape Report for the Federal Oval, the Santiago E. Campos U.S. Courthouse, including the surrounding Federal Oval Grounds, is one of the most significant historic buildings in the State of New Mexico (Attachment A: Figures 3-8). The courthouse, the surrounding stone masonry wall, and the park-like campus, represent the first courthouse “square” constructed in the state. The site also reflects a late 19th-century interpretation of the English Landscape Garden. Designed by architect and site superintendent F. H. Brigham in the late 1880s and later modified by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the New Deal Era, the grounds remain an important public space within Santa Fe’s federal and municipal sectors. The adjacent Joseph M. Montoya Federal Building and U.S. Post Office is locally notable as a New Formalist building and represents an important work by architect W.C. Kruger and Associates. Both the U.S. Courthouse (NR 73001152, SR 244) and the Federal Building and U.S. Post Office (NR 100008474, SR 2075) are individually listed on the NRHP and are part of the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties.

Another prominent feature of the Federal Oval was the sandstone obelisk honoring Christopher "Kit" Carson. While additional historical details about the monument can be found in Attachment B, it is important to note that Carson was a popular figure in 19th-century America, recognized in part for his service in the Mexican-American War and the Civil War. Erected in 1885, the monument stands directly in front of the current south entrance to the U.S. Courthouse (Attachment A, Figure 1). The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a Union Veterans' organization, collaborated with the local community to fund its construction on the then-unfinished grounds, originally designated for the Territorial Capitol. The GAR’s successor organization, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, retained ownership of the obelisk until its transfer to GSA in 2023.

Recent vandalism of the monument has resulted in the removal of the top three blocks of the obelisk, breaking them into numerous pieces, along with additional damage to the cornice line on the main inscription masonry block (Attachment B, Figures 9-17). The damage has reduced the monument’s height by several feet, compromising its architectural integrity. Of the seven Aspects of Integrity listed in the National Register Bulletin for *How to Apply National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, the damages to the monument have impacted the Object’s ability to convey its significance in the aspects of Design, Materials and Workmanship. As such, the monument is now considered a Non-Contributing Feature to the historic Federal Oval.

It is important to note that the monument was neither commissioned nor installed by the Federal government, and was erected by the GAR and citizens of Santa Fe on Federal property. Carson, himself, had no direct association with this particular location during his lifetime. Carson was known as a frontiersman, expedition guide, U.S. Indian agent and a U.S. Army Officer during the Civil War. During his military service, Carson led forces that implemented a scorched-earth campaign against several tribes including the Navajo (Diné) and Mescalero Apache. These actions were part of the forcible removal of these tribes from their homelands in Arizona and New Mexico territories. This campaign and others like it were part of a period in American history during which federal policies and resulting actions towards indigenous communities were fraught with aggression, broken agreements, and the forced displacement of these groups from their ancestral lands, which has wrought intergenerational historical trauma, as characterized by tribal representatives during consultation.

This Executive Summary serves to summarize the historic components of the Federal Oval and the relationship with the Kit Carson Monument. As noted, this investigation is part of a larger cultural resources' documentation effort. A site visit, background research, and consultations with the Pueblo of Tesuque and the Pueblo of San Ildefonso were undertaken in June 2024 by Dr. Michelle Wurtz Penton, RPA and Ms. Tamara Stewart, MA for Versar Global Solutions, Inc. (Versar) as a subcontractor to Quaternary Resource Investigations, LLC (QRI). QRI is under contract with GSA.

This work was completed in support of GSA's compliance with legal obligations under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470 et seq., as amended), the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act (AHPA) of 1974 (16 USC 469a et seq.), and the Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) of 1979 (16 USC 470aa-470ll). The Section 106 review process under the NHPA requires federal agencies to consider the impacts of undertakings they carry out, license, or assist on properties listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register, including those with religious and cultural significance to Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations (NHOs). Understanding the significance of historic properties of cultural and religious significance to Indian tribes and NHOs and any effects to them are resolved, in consultation with Indian tribes and NHOs, is crucial to successful Section 106 reviews.

Based on results of this investigation and consultation with the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), GSA has determined that the Kit Carson monument no longer contributes to the historic, architectural or landscape significance of the Federal Oval because of its severely diminished integrity. The monument has undergone significant alterations, to the point where it no longer retains the physical features that made it historically important during its period of significance. Because it is considered to have suffered an irretrievable loss of integrity, it is not eligible for protection under the NHPA, as its historical value to the Federal Oval has been severely compromised.

**ATTACHMENT A: ILLUSTRATIVE FIGURES 1-8**

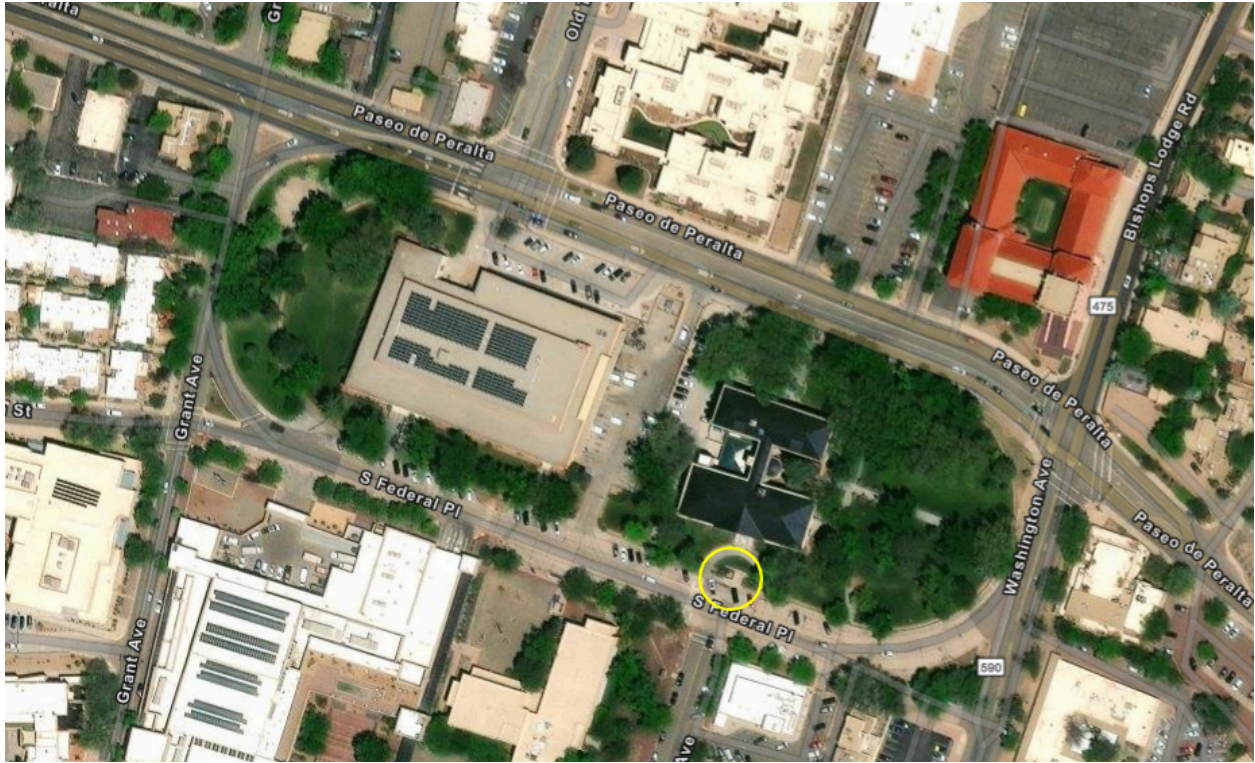


Figure 1. Aerial view of the Federal Oval with the location of the Kit Carson Monument (yellow circle) noted.

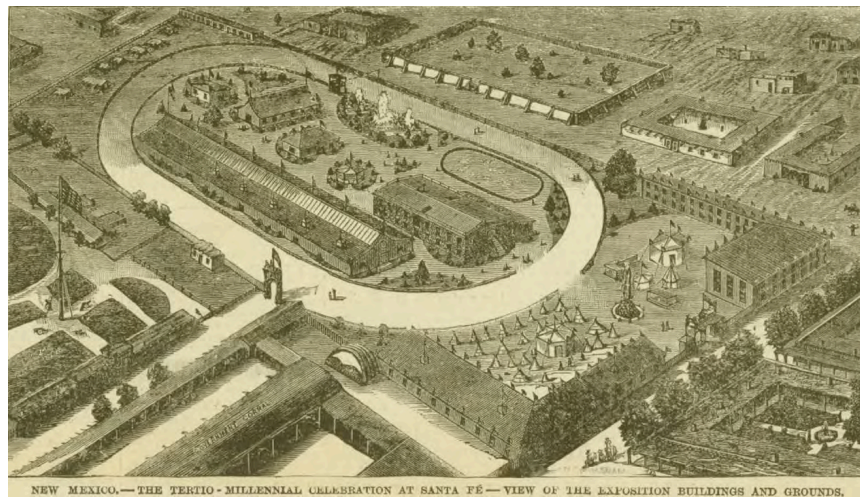


Figure 2. Exposition grounds, Tertio-Millennial Exposition, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1883. Courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives (NMHM/DCA), neg. no. 010994.



Figure 3. Park-like campus of the Federal Oval grounds, looking southwest towards the U.S. Courthouse (photo taken June 2024).



Figure 4. Park-like campus of the Federal Oval grounds looking northwest towards the U.S. Courthouse (photo taken June 2024).



Figure 5. Federal Courthouse, looking northeast (photo taken June 2024). Kit Carson Obelisk with plywood box.



Figure 6. Joseph M. Montoya Federal Building and Post Office, looking northwest (photo taken June 2024).



Figure 7. Limestone wall surrounding Federal Oval, looking east (photo taken June 2024).





Figure 8. Gate at the east entrance, looking east (photo taken June 2024).

**ATTACHMENT B: KIT CARSON MONUMENT**

## **KIT CARSON MONUMENT**

In 1997, a conservation assessment of the Kit Carson Monument by Bettina Raphael was undertaken. Portions of the following description were taken directly from that pretreatment report (Raphael 1997). The monument erected to honor the well known soldier and adventurer, Kit Carson, was dedicated on Memorial Day in 1885. It was conceived by army officers Col. William Craig, Capt. Smith Simpson, and W. S. Fletcher and funded by the GAR, the organization of Union veterans from the Civil War. The Santa Fe Board of Trade, led by Judge Willi Spiegelberg, was also directly involved in gathering support for the monument. The well-known local senator, Stephen E. Dorsey, provided the buff-orange colored sandstone quarried on or near the Dorsey Ranch in northeastern New Mexico. The Santa Fe Railroad donated to the shipping of the stone to the site.

The designer of the monument is not known, but an early drawing of the Carson Monument appeared in the publication *Illustrated New Mexico* by William G. Ritch in 1885. Three years later, three gray stone steps, which now support the monument, were installed. Over the years no other significant additions or changes appear to have been made to the monument except for the addition of two iron or steel bands near the top, which were apparently used to hold a flag.

The monument consists of four components (Figures 9 and 10) as described below from the 2001 post treatment report entitled *As-Built Document Historical Restoration Kit Carson Memorial, Santa Fe, New Mexico*. The current condition of the obelisk monument is far from its original design. Over the years the sandstone base and obelisk have been subjected to natural occurring forms of deterioration, repairs and or alterations, and vandalism. Prior repairs have resulted in the patchy appearance and there are also signs of concrete having been used for repairs to losses and resurfacing of eroded areas. In addition, vandalism has taken its toll over the years. The most recent and most extensive vandalism occurred in August 2023 which resulted in the “toppling” of portions of the obelisk and damage to the cornice and cracks in the base (Figures 11-17). Prior to the vandalism in 2023, the monument was previously recommended as a contributing feature of the cultural landscape (Morrow Reardon Wilkinson, Ltd. 2003).

### **Obelisk**

The obelisk is a simple four-sided structure with smooth unornamented sides and a pyramidal top that comes to a gentle point. It is constructed of four blocks of sandstone which diminish in size as they ascend. Below the pyramidal top were two narrow iron bands that wrapped the obelisk.

### **Cornice & Square Pedestal with Inscriptions**

The central section of the monument is roughly square in shape and has a cornice at the top which angles out to form a ledge on which the obelisk stands. This section is also constructed of large blocks of sandstone, but here the stone is more crisply sculpted and ornamental. Each face has a recessed panel bearing part of the incised inscription of the dedication to Kit Carson:

Front (south): “Kit Carson died May d 1868 Age 59 Years”

Proper right (west): “He led the way”

Back (north): “Pioneer, pathfinder, soldier”

Proper left (east): “Erected by comrades of the G.A.R.”

The cornice is formed of a separate piece of sandstone.

## Sandstone Base

The base is constructed of four large rectangular blocks of sandstone. The two lower stones are laid in the east-west direction. The two upper stones are laid in the north-south direction. The field of the stone has a light bush hammer texture. The edges at the corners consist of a band of incised straight lines known as “margining”. The top edges of the top blocks are sloped away from the obelisk.

## Gray Stone Steps

There are three levels of steps at the base of the monument made of hard dark gray limestone or granite.

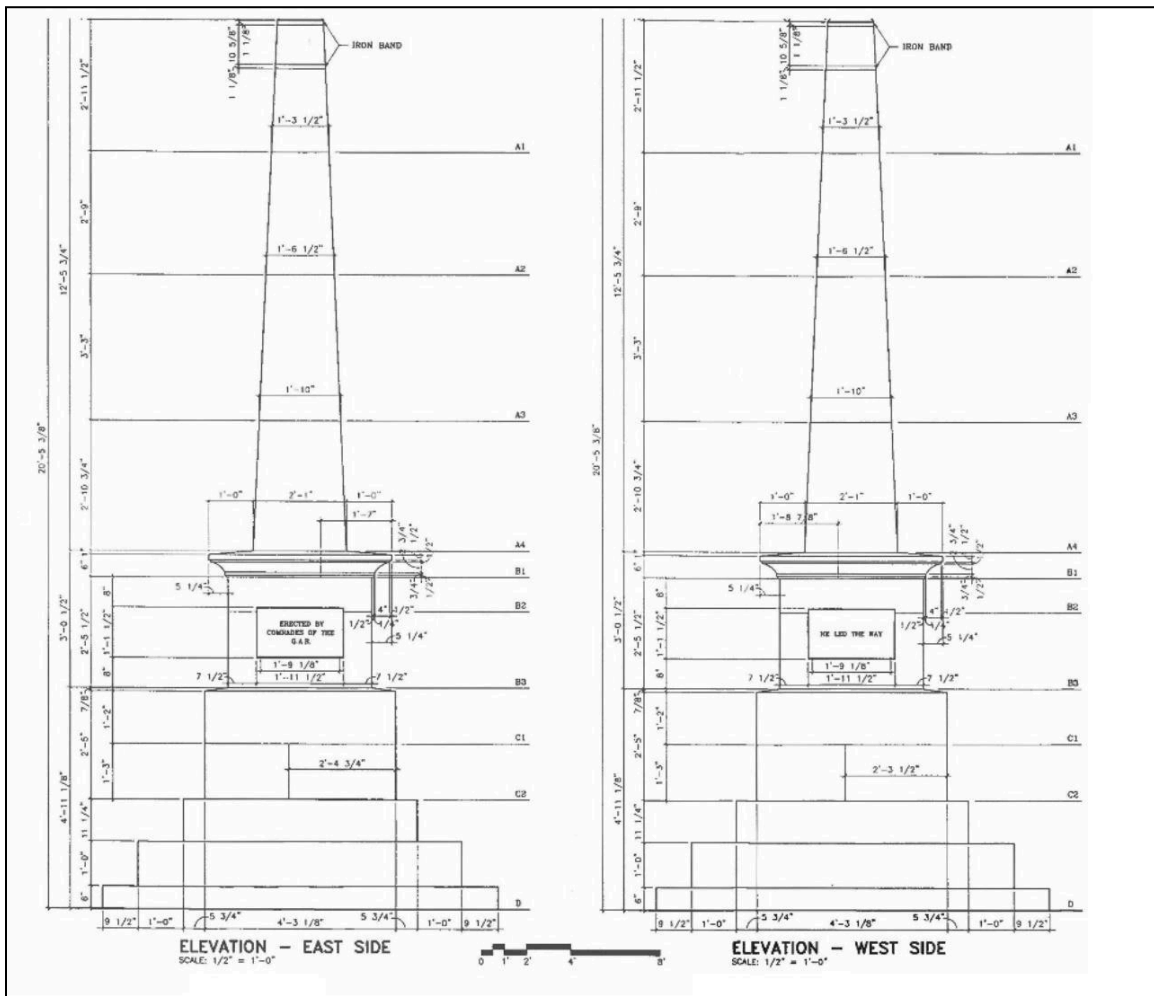


Figure 9. Elevation drawings of Kit Carson monument (courtesy of 2001 conservation report).



Figure 10. 2019 condition of Kit Carson monument.

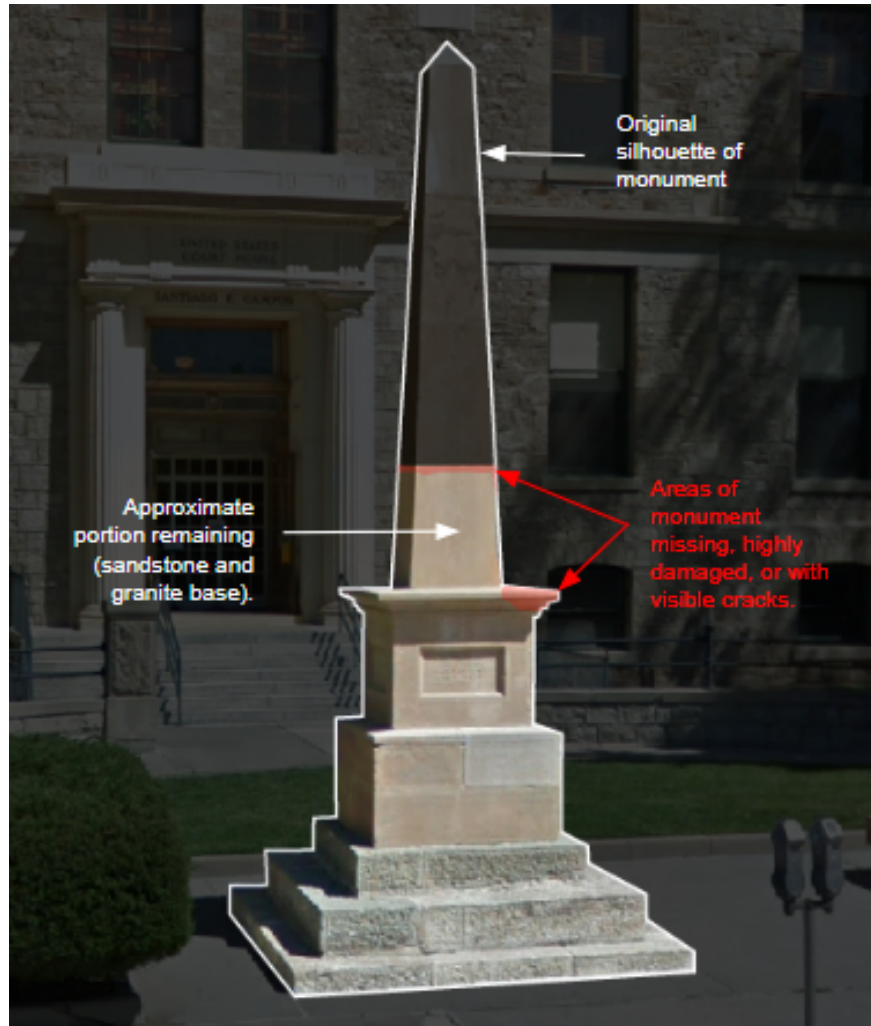


Figure 11. Rendering of the Kit Carson monument, showing approximate change in height, portions missing and remaining, and highly damaged areas.



Figure 12. Kit Carson monument, damage to the cornice (photo taken September 2023).



Figure 13. Kit Carson monument, damage to the obelisk (photo taken September 2023).



Figure 14. Kit Carson monument, damage to the monument. Note fragmented remains (photo taken September 2023).



Figure 15. Kit Carson monument, damage to the obelisk (photo taken September 2023).





Figure 16. Kit Carson monument, looking southeast (photo taken June 2024).



Figure 17. Kit Carson monument, view of steps and base (photo taken June 2024). Note cracks in base.