

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED DEC 19 1985  
DATE ENTERED 1/22/86

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Sterling Post Office, Federal Building, and Federal Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

Sterling Main Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Third and Popular Streets

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Sterling

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4

STATE

Colorado

CODE

08

COUNTY

Logan

CODE

075

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	NA <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thematic Group	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	NA <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

United States Postal Services, Western Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER

850 Cherry Ave.

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

CA

94099

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Logan County Assessor

STREET & NUMBER

Logan County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Sterling

STATE

CO

80751

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None Known.

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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

The Sterling Main Post Office and Federal Building is a four story rectangular building of tan brick, with sandstone facing on the first story. The structure is a late phase Beaux-Arts inspired design with a flat roof. (1930)

### LOCAL CONTEXT

The town of Sterling was originally founded in 1874 by a group of settlers from Tennessee and Mississippi, who were dissatisfied with conditions in the reconstructed South. The first town, constructed primarily of adobe and sod, was located roughly three and a half miles northeast of the present town of Sterling, which was platted in 1881 when the Union Pacific Railroad built its line along the Platte River. The nineteenth century Logan County Courthouse and old City hall, built in 1912, are located within two blocks of the post office, though the subject site is not within a designated historic district. No buildings of known historic significance are located adjacent to the post office.

The building has a full basement, though there are no unusual or unique subterranean features within the subject property. The site survey for the present building indicates that a two-story brick residential building occupied the site prior to the construction of the post office. Basement excavations for the present structure have probably destroyed any trace of the previous buildings.

### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building appears to be in excellent structural condition, and is being well maintained. The wrought iron railings on both public entrances have been replaced with aluminum rails, and the original bronze frame doors have been replaced with aluminum frame glass doors. The original lobby service windows have been replaced with a plastic-laminate topped counter, and some of the wood trim has been painted pale blue. A new bank of lockboxes has been installed on the south side of the lobby.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Sterling MPO

Item number

7

Page

1

The building has a structural steel skeleton, and rests on a reinforced concrete foundation. The walls are reinforced concrete, with sandstone veneer in the first floor. Granite steps lead to the front and side public entrances, and the public lobby has a terrazzo floor. The building is topped by a flat, asphalt composition roof, which replaced the original hipped tin roof. Applied ornament is cast stone (a type of high quality concrete), terracotta, and cast iron. The top three floors are American bonded light tan brick with black manganese spotting.

The Sterling Main Post Office is designed in the late phase of Beaux-Arts classicism, and shows an eclectic mix of sources. The first floor walls have a veneer of sandstone "ashlars", giving the building the appearance of a baroque piano nobile. A sandstone belt course defines the second floor line, and provides a plinth to visually support a series of six pairs of double, giant-order pilasters, which extend from the second floor line to the third floor ceiling line. Decorative cast-iron panels are placed along the second floor ceiling line, separating two rows of double hung windows. The central portion of the facade is flanked by two "wings", which project forward about one foot from the wall surfaces. The windows on the projecting wings are also double hung sash type, but are narrower than those between the columns, and lack the central mullion which articulates the larger windows. The pilasters, stylistically derived from the Greek Doric Order, carry a Doric-derived tryglyph and metope frieze.

The Doric is the simplest of the classical orders, and its use on this building promotes an image of austere simplicity and republican virtues appropriate for a federal building and courthouse. Sandstone quoining articulates the corners of the projecting wings, adding visual emphasis to the relatively small distance the wings project beyond the wall.

Red granite steps lead to both the front and side public entrances, and both doors are flanked by cast-iron light fixtures, identified in detail drawings as "standard fixture #B-4." The hexagonal lantern of these fixtures is supported on

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Sterling MPO

Item number

7

Page

2

a tapered column, which rests on a zoomorphic tripod; the legs of the tripod are in the shape of a fantastic clawed animal, and appear crouched, ready to spring into the air at any moment. These standards were used on post office buildings throughout the West. The front entrance is ornamented by sandstone molding, and is topped by a cast-stone eagle, perched among stylized beet leaf-acroteria. The transom is filled with a cast aluminum grate, in a Gothicizing fleur-de-lis pattern.

# 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 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      Constructed 1930-31      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      OSA/James Wetmore, Acting Sup. Architect

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sterling Main Post Office is a well executed example of Neo-Classical design and represents the end of the Beaux-Arts tradition that had dominated the first 20 years of the Twentieth Century. The building is monumental in its representation of the federal government as both a post office and federal court (one of four such building types in Colorado) and stands as one of the most imposing buildings in the city.

### ARCHITECTURE

The Sterling MPO has its roots in the Beaux-Arts period of federal design. Sterling, as well as four other Colorado cities received appropriations for sites in 1913 (Durango, Montrose, Canon City and Monte Vista). However, because of various intervening events none were completed until the early 1930s (Durango was completed in 1929). Thus, even though they were constructed during the 1930s, their design is characteristic of the period in which they were originally appropriated. Sterling is the largest of these buildings, and the only building in Colorado during the 1930s to house a federal court. The buildings that followed from 1935 to 1940, were reductions of the monumental Beaux-Arts as exemplified by the Sterling MPO to the Starved Classicism which dominated federal design during the period.

The Sterling Post Office is one of three public buildings in the community representing a level of government. The two others include the 1910 Morgan County Courthouse and the 1912 City Hall. The Post Office and the County Courthouse are the two most dominant buildings in the city, rising above the one to two storied commercial blocks (and city hall). The County Courthouse (3 story brick, Neo-Classical, projecting wings, cupola) occupies the central position in the community in the town square, whereas the Post Office anchors the periphery of the central business district along the main arterial of the city. Both buildings are imposing, with the federal representative being the most refined.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

None Known.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY + 0.34 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A | 13 | 6 | 5,1 | 6,2,0 | 4,4 | 9,8 | 43,0  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1 and 2 of Block 15, original Sterling Townsite. (see attached map).

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Paul R. Secord, Vice President/H. James Kolva

ORGANIZATION

Beland/Associates, Inc./Institute for Urban & Local Studies

STREET & NUMBER

16 S. Oakland Ave. Suite #204/W. 705 1st Ave

CITY OR TOWN

Pasadena / Spokane

DATE

August 1984/August 1985

TELEPHONE

(818) 796-8093 / (509) 458-6219

STATE

CA 91101 / WA 99204

**12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION**

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES  NO  NONE

*Barbara Sudler*

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*James T. Col*

TITLE

Director, Office of Real Estate

DATE

December 17, 1985

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

*See Continuation sheet for listing* DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Inventory—Nomination Form**

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date entered

Continuation sheet

Sterling MPO

Item number

8

Page

1

The characteristics of the federal building which identify its transition include the following Beaux-Arts elements: rusticated stonework demarking the first floor; paired flat fluted pilasters dividing the second and third floors window bays; and molded architrave with projecting cornice framing the entry bays. These elements are placed in the context of a facade that is essentially flat. The architectural ornamentation is also flat, without a strong delineation of three dimensions. While the building is more characteristic of the early 1900s it suggests the modern in its flat refined facade.

It is interesting to note that the building includes a fourth floor, atop the slightly projecting cornice completing the third floor. This is apparently a design solution to the accommodation of the federal court (building was originally appropriated to be designed and constructed so that a court could later be add). Typically, the building would have terminated in a parapet or balustrade resting above the cornice.

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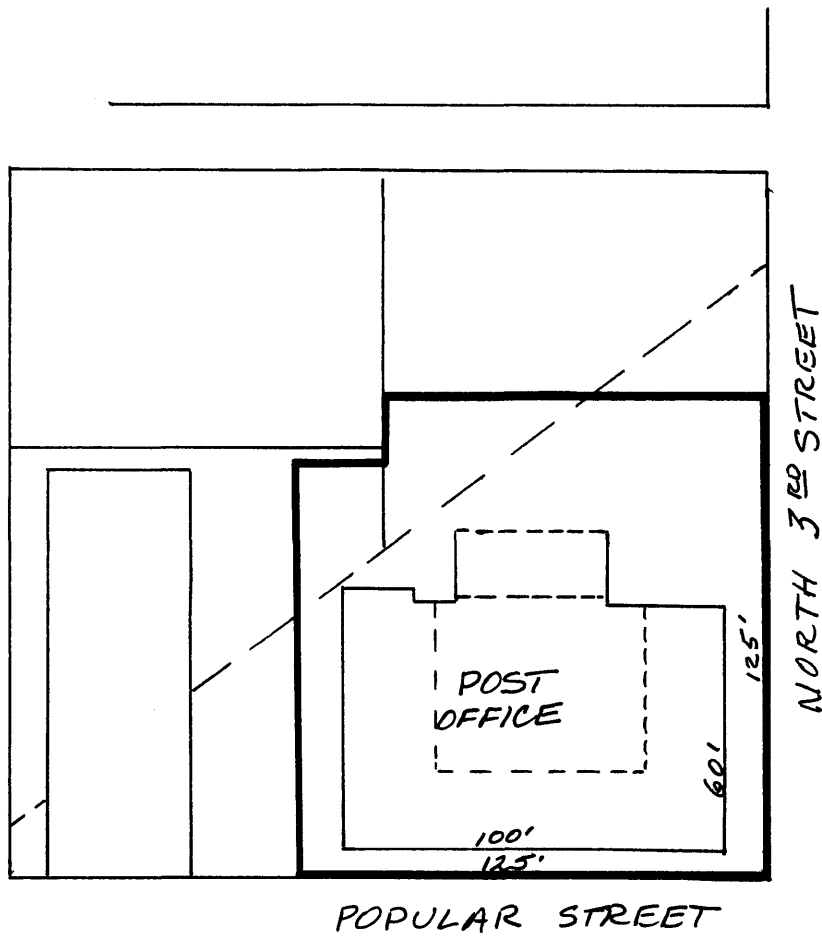
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CONTINUATION SHEET Sterling MPO ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Source: Sanborn Map, Sterling Colorado, June 1927, page 2.



↑ N  
1" = ±50'