

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: California	
COUNTY: San Francisco	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 11.10.06.0058	DATE 10/14/71

1. NAME

COMMON: Main Post Office

AND/OR HISTORIC: \* United States Post Office and Court House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Northeast corner of Seventh and Mission Streets

CITY OR TOWN: San Francisco

STATE: California	CODE: 06	COUNTY: San Francisco	CODE: 075
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____
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4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: United States of America (Custodian: General Svcs. Adm.)

STREET AND NUMBER: 49 Fourth Street

CITY OR TOWN: San Francisco

STATE: California	CODE: 06
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: National Archives, Records Center

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington, D.C.

STATE:	CODE: 08
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Junior League of San Francisco, Inc. Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1962-1968  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Rare Books Room (Special Collections), S.F. Public Library

STREET AND NUMBER: McAllister and Larkin Streets

CITY OR TOWN: San Francisco

STATE: California	CODE: 06
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

 Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

(Check One)

 Altered     Unaltered

(Check One)

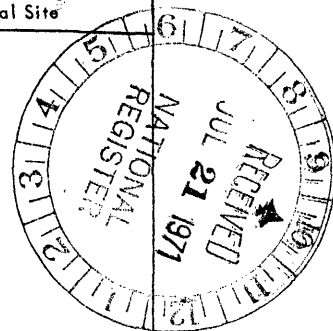
 Moved     Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in the style of an Italian Renaissance Palazzo, the Post Office is three stories in height with a basement. It is a regular quadrangle with an inner courtyard; the inner courtyard (reaching only to the ceiling of the main floor) is decorated with geometrical designs on the walls. There is one principal facade (that on Seventh Street) and two minor ones (those on Mission and Stevenson Streets). The first floor (devoted to the postal service) is pierced by Romanesque arched windows, nearly from floor to ceiling. The fenestration of the two upper stories differs: That of the second is composed of square windows, that of the third and most ornate floor (which contains the courts) is composed of rectangular window openings separated by flat pilasters and surmounted by triangular pediments. There are pavillions at each of the four corners of the building, in these are placed the entrances. Entrances on the principal facade are contained within arched spaces. The doorways are flanked on either hand by double engaged and fluted columns (bound as in the manner of the Roman fasces). The capitals are composite, being chiefly Ionic, but also containing wreaths and carved fruits, and surmounted by small American eagles. There are triangular pediments (over these principal entrances) which are dentillated. The arches over the pediments are at second floor level. The second floor windows (lighting judges chambers and other offices) are without ornamentation but have flat arches. The third floor windows in the pavillions are separated by double columns (again bound) and are surmounted by curvilinear pediments (save for the central windows in each pavillion which are triangular). Walls are thick and all windows are deeply set; those at first floor level have projecting sills, supported by brackets, between which are black marble roundels. The stones of the walls are carefully cut and deeply incised joints (joining those of the first and second floor arches) form continuous lines emphasizing the horizontal dimensions.

The two lesser facades lack pediments (save for third story windows) and the entrance arches are at first floor level. The principal facade has pediments at the roof-line over each entrance (in the pavillions). There are two cornices: that at <sup>third</sup> second floor level is simple supported by brackets, that at the roof is strongly dentillated as are the pediments surmounting the pavillions.

CONT.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1893-1905

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education    | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering  | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry     | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape    | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature   | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military     |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music        |  |  |

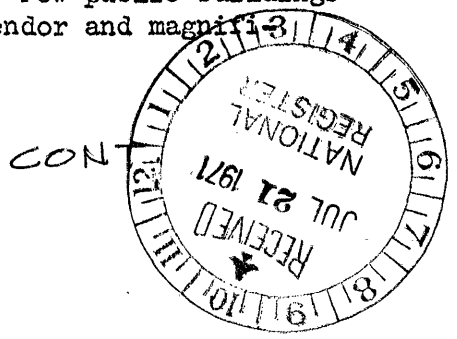
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The entire building and its adornment reflect several influences: the then dominant Beaux-Arts school of architecture, the federal traditions of the early republic, and the Italian Renaissance. While not unique in the United States, the building is an outstanding example of its time and period.

The building was designed by James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the U. S. Treasury Department in Washington (which then had charge of all federal buildings of a civil nature), and work was carried on under the supervision of Joseph H. Roberts. It is probably the most ornate of all public buildings west of the Mississippi being rivaled (if at all) only by the State Capitols of Utah and perhaps Colorado. The best of the rooms of the Post Office are those designed for the courts containing splendid marble statues and busts, a marble bench, fresco wall paintings depicting the colonial conquests of the U. S. in the Pacific, (then recent) the Phillipines, scenes of ocean commerce and symbolic figures, one court room especially has an air of elegance. Another room contains glass mosaic trimming, marble walls and floors, and carved panels.

The structure is of brick faced with granite. The marbles were brought from Italy (some are Carrara) and from North Africa. Italian workmen were brought as woodcarvers, stone masons, and marble workers. It resembles, in its interior, the Library of Congress (a contemporary - 1899), the U. S. Capitol, and the New York Custom House. Few public buildings in this country have such an air of splendor and magnificence.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	California
COUNTY	San Francisco
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
71,10,06,0058	10/14/71

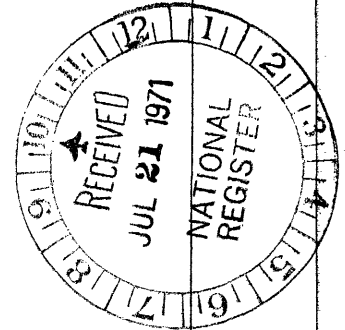
(Number all entries)

UNITED STATES POST OFFICE AND COURT HOUSE:

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There is a parapet, surmounted by classical balustrade above the roof line. Granite spheres surmount the piers of the balustrade on the pavillions. Bronze spiked lanterns flank the main entrance at street level. There are ornamental street lamps along the entire Seventh Street front. The setback area in front of the facades has recently been planted with trees and shrubs forming hedges. The setback itself was paved with stone flagging. There are low granite steps leading to each entrance flanked by low stone walls.

The interior finish deserves as much attention as the exterior. The flooring of the public corridors on the first floor is terrazzo work with ornamental designs in the form of stars and geometrical figures. The corridors are finished in Italian and American marbles. The ceiling is of marble and mosaic work. The second floor corridors are of Italian marble, with trim of Lyonnaise and glass mosaic (a revival of Assyrian decoration). The third floor is trimmed in Numidian (North African) and Tennessee marble. Interior wood finishes are of Mexican mahogany, white mahogany, East Indian woods, redwood, and antique finish oak. Many of the doors, especially those of the judges chambers, are elaborately carved.



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The site was purchased under authority of Act of Congress on March 3, 1887 for \$1,055,000. Initial opposition to separating the Federal courts from other Federal agencies was overcome, and Congress on March 3, 1893 provided \$2,500,000 for construction costs, a sum later to amount to \$3,555,000 - equivalent to perhaps \$20,000,000 today. Work progressed quite slowly; it was not until late 1905 that the building was ready for occupancy. Hardly six months later, the 1906 earthquake seriously damaged the structure, and the fire threatened to destroy it. However, all valuable records were placed in vaults, oil lines plugged, fire hose rigged, and wet sand bags against inner doors confined the fire to a few rooms. The building was saved by the determined and heroic efforts of the employees on duty, as was the old custom house (old Appraisers Building now demolished) and the Old Mint. Because of this, court records and other documents dating from the 1850's are still extant.

A different sort of crisis arose in the 1960's when the courts were scheduled to move to the new Federal office building in the Civic Center. This would have rendered useless space designed in the grand manner for courtrooms and chambers. Fortunately, the Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals was instrumental in securing refurbishing and in retaining his courts in the old building.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Junior League of San Francisco, Inc., Here Today - San Francisco's Architectural Heritage (Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1968)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

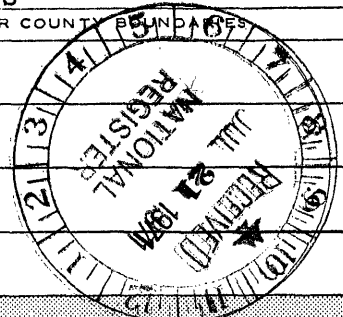
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		37° 46' 48"	122° 24' 37"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UTM  
10/551990  
4181360  
CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 2.6 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Ralph A. Mead, Secretary

ORGANIZATION: San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board DATE: August 3, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER: 100 Larkin Street

CITY OR TOWN: San Francisco STATE: California CODE: 06

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: [Signature]

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: October 16, 1970

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

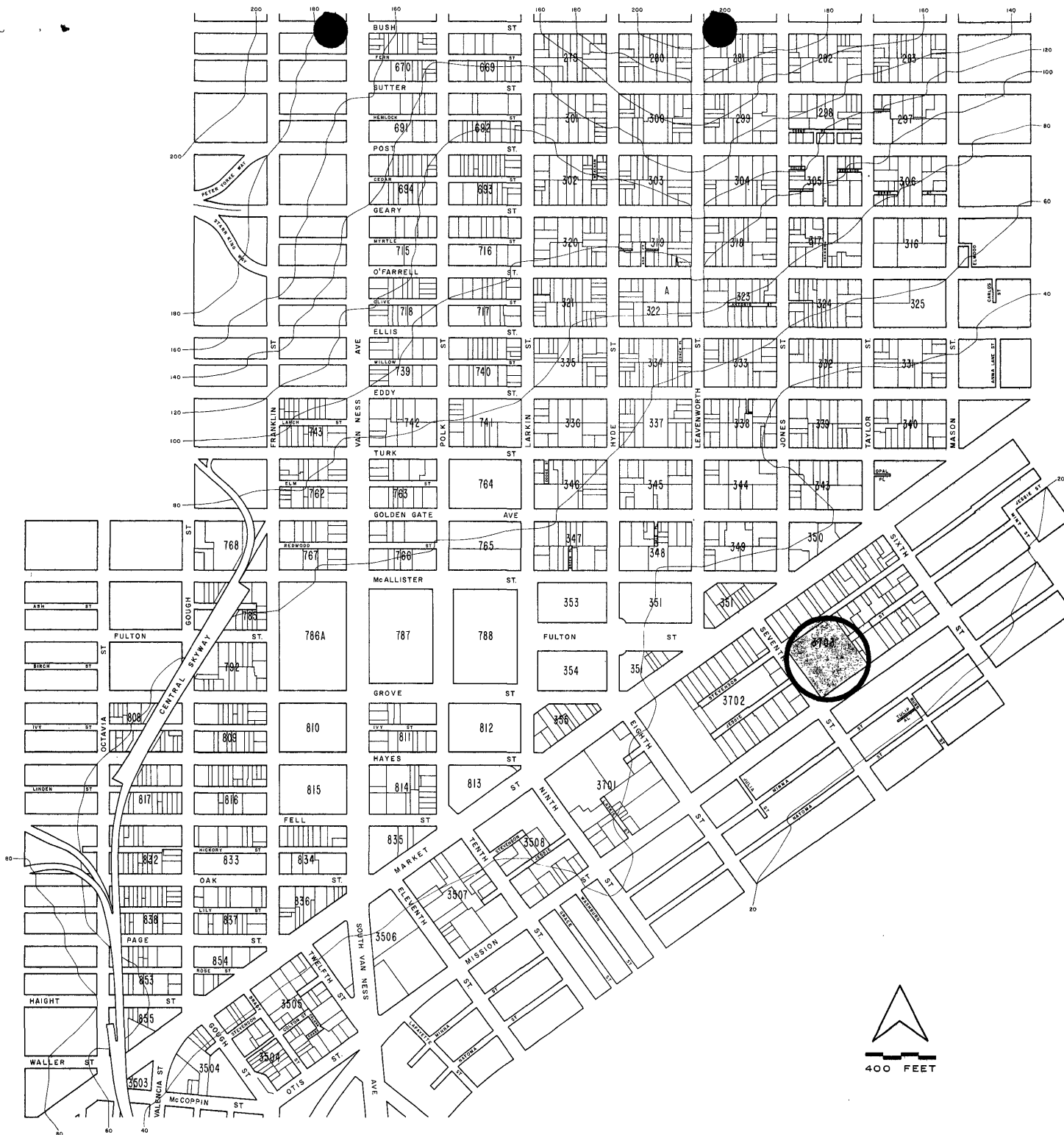
[Signature]  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: OCT 14 1971

ATTEST:

[Signature]  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: SEP 21 1971



WORKING AREA LAND USE STUDY

CIVIC CENTER

WORKING AREA W · PLANNING AREA 3

MAIN POST OFFICE

