

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 27 1981

DATE ENTERED

JAN 11 1985

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

U. S. Post Office

AND/OR COMMON

Oroville Main Post Office

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1735 Robinson Street

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Oroville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Butte

CODE

007

**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 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	<input checked="" 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)

U.S. Postal Service, Western Regional Office

STREET &amp; NUMBER

850 Cherry Ave.

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA

VICINITY OF

STATE

CA 94099

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Butte County Recorder

STREET &amp; NUMBER

25 County Center Drive

CITY, TOWN

Oroville

STATE

CA

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**TITLE A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California  
(by David Gebhard, et.al., Published by Peregrine Smith, Inc.)

DATE

1973

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

C/O David Gebhard, Department of Art History, University of California

CITY, TOWN

Santa Barbara

STATE  
Ca

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" 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 <u>NA</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

4/27/84

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Oroville Post Office is small, sparsely decorated, classical box with predominately Italianate ornament. The facade corresponds to the conventional symmetry of the Supervising Architect's office, consisting of a central arcade flanked by two "wings", each opened with a single double-hung window. A pitched red tile roof is built up around the building's facades. Terracotta ornaments consists of molded capitals, a frieze, and dentil molding along the top of the structure.

### LOCAL CONTEXT

Oroville, the Butte County Seat, is located in Northern California, approximately 25 miles south of Chico. The city was named for a rich gold deposit found in the area. The first prospectors came for gold in 1849 and gold was a major factor in the economy well into the 1880s. Oroville is now a commercial center for the surrounding agricultural region, and since the construction of the Oroville Dam in 1968, has become a large recreational area as well.

The Oroville Main Post Office is on the southwest corner of Robinson and Oak Streets, fronting on Robinson Street. The central business district is two blocks to the north. Surrounding land uses are primarily residential and government office. The Butte County Courthouse is one block northeast of the post office. The Oroville City Hall and Library are two blocks to the north. Robinson Street to the east contains commercial buildings. The area to the south and west is residential.

### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building's style could be described as either late Second Renaissance Revival or early Starved Classicism. It is, in fact, a transitional style between the designs of the twenties and those of the thirties. In keeping with its Renaissance Revival roots, the detail is derivative of Renaissance and classical forms. The symmetrical front facade is wholly consistent with federal designs produced through the thirties, and consists of an arcade flanked by two slightly projecting wings. The arched windows are outlined with a terracotta cove molding and terracotta impost molding decorated with floral motifs are placed at the springline of the arches. A frieze containing alternating rectangular plaques containing floral motifs and circular floral medallions runs along the roofline. The words, "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE", are inscribed in this frieze above the arcade. A terracotta dentil molding runs just below the projecting cornice.

Large casement windows are placed in the center of each of the projecting wings. The windows are surrounded with an ornamental molding, and are visually supported by two fluted S-shaped brackets. A richly-ornamented terracotta plaque fills the space between the brackets below the windows. The windows are topped by a coved cornice and dentil molding.

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A casement window, identical to those used on the front facade, is also used on the east facade. Three arches, similar in size and ornament to those on the front elevation, are placed to the north of the casement window. The ornamented frieze and dentil molding used on the front elevation is carried around the east elevation.

The west elevation is articulated with a projecting end wing and casement window similar to the front elevation. The frieze and molding is carried around the side, though the rest of the fenestration is unornamented.

The facility is occupied entirely by the Postal Service, and consists of a partially finished basement, a main floor and a mezzanine.

The basement contains approximately 6,000 gross square feet of floor area. It houses a boiler room and storage space. Access to the basement is by stairs in the northwest corner of the building.

The main floor contains the public lobby, workroom, and mailing platform. The public lobby runs along the north side of the building. The service counter is located in the eastern corner.

The postmaster's office is adjacent to the east side of the lobby and separates the lobby from the workroom.

Also on the east is a mezzanine containing the swing room and a toilet. A lookout gallery extends along the north and east sides of the workroom at the mezzanine level. Stairs to the swing room are in the southeast corner of the workroom. The opening mailing platform is to the rear (south) of the workroom; the platform was extended in 1964.

The post office site contains 60,370 gross square feet; the building is on the front (north) portion of the lot, a paved vehicle maneuvering area is to the rear. The grounds on the west side of the property are landscaped with a lawn, and several deciduous trees and bushes. A driveway on the west side provides access to Robinson Street.

### ALTERATIONS

In the interior, the lobby was remodeled at the time of the extension. The lobby floor is red tile separated by marble borders. The original lamps hang from the ceiling, although fluorescent lights were also installed. A portion of the lobby on the east side was enclosed to provide space for additional lockboxes. The service windows were replaced with a single service counter, and paneling was installed behind the counter to block the view of the workroom from the lobby.

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The original skylight over the workroom was covered during the remodeling and fluorescent lights replaced the incandescent fixtures. The wood floor was covered with vinyl tiles.

An addition to the rear of the post office was completed in 1964; the building was extended approximately 100 feet by 97 feet to provide additional workroom and storage space.

A vault in the postmaster's office was moved in 1964, and two additional offices were constructed.

# 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		

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SPECIFIC DATES <b>Begun 1932, Completed 1933.</b>	BUILDER/ARCHITECT <b>James A. Wetmore/ Louis A. Simon, OSA</b>
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

On the local level the Oroville Post office is one of the most monumental and imposing buildings in town, and is the only federal building in Oroville. The building has state significance as an example of its type and period of construction.

ARCHITECTURE

This building's significance derives from its relation to two themes contained in this nomination. The first is the Beaux-Arts and Renaissance Revival buildings constructed during the first three decades of this century. The second is the Starved Classical style developed during the massive building program of the 1930s. Though Starved Classicism evolved as a way of economizing on ornament and design time, as well as in response to the evolving European Modernist movement, it had its roots firmly planted in the past design practices of the Office of the Supervising Architect. The Oroville Main Post Office is evidence that the style did not spring full-blown into federal construction but evolved over a period of years. The building's significance on the state level, then, is as a rare example of a style transitional between the Beaux-Arts and Starved Classical traditions.

On a local level, the building has some significance as the only federal building in Oroville. Though the building has had no directly quantifiable impact on the development of the town's architectural tradition, it remains one of the most prominent monumental buildings in town.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gebhard, David; Winter, Robert, " A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California", 2nd. Ed., Santa Barbara, Peregrine Smith, 1976.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.5

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 0	6 2 4 1 4 0	4 3 7 4 6 0 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block 25, Lots 2, 3, Town of Oroville Subdivision, Butte County. The site has a 147' southern frontage on Oak Street, a 200.3' western frontage on Robinson Street, a 130.73' northern border along an alley, while the eastern border proceeds south 64.62', turns west 14.38', and continues south 135.15'.

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

Doug Robertson, Planner

ORGANIZATION

Beland/Associates, Inc.

DATE

April 27, 1984

STREET & NUMBER

16 S. Oakland Ave. #204

TELEPHONE

(818) 796-8093

CITY OR TOWN

Pasadena

STATE

CA 91101

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_ NONE\_\_\_

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

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

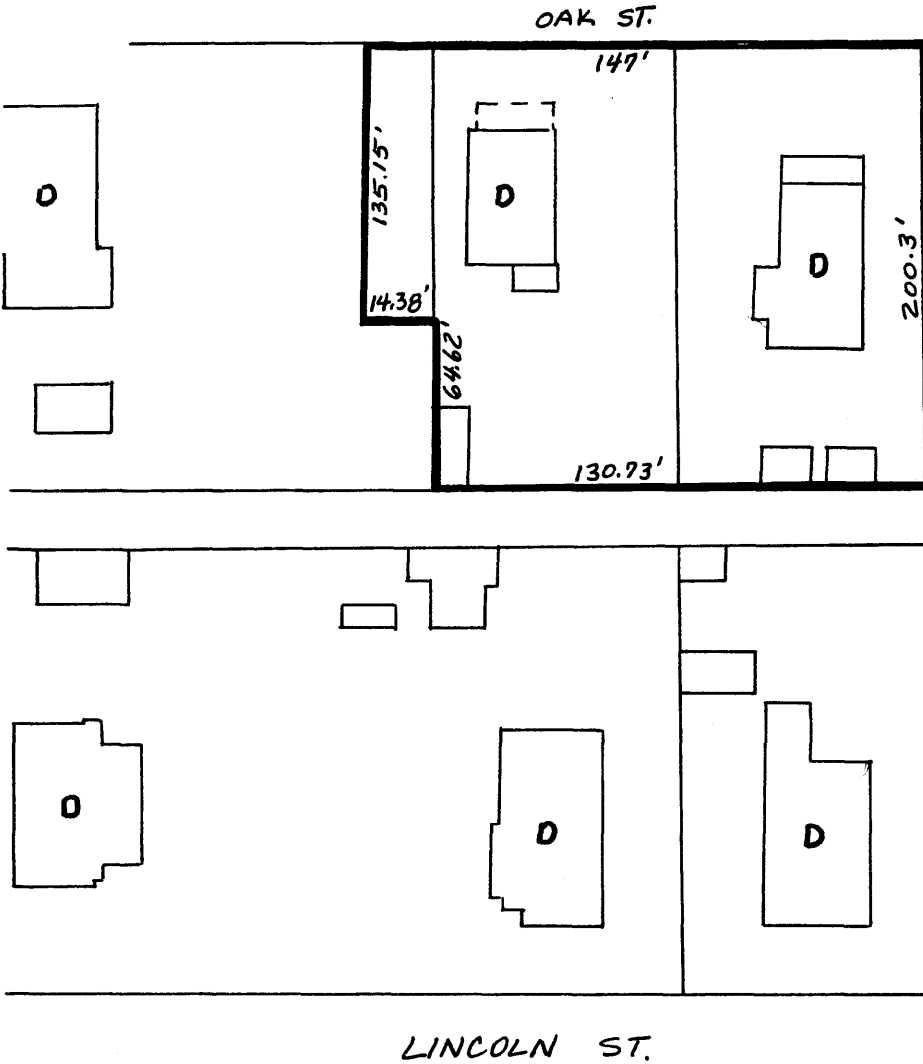
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↑ N  
1" = 50' ±

Note: Post Office site outlined in red.

Source: Sanborn Map, Oroville Book, page 14, 1926; Geography Dept. California State University, Northridge, California.