

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0680516

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 31 1978

DATE ENTERED NOV 20 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Federal Post Office, Riverside³

RECEIVED

APR 27 1978

AND/OR COMMON

Riverside Municipal Museum

OHP

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

3720 Orange St

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Riverside

VICINITY OF

36th

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Riverside

CODE

065

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Riverside

STREET & NUMBER

c/o Property Services 3900 Main St.

CITY, TOWN

Riverside

VICINITY OF

California 92501

STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Riverside County Administrative Center

STREET & NUMBER

4080 Lemon St.

CITY, TOWN

Riverside

California 92501

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Cultural Heritage Board Landmark #11

DATE

October 8th, 1969

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Riverside Municipal Museum 3720 Orange St.

CITY, TOWN

Riverside

California 92501

STATE

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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In the first decade of the 20th Century a movement in architecture developed in different sections of the country that resurrected their own regional heritages. "The Southwest sought an architecture recalling the missions and churches of Spanish origin, most of which had disappeared or been greatly abused."¹ This Mission Revival movement enjoyed a wide popularity in Riverside, California, especially in the downtown areas adjacent to the Mission Inn. When the new federal post office was proposed many concerned citizens worried that the classical design, typical to most of the government buildings of the time, would not complement the surrounding structures architecturally. This controversy was resolved by a compromise when the post office was approved in a neo-classical style with flavorings of the Mission Revival movement.²

The federal architect James K. Taylor, chief draughtsman at the U.S. Architects Office designed the building which in turn was built by the Southwestern Construction Company of Los Angeles at a total cost approaching 100,000 dollars. No effort was spared in getting only the best construction materials. The ". . . marble for the exterior work came from Vermont. The interior marble wainscoting and the beautiful ornamental floors of marble were cut from the quarries of California, as was the granite used in the superstructure. The cement came from our neighboring city, Colton. The ornamental bronze was made in the workshops of Los Angeles, and the interior woodwork, entirely of redwood was cut from the forests of California."³

A very good architectural description of the building was made by Kirk A. deGooyer from the University of California, Riverside.

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He describes the building in the following detail:

"The building is neo-classical in its relatively simple compact geometric design. While the surface is basically flat, there is much ornamentation that lend the feeling of the Mission Revival style. The rounded mission style arches of the main entrance, are carried around to all sides of the building in a delicate incision into the flat wall surfaces. Within some of these arch incisions are windows of the same pattern. On the four corners of the building the wall comes out the same distance as the arch incisions that are contained within these four corners. The windows contained in the corner verticals are rectangular. There is a rectangular window on the second floor for every lower window. The first approximately five and a half feet of the building is granite block. A nine inch strip of marble is next with the rest of the exterior being cement and granite. Marble is used for all the window ledges. On the north and south sides of the building there are false fronts reminiscent of the front of the Carmel mission. With their semi-circular tops they are the strongest influence of the mission style. There is an ornate wooden overhang cornice which tops the building except where the false front juts through. Above this cornice is the beautiful tiled roof so common to the Mission Revival.

There are six columns of marble when you reach the top of the steps. The columns are fluted from about three feet up to the top of the cornices, which begin at approximately eight feet. They support seven rounded arches. The "intrados", columns and cornices are all made of marble. These seven arches are repeated on the front of the building itself. The archivolts of these arches are made of redwood. In the loggia area, created between these two spaces is a groin vaulted ceiling. Hanging from this are the original three bronze light fixtures, one in every other arch.

Above the arches of the main entrance are four seals appropriate to the building's original use as a Post Office. At the top of the false front, is a plaque-like flag pole holder with bronze fixtures. The seals and flag pole holder are made of marble."⁴

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However, the structure has been altered in its exterior for a small addition has been added on to the rear of the building and the two flanking doors in the front as well as the side entrance door have been replaced. The massive iron grills that had covered the doors at night were taken for scrap during the Second World War. The building was declared a Cultural Heritage Board landmark because its architecure closely complements the Mission Inn, the old City Hall, the first Congregational Church, the Unitarian Universalist Church, and many others that are being proposed as part of a downtown historic district.

The interior of the building has retained much of its original beauty for ". . . the nine foot wainscoting of polished marble reaching up to the white plaster of paris walls. . . " are still in excellent condition.⁵ Except for the beautiful bronze railed staircase all of the bronze fixtures in the interior of the building have been removed. " The main floor workroom area, which was once two stories of open space, has been made into two separate floors. The corridor still has the Italian mosaic with California marble border, this being the second floor corridor. Almost all of the rest of the building has been extensively remodeled in order to accommodate the museum".⁶

It is the feeling of the Riverside Cultural Heritage Board and the museum's history department staff that the building has significant architectural merit to place it on the National Register of Historic Places Inventory.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES	Constructed 1912	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Builder: Southwestern Construction Company
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			Architect: James K. Taylor

On the corner of 7th and Orange St. stands the beautiful neo-classical building with mission influence that now serves the public as a museum. Constructed in 1912, it was designed by James K. Taylor who was the principal draughtsman at the United States Architects Office at the time.

From the years 1912 through 1938 the primary function of the building was that of a federal post office. During World War 11 it was the headquarters of the 4th Air Force and later was used as an emergency dormitory for service men on leave. Finally, in 1945 the property was sold to the city of Riverside. Beginning in 1947 it was both the headquarters of the Riverside Police Department which occupied the top floor of the building while the museum was located in the basement. This arrangement of dual occupancy would continue for the next eighteen years.¹

The past history of the building is closely related to the founding of the Riverside Municipal Museum. The Riverside Museum as an established city institution began when the widow of Cornelius E. Rumsey (one of the founders of the National Biscuit Company) donated his extensive collections of Indian artifacts to the city of Riverside in 1923. Known as the Rumsey collection it is considered one of the finest collections of its kind in southern California. The city of Riverside accepted the gift under Rumsey's stipulation that a suitable building would be provided to display this collection. For many years Rumsey's collection was displayed in the basement of the old city hall directly across the street from the present museum.²

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Refer to Continuation Sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 2/3 of an acre.

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>11</u>	<u>46.5780</u>	<u>376.0020</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The north boundary parallels 7th St. for 140 ft.. It then right angles southward and parallels Orange St. for 140 ft.. The line then right angles eastward in a straight line for 140 ft.. Finally, it runs northward in a straight line for 140 ft..

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James J. Stoffaire

ORGANIZATION

Riverside Municipal Museum

STREET & NUMBER

3720 Orange St.

CITY OR TOWN

Riverside

DATE

TELEPHONE

(714) 787-7273

STATE

California 92501

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Knox Mellon

DATE 7/11/78

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Charles Abbe
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 11.20.79
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *W. Ray Luce*
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 11.17.78

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In the late 40's both the police department and the museum moved into the former federal post office building. Finally in 1965 the police department moved into their present location and the entire building was converted to museum use.³ Today, the museum still has the Rumsey collection along with additional collections that interpret the natural and physical sciences as well as the local history of the area. It is a contribution to the community in that it is a cultural center that provides a significant educational experience to the sixty thousand people who visit it each year.

The building is architecturally significant as a successful example of an attempt to blend the typical turn-of-the-century building with strong Mission Revival detailing. This eclectic approach is carried out throughout the interior spaces. The marblwork and ornamental bronze fixtures are typical of early 20th century interior design.

Gebhard, in his Guide to Architecture in Southern California, describes the building as "basically a Renaissance Revival former U.S. Post Office building made Mission by the introduction of a many-arched arcade, central parapeted gable, a tile roof, and stuccoed walls."

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Major Bibliographical References For Item #7

- ¹ Burchard, John, and Albert Bush Brown, The Architecture of America, a Social and Cultural History, An Atlantic Monthly Press Book, Little Brown and Company, c. 1961, p.291.
- ² From Post Office To Riverside Municipal Museum
Kirk A. deGooyer p.1
- ³ Ibid., p. 2
- ⁴ Ibid., p.5-6.
- ⁵ Ibid., p.6.
- ⁶ Ibid., p.6.

Major Bibliographical References For Item #8

- ¹ Patterson, Tom, Landmarks Of Riverside, Press-Enterprise Co. c. 1964, p. 173.
- ² Ibid., p. 173.
- ³ Ibid., p. 173.