

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 1984

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

Beverly Hills Main Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

469 North Crescent Drive

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Beverly Hills

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

23

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Los Angeles

CODE

037

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

Thematic
Group

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

NA PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

U.S. Postal Service, Western Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER

850 Cherry Avenue

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Los Angeles County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

277 North Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Los Angeles,

STATE

California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California,
(published by Peregrine Smith, Inc., Salt Lake City).

DATE

1977

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

C/o Dr. David Gebhard, Department of Art History

CITY, TOWN

University of California
Santa Barbara

STATE

California

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
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>NA</u>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Beverly Hills Main Post Office is a textbook example of the Renaissance Revival style. The front elevation is marked by alternately arched and triangle-pedimented windows, and a rusticated terracotta beltcourse and quoining. The lobby is finished with marble veneer, and has a verde marble floor. Several Treasury Section of Fine Arts murals are placed in the public lobby.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Beverly Hills is an incorporated city of 32,000 located in the western portion of Los Angeles County. Famous worldwide as a wealthy residential enclave within the Los Angeles metropolis, the city was founded by the Rodeo Land and Water Company as "City for the Swell" and incorporated in 1914.

Will Rogers, in a 1930 letter to Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon, asked for a new Beverly Hills post office, as "...we are getting a lot of mail out here now, and they are handling it in a tent". Whatever real impact his request had, he is locally credited with winning the new facility from Washington, D.C.

Directly east of the post office site is the Beverly Hills City Hall- a classic Spanish Renaissance structure built in 1932 and designed by William J. Gage in a magnificent style not typical of those Depression-era days.

No known archaeological resources exist within or adjacent to the subject property. Sub-surface investigation or additional research does not appear justified.

Information concerning use of the subject site prior to the post office was not available.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This building is an outstanding example of Renaissance Revival (1840-1890), although constructed in 1933. The main elevation includes a partial second story containing functional support areas and lobby clerestory. A single-story workroom wing is perpendicular to this main element. There is a large basement below the workroom wing.

Constructed of poured concrete with Roman brick and terracotta facing, the building is finished throughout in marble veneer and plaster. The public lobby is floored with black and verde gree marble. Lobby walls are beige marble veneer capped by an ornamental plaster cornice. A full vaulted ceiling crowns the public lobby area. The post-master's office is panelled in walnut.

Special features of the exterior include:

- o Rusticated terracotta quoins and beltcourse;
- o Architrave trimmed entries and windows with pedimented and segmental frontispieces; and
- o Multilight window sashes.

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Item #7

° Smaller, square windows of the upper story.

ALTERATIONS

The exterior service courtyard was renovated in the late 1960s. Additional land between Burton Way and the original site has been converted to a public parking area for postal customer convenience.

Item #8

the same point in time, and in compatible architectural styles. Their relative locations and landscaping create a Civic Center, and sense of place for the entire downtown area.

ART

The murals in the lobby of the Beverly Hills Main Post Office are not individually significant as art. They are important, however, as examples of the style and accepted iconology of murals produced for post offices in California in general. Too, the murals derive most of their meaning from their Southern California context, and would suffer if moved from their original location.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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	See below.	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Ralph C. Flewelling; Allison and Allison, Consulting Architects
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Site acquired April, 1932; occupied April, 1934.)

This building is an excellent example of the work of a prominent local architect, Ralph C. Flewelling, and is an unusually lavishly ornamented 1930s-era post office. Though Flewelling was not known for his use of Renaissance Revival styles, the Beverly Hills Post Office is a sophisticated and graceful Renaissance building. The structure also plays an important urban design role in the city's civic center.

ARCHITECTURE

Flewelling was a locally prominent and prolific architect. Allison and Allison was a prominent Los Angeles architectural office from the late teens through the 1930s. They specialized in school architecture, and much of Ralph C. Flewelling's early work with the firm was involved with schools and universities. He designed UCLA's Women's Gymnasium in 1932, and USC's Art and Architecture Building in 1931. Most of these early designs were in the Northern Italian Romanesque style, although the architect later designed International Style and Renaissance Revival buildings with equal ease. He later formed his own office in Los Angeles: "Ralph C. Flewelling and Associates, Architects".

The Renaissance Revival styling of this building is important in the context of the architect's work: it is the only known example of Renaissance Revival he designed.

As per National Register Criterion C, the structure contains high artistic values as a successful interpretation of early Italian Renaissance forms and detailing. Considering the limitations imposed by post office operational requirements, the overall volumetric massing is exceptionally elegant.

The building is an important example of the post office as a type; especially in its idiosyncratic use of the Renaissance Revival applied to a classic box. Federal design tended toward conservatism and this tendency is expressed in this building. Finally, this building is significant as an example of the second type of post office considered in this report, as described in the cover document.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

The Beverly Hills Main Post Office takes on significance in the urban design of the city when considered in relation to the Beverly Hills City Hall directly across the street to the east of the post office. The two buildings were constructed essentially at

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Note: Post office site outlined in red.

Source: United States Postal Service, "Approach Plan" 1933,
Beverly Hills Post Office, 469 N. Crescent Drive,
Beverly Hills, Calif. 90213.

