

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

Los Angeles Terminal Annex Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

900 N. Alameda Street

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Los Angeles

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

25

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

California

CODE
05

COUNTY

Los Angeles

CODE

037

2 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	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<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 & NUMBER

850 Cherry Avenue

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

California 94099

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Los Angeles County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

227 N. Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Los Angeles

STATE

California 90017

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Los Angeles Rapid Rail Project Survey and Determination
of Eligibility

DATE

Determined eligible 5/24/83

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

U. S. Urban Mass Transportation Administration

CITY, TOWN

Los Angeles

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 Terminal Annex, in terms of usable square footage, is the largest building included in this nomination. Though the structure is anomalous in scale, its architecture is consistent with 1930s post office construction throughout California. The building is an eclectic mix of Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival Styles, with elements of Pueblo and Islamic.

LOCAL CONTEXT

The Terminal Annex facility is located one block northeast of El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park near the center of older Los Angeles. The area includes Chinatown to the west and north, Union Station to the south, and substantial older industrial and commercial uses in the periphery. In addition to the age and significance of these abutting uses, there is substantial new development underway in Chinatown and the area easterly of Union Station is under consideration as a part of the proposed Metro Rail Project for Los Angeles. In general, this is an area of great complexity and importance.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The building appears to be in excellent structural condition, and is being well maintained. The Terminal Annex building is an example of a simplified version of the Spanish Colonial Revival style which was the dominant idiom of government construction in the 1930s in Southern California. The two domes, placed near the front of the building, are covered with blue and tan glazed terracotta tiles, and rest on hexagonal drums. Stylistically, the domes are tied to both Spanish Baroque and Islamic traditions. Large canales, or waterspouts, are placed along the front and side elevations just below the third-floor cornice. Concrete buttresses add structural stability, and recall elements of Spanish Colonial design as seen in some California missions. The thickness of the walls is emphasized by incising the entrances and windows into the wall surface; the general effect recalls the thick, buttressed adobe walls seen in Spanish Colonial design throughout California. The bronze doors at the public entrances are richly detailed, though they relate stylistically to Beaux-Arts design of the first decades of the twentieth century. The ceiling in the public lobby is formed in a cast-concrete imitation of vaulting, which divides the lobby into vaguely defined bays. The design of the terrazzo floor reflects this division of the lobby, with an ornamental double-triangle motif in white and green outlining each bay. The center of each bay is marked by a design in red, black, yellow, white, and green terrazzo, and resembles Southwestern American Indian textile decorative motifs.

ALTERATIONS

A large addition, which bears no stylistic resemblance to the original structure, was constructed on the north side of the building in the 1960s. The south side of the building acquired a flamboyant, but more compatible, fire escape in the early 1970s. The original service windows have been removed and replaced with plastic laminate topped service counters and self-service areas. Several bays of new lockboxes have been added on the southern portion of the lobby, and the original lobby light fixtures have been replaced with new incandescent fixtures. The site is landscaped with olive and palm trees, trimmed shrubs, and mown grass, all of which are well cared for.

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 **Begun 1937,
completed 1938.**

BUILDER/ARCHITECT **Gilbert Stanley Underwood**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Terminal Annex's exceptional significance resides in several areas, including its architecture, its urban design impact on the surrounding area, and in its lobby murals. The Annex represents a building type transitional between the decentralized mail handling systems of the years before 1940, and the highly centralized and increasingly mechanized systems used after the Second World War. In combination with the Union Passenger Terminal to the south and El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Park, the Terminal Annex takes on an urban design focus it would not otherwise have; it is an essential part of this historic section of Los Angeles. The lobby murals date from the end of the New Deal public art programs, and are examples of one of the larger commissions awarded during the program.

ARCHITECTURE

The Los Angeles Terminal Annex is the newest building included in this nomination, and is, at present, 46 years old. The building is nevertheless eligible for inclusion in the National Register because of its exceptional significance*

By 1937, most federal construction, whether designed by the Office of the Supervising Architect or by private architects, was in the Starved Classical style. The anomalous use of the Spanish Colonial Revival in the Terminal Annex relates to the buildings constructed during the Mexican period in the nearby Plaza de Los Angeles and Olvera Street, a part of Los Angeles now included in El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park. The building retains the rigid symmetry, monumental proportions, and minimal ornament of the Starved Classical, and could be called a "Starved Spanish" design.

Gilbert Stanley Underwood, Architect:

A prominent Los Angeles architect, Underwood received numerous commissions for federal projects in the 1930s. He designed most of his structures in a simple, unadorned style fully compatible with the Starved Classicism of the Supervising Architect's office.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Apart from the important urban design relationship the building has with El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park, the siting of the Terminal Annex and Union Station fundamentally changed the character of the immediately surrounding area. By the late 1930s, the site was covered by multi-story tenement buildings, occupied mostly by Americans of Chinese descent, and marked the eastern border of Los Angeles' Chinatown.

*The property was determined eligible for listing in the National Register on 5/24/83.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Building records: progress photographs, blueprints.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.75

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	1	3	8	6	0	0	3	7	6	9	1	1	0
ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING							

 B

ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING						

 C

ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING						

 D

ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Los Angeles County Assessor's Map Book 5409, p. 15, Kerckoff, Cuzner and Co. tract. M.R. 4-565, Parcels: 902 (lots A, B, 27-732); 903 (unnumbered lot); 904 (lots 4-13); 905 (lots 14-23); 900.

The site is an irregular trapezoid with a 416' frontage on Macy Street, and an original 168' frontage on Alameda Street.

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 South Oakland Avenue, Suite 204

TELEPHONE

818-796-8093

CITY OR TOWN

Pasadena

STATE

California 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

1/11/85

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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CONTINUATION SHEET Los Angeles, ITEM NUMBER 7, 8 PAGE 1

Terminal Annex

Item 7
ART

The lobby contains twelve murals painted between 1941 and 1943 by Boris Deutsch, a well known project artist. Most of the murals painted between 1941 and 1943 depict various Meso-American Indian cultures and people. Two of the 1943 murals depict the Spanish colonization of California- one showing settlers with domestic animals and wagons, and another showing the Franciscan Father Junipero Serra with several Mission Indians. Two murals painted in 1943 depict modern scientists studying astronomy and chemistry. One 1944 mural shows modern telecommunications, and the last mural, also painted in 1944, depicts American military men, ships, and guns.

Item 8

Terminal Annex and Union Station site was razed, the Chinatown area was constrained to areas to the north and west of the post office site. Terminal Annex is directly north of the Union Passenger Terminal, constructed in 1939 in a Spanish/Streamline Moderne style. These two large buildings form a major focus, and eastern terminus, of the Pueblo de Los Angeles area.

ART

The murals conform to the representational style which was standard for Federal Art Project murals. Iconographically, the bulk of the murals seem to depict the history of Central America and California. Deutsch was apparently concerned primarily with cultural history, and so chose to depict Central American Indian cultures, which loom large in Mexico's popular consciousness and in the art of such painters as Orozco and Rivera. By depicting Mexican Indian cultures and the Spanish settlement of California, he provides an alternative to the Anglo concept of settlement and civilization in the Americas. The military mural is anomalous, and appears to have been painted last in a show of patriotic fervor. The murals depicting the scientific pursuits of the twentieth century compliment the scenes depicting the scenes of ceremonial and daily life in pre-European contact America. The juxtaposition of the murals suggests that Deutsch considered the ceremonies surrounding technology are analogous to earlier Indian ceremonies.

The iconography of the Terminal Annex murals is highly unusual for post office murals, and Deutsch employed an expressionistic style that was on the fringe of the accepted representationalism. The murals possess exceptional significance on the local level, in the context of Los Angeles' Spanish, Mexican, and native American history. The murals are significant on the state level for their unusually large size, as examples of expressionism in Federal Art Project murals, and for their unusual iconography.

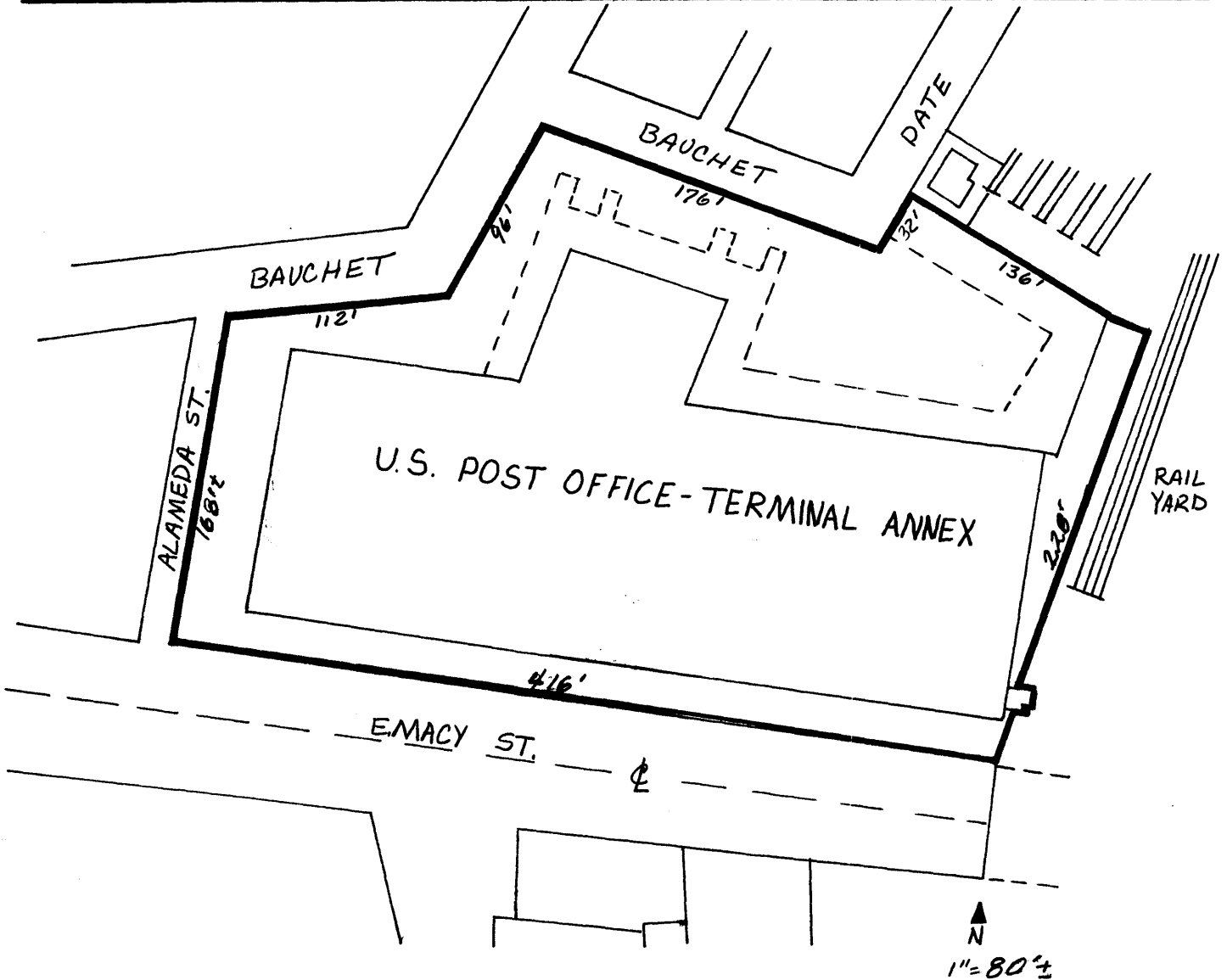
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Los Angeles

CONTINUATION SHEET Terminal Annex ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE two



Note: Post office site outlined in red.

Source: Sanborn Map, Los Angeles Book, Vol. 3, page 304, 1923-52;
Geography Map Library, California State University, North-
ridge, CA.