

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

DATE ENTERED

JAN 11 1986

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

Santa Cruz Main Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

850 Front Street

NA

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Santa Cruz

NA

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

16

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Santa Cruz

CODE

087

2 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

X Thematic Group

OWNERSHIP

- X PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- NA IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- X OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

- YES: RESTRICTED
- X YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- X GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

U.S. Postal Service, Western Regional Offices

STREET & NUMBER

850 Cherry Ave.

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA

VICINITY OF

STATE

CA 94099

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Santa Cruz County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

701 Ocean Street, Rm. #230

CITY, TOWN

Santa Cruz

STATE

CA

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Santa Cruz Historical Resources Inventory

DATE

3/9/76

FEDERAL X STATE COUNTY X LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Office of Historic Preservation, P.O. Box 2390

CITY, TOWN

Sacramento

STATE

CA 95811

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE NA

4/27/84

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The original building is an archetypal example of Supervising Architect's Taylor's Renaissance Revival design. The building is decorated with extensive terracotta ornament, and has a red terracotta tile roof. The lobby has a groin-vaulted ceiling and drop lights dating from the 1936 remodeling. The addition completed in the 1930s was sympathetic to the original design, but the 1966 addition is a stucco box that does not relate to the structure's dominant Italianate detailing.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Santa Cruz is the Santa Cruz County Seat, and is located in the north shore of Monterey Bay, approximately 25 miles southwest of San Jose. Mission Santa Cruz was established in 1771 on a mesa overlooking the Bay and the present-day town. The post office is within the downtown business district at the southeast corner of Front and Water Streets. The surrounding uses are primarily retail and commercial. Directly across Front Street, to the west of the post office, is a shopping area of restored retail/commercial buildings containing three properties currently listed on the National Register.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The architectural style of the building is Renaissance Revival. The symmetric front facade is articulated with an arcade, carried by unfluted granite Doric columns, and circular marble plaques are placed in the spandrels of each arch. A molded terracotta belt course runs the length of the arcade, and an eagle is placed in each of the projecting wings of the front elevation, and is decorated with an elaborate egg-and-dart molding, and floral bosses are placed in the coffers between the modillions.

The north and south elevations are identical, each containing ten light casement windows. The facades project slightly, roughly 15 feet from the elevation, and contain windows identical to those found on the end wings of the front elevation.

The public lobby has a 20-foot vaulted ceiling, visually supported by marble pilasters and Corinthian capitals. The green terrazzo floor is separated with strips of white marble, and bordered with a rose marble baseboard.

ALTERATIONS

A 30-foot by 97-foot addition to the workroom was completed in 1936 in the style of the original building. A second addition was made to the workroom in 1966, and was not sensitive to the original style. Drop lights and bronze post office boxes were added to the lobby during the 1936 remodeling.

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 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 **Design 1910, Construction began 1911, completed 1912.** BUILDER/ARCHITECT **See Below.**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Office of the Supervising Architect
 James Knox Taylor (1912 building)
 James A. Wetmore/Louis A. Simon (1936 Addition)
 GAS
 John Taras (1966 Addition)

The building's architectural significance is based on its considerable aesthetic merit, and its usefulness as an example of the changing remodeling policies of the federal government. The murals, painted as part of the New Deal art program of the 1930s, are important documents of the social and artistic milieu of the 1930s, and testify to the building's continued importance as a focus of small-town life.

ARCHITECTURE

The 1936 addition remained faithful to the original style and feeling of the building, and did not impair its integrity. While the 1966 additions are inconsistent with the Italian Renaissance Revival styling of the rest of the building, it is not visible from the front elevation where most of the building's significance resides. Therefore, the structure retains substantial architectural integrity.

Taylor's tenure as Supervising Architect was marked by a devotion to "the classical style of architecture", by which he meant Beaux-Arts Classicism. The Santa Cruz Main Office provides an example of a blending of Italian Renaissance Revival motifs with Beaux-Arts notions of planning and symmetry. The proportions of the front arcade are directly derivative of the 15th century Florentine buildings, such as Brunelleschi's Ospedale degli Innocenti. The rich ornament on the eaves, however, reflects late 19th century Beaux-Arts decorative motifs.

The building is important on the state level as the earliest post office surveyed still serving as a post office and under Postal Service control. It also provides evidence that the characteristic style of federal construction during his tenure as Supervising Architect. The structure is locally significant as an example of its type and style, and as an integral part of the historic downtown area.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gebhard, D., Winter, R., "A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California". Peregrine Smith, Inc., Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City, 1973.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1.0

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 0	5 86 6 9 6	4 0 9 2 1 5 3 4	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block 7, Lots 2, 3, 4, 7, 21, Town of Santa Cruz Subdivision, Santa Cruz County Assessor. The irregular site has a frontage of approximately 270" on Water Street and 275' on Front Street, with the post office building located adjacent this intersection.

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

STATE NA	CODE NA	COUNTY NA	CODE NA
STATE NA	CODE NA	COUNTY NA	CODE 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
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Item 7

ART

Four murals, completed in 1936 by Henrietta Shore and Clarence Flagg, are placed in arches in the lobby. The murals, entitled "Artichoke Pickers", "Brussels Sprout Pickers", "Fishermen", and "Limestone Quarriers", depict working people engaged in the basic industries of the area. The murals were commissioned by the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts.

Item 8

ART

Like many murals painted during the 1930s, the four murals contained in the Santa Cruz Post Office derive most of their meaning from the context of Santa Cruz and the surrounding area. The murals depict common working people engaged in a combination of economic activities unique to the Monterey Bay area. Stylistically, the murals conform to the requisite representationalism of Section of Fine Arts painting, but use an unusual expressionistic distortion of color and form. This expressionism adds an element of emotional intensity not commonly found in post office murals. Their placement in the 1912 lobby is aesthetically pleasing, and gives evidence of a long, continuous use of the post office as a vital part of the area's economy and public consciousness.

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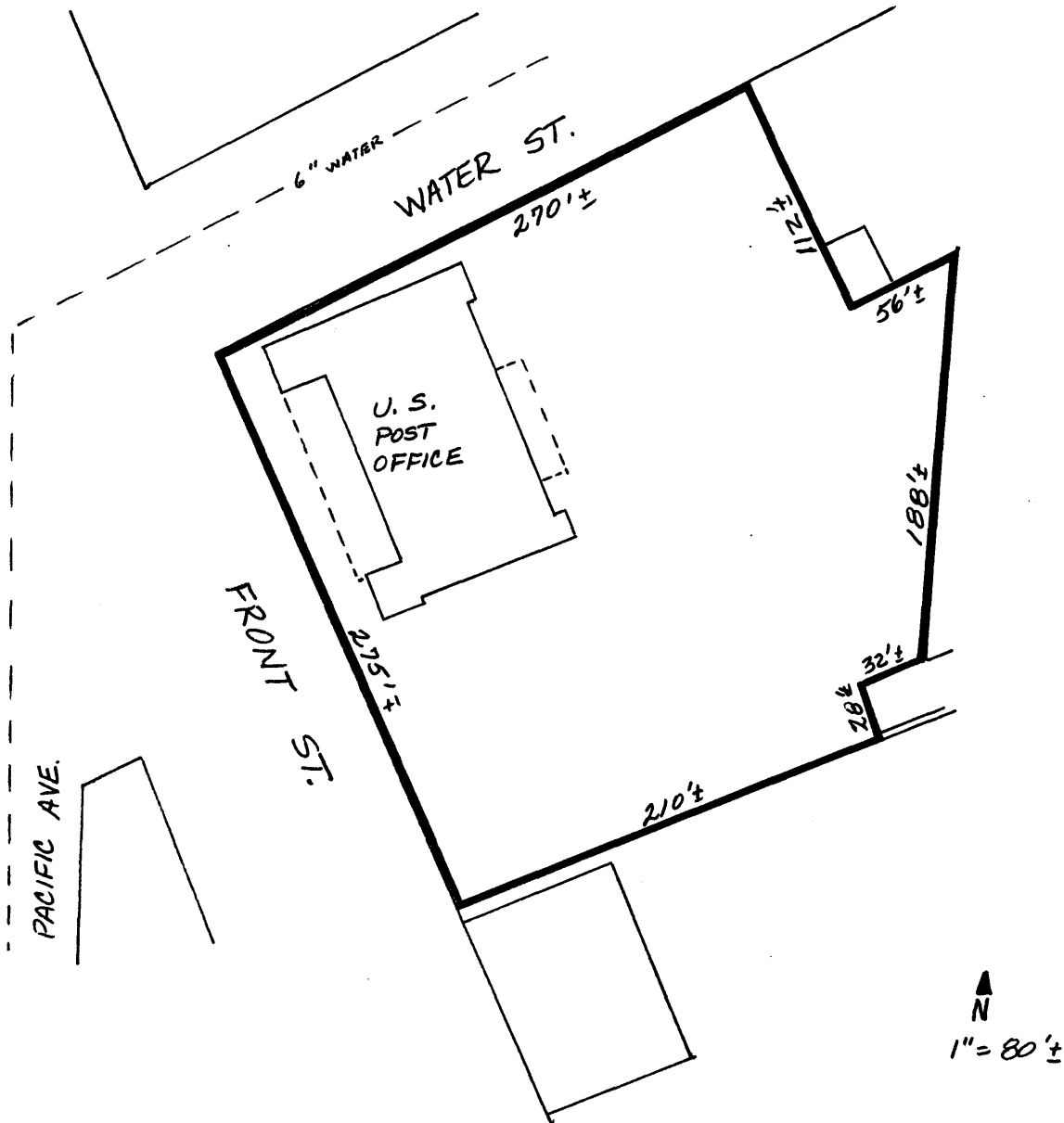
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CONTINUATION SHEET Santa Cruz MPO ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE two



Note: Post office site outlined in red.

Source: Sanborn Map, Santa Cruz Book, Vol. 1, page 114, 1928-29;
Geography Department, California State University,
Northridge, California