

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	MAR 14 1988
DATE ENTERED	

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

U. S. Post Office - San Mateo Main Post Office

AND/OR COMMON

San Mateo, Saint Matthew's Station

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

210 South Ellsworth Street

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

San Mateo

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

California

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

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 checked="" 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	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input 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, Facilities Service Center

STREET & NUMBER

850 Cherry Avenue

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA VICINITY OF

California 94099

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

San Mateo County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

401 Marshall Street

CITY, TOWN

Redwood City

STATE

CA 94063

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None.

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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		

6/23/87

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The architecture of the building is of the Mission Revival style. The front facade is characterized by a well-ordered, symmetrical design. The end wings of the facade are box-like, and project out slightly to divide the front into three vertical segments. The central portion contains the main entrance, which consists of three sets of double doors made of wood and glass, with single-light transoms. A wood sculpture in the center transom depicts four female figures holding birds and fish above their heads. The lobby contains three Treasury Relief Art Project-sponsored murals depicting scenes of early California living.

LOCAL CONTEXT

San Mateo, about 20 miles south of San Francisco, is the largest and possibly the oldest city on the San Francisco Peninsula. In March of 1776, Father Pedro Font, chaplain of the Anza expedition, crossed a creek naming it San Mateo. The Padres of Mission Dolores in San Francisco later chose this area as a farming outpost for the Mission, and as a rest-stop halfway down El Camino to Mission San Jose. In the 1860's San Mateo grew into a business and commercial center for the surrounding farm communities. The arrival of the railroad in 1863 further accelerated development; the first plat covered sixteen blocks around the depot. Portions of the early buildings can still be seen in a few houses along Delaware Street.

After World War II, San Mateo became a center for retail, trade, commerce, education, and religion. They remain primary economic sources for the city.

The San Mateo Saint Matthew's Station was originally the Main Post Office until 1964, when the Postal Service leased a new facility about five blocks to the north. The Saint Matthew's Station is in the central business district, on the northern corner of Ellsworth Street and Second Avenue fronting on Ellsworth. A public parking area is to the southwest. The property adjacent to the post office on the southeast is vacant.

The Station is in one of the older sections of the city; many of the structures date from the 1920's and 1930's. Although built during the same period, these buildings represent a diversity of architectural styles and do not appear to have any major architectural significance. In addition, no archaeological sites are known to exist within or adjacent to the subject property. Subsurface investigation or additional research does not appear to be justified.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building appears to be in good structural condition. There have been no significant interior or exterior modifications. The building retains its original doors and fixtures.

The foundation of the building is of reinforced concrete on spread footings; the floors are of concrete beams and ribbed slabs. The exterior walls are stucco. The roof of the structure is composition, under Spanish clay tile; it is flat, except for a small sloped section over the lobby.

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

SPECIFIC DATES Building completed: 1935 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Treasury Department Supervising Engineer's Office, under Neal Melick

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The building, which is in good condition, is a fine example of the Mission Revival Style of architecture. The design of the building, as well as the murals contained within it, are highly reflective of the early, Spanish-dominated history of the area. Additionally, they are representative of predominant California trends in federal art and architecture of the period in which they were produced.

ART

The three murals in the lobby of the building were painted under the auspices of the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP) in 1937. The murals are entitled, "Life in Early California;" the artist is Tom Laman. Laman was the master artist on two other TRAP projects: murals for the Whittier and Eureka post offices. Laman's murals at the Saint Mathew's Station are representative of the "Regionalist" style adopted by many federally-sponsored California artists. The Regionalist style glorified the old-fashioned, agrarian values traditionally associated with the midwest, and was generally apolitical in content. In California, New Deal mural art often presented themes from the California period of Mexican/Spanish domination of the state. As such, the murals tended to feature idealized scenes of California colonial life. California mural artists were also strongly influenced by mural artists in Mexico. Diego Rivera was particularly influential, and period California murals often reflected Rivera's style elements: decorative, optimistic; with puffy modeling, linear brushwork, and the use of saturated earth colors.

Laman's murals in Saint Matthew's Station generally follow the aforementioned style trends in both form and content. However, the value of the murals lies chiefly with their historical context as representative of these trends rather than with their individual significance as works of art.

The carved wood sculpture above the center front door, entitled, "Indian Maidens," was done by TRAP-sponsored artist Zygmund Sazevich. Sazevich also produced a wood sculpture for the Roseville Post Office in 1936. Sazevich achieved some local prominence; in 1938, his work was exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Art.

Neither Laman nor Sazevich are included in standard art bibliographies.

ARCHITECTURE

In 1934, Louis A. Simon replaced James Wetmore as Supervising Architect of federal

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

de Saisset Art Gallery and Museum, University of Santa Clara,
 "New Deal Art: California," University of Santa Clara, 1976

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .39

UTM REFERENCES

A 10 559760 4157150
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The rectangular site occupies the northern corner of the block bounded on the east by S. Ellsworth Street and on the north by Second Avenue. The site has a frontage of approximately 110' on S. Ellsworth, and 155' along Second Avenue.

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

Paula Frederick, Technical Associate

ORGANIZATION

Environmental Science Associates, Inc.

DATE

June 23, 1987

STREET & NUMBER

760 Harrison Street

TELEPHONE

(415) 896-5900

CITY OR TOWN

San Francisco,

STATE

CA 94107

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

Kathryn Gutierrez
 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

Paula Frederick

TITLE

Principal, Environmental & Cultural Resource Mgmt.

DATE

3-11-88

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Mary Schlapel

DATE

4/18/88

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 St. Matthew's Stn. **ITEM NUMBER 7** **PAGE 1**

Item #7

The end wings of the front facade contain the mezzanine, and extend up to meet the ridge line of the sloped center roof. A five-light rectangular casement window in each wing is enclosed with a black iron screen, and framed in a plain round arch. The end facades (north and south) are identical with five rectangular windows on the first floor level, and five smaller rectangular windows on the mezzanine level. The end wings of the facades also project out slightly, and contain rectangular windows identical to those on the front facade.

In the lobby, the original wood-framed service windows are still in use, and the steel bar and leaded-glass closures remain. The original glass drop light fixtures hang from the open beam ceiling. The lobby floor is of the original red tile. The lower portion of the walls are finished with a wainscot of red, green, and gray tile in a random pattern; the upper portions are of white plaster. The lock box area on the north and south sides of the lobby contain some of the original brass lock boxes, although new aluminum boxes have also been added.

Much of the work room remains unchanged and is in good condition. The work room floor is of tongue-and-groove oak wood. Four original skylights are still used for air circulation; no air conditioning has been installed. The Postmaster's office retains its original features, except for wood-panelling of the walls. The office space on the second floor was designed as purely functional, and has no special features.

Distinctive exterior features include:

- o Intricately-carved and colorfully-painted wood front door panels and transoms;
- o Vertical poles of colorfully-painted wood bead-and-reel molding, which cover the door panes and transoms;
- o Recessed casement windows, some of which have wrought iron grates;
- o Wrought iron light fixtures, which flank the front entrance;
- o Decorative tile medallions above the windows of the front end wings of the building.

Distinctive interior features include:

- o Decoratively-carved and painted wood ceiling beams in the lobby and offices;
- o Original brass lock boxes with eagle emblems;
- o Multi-colored tile on the lower portion of lobby walls;
- o Original red tile floor in the lobby;

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CONTINUATION SHEET St. Matthew's Stn. **ITEM NUMBER 7,8** **PAGE 2**

o Wood-framed service windows.

ALTERATIONS

Exterior alterations to the building consist of a cement ramp attached to the rear loading platform, built to accommodate wheeled carts and handicapped customers. Alterations to the building's interior consist of: construction of a wall to divide office space in the Postmaster's office area (south-end of the building); extension of the south-end post office box lobby (extending into a small portion of the workroom); removal of an original box lobby in the north-end of the building; and replacement of the original incandescent lights in the workroom with fluorescent lights.

The original wood-beam ceiling in the Postmaster's office area was retained. The floors and walls of the south-end box lobby extension were matched with the original red floor tile and glazed wall tile. The original north-end box lobby was temporarily closed off between approximately 1970 and 1978 from public use, but has been reopened as a customer lobby. One minor alteration to the interior has been approved by the Postal Service for Fiscal Year 1987. The alteration consists of L-shaped extensions from the service counter to accommodate new equipment at each service window. The extensions would be located on the workroom side of the service counter.

Item #8

buildings. Between 1934 and 1939, federal design exhibited greater stylistic variety than in the previous 25 years. During this period, more consideration, as well, was given to local architectural tradition. In California, "Spanish," or "Mission" style architecture became popular during the twenties and early thirties.

Saint Matthew's Station reflects this architectural trend. The Station's design is in the Mission Revival style, which was one of the three Spanish Revival Periods in the early part of the century. The building's design is therefore highly representative of the architectural traditions associated with the area in which it is located.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Cover Document **ITEM NUMBER** 8 **PAGE** 24

This nomination of the San Mateo, California, St. Matthews Station Post Office is an Addendum to the Thematic Group Nomination, prepared April 27, 1984, for Post Offices built between 1900 and 1942. This Post Office will be added to the existing Thematic listing which includes the following Post Offices:

Beverly Hills, CA - Main Post Office
Chico, CA - Midtown Station
Glendale, CA - Main Post Office /
Federal Building
Los Angeles, CA - Terminal Annex
Napa, CA - Franklin Station
Petaluma, CA - Main Post Office
Redlands, CA - Main Post Office
San Diego, CA - Downtown Station
Santa Ana, CA - Spurgeon Station
Santa Cruz, CA - Main Post Office
Willows, CA - Main Post Office

Burbank, CA - Downtown Station
El Centro, CA - Main Post Office
Long Beach, CA - Main Post Office
Los Angeles, CA - Hollywood Station
Marysville, CA - Main Post Office
Oroville, CA - Main Post Office
Porterville, CA - Main Post Office
San Bernardino, CA - Downtown Station
San Pedro, CA - Main Post Office
Santa Barbara, CA - Main Post Office
Visalia, CA - Town Center Station

The St. Matthews Station Post Office in San Mateo will be included as a significant example of the California Mission Style, designed under the administration of Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect, during the Work Progress Administration (WPA) as a small, single-function Post Office. As described in the cover document, four themes of function, style, funding and architect chronicle the 40-year development of the post office as a building type.

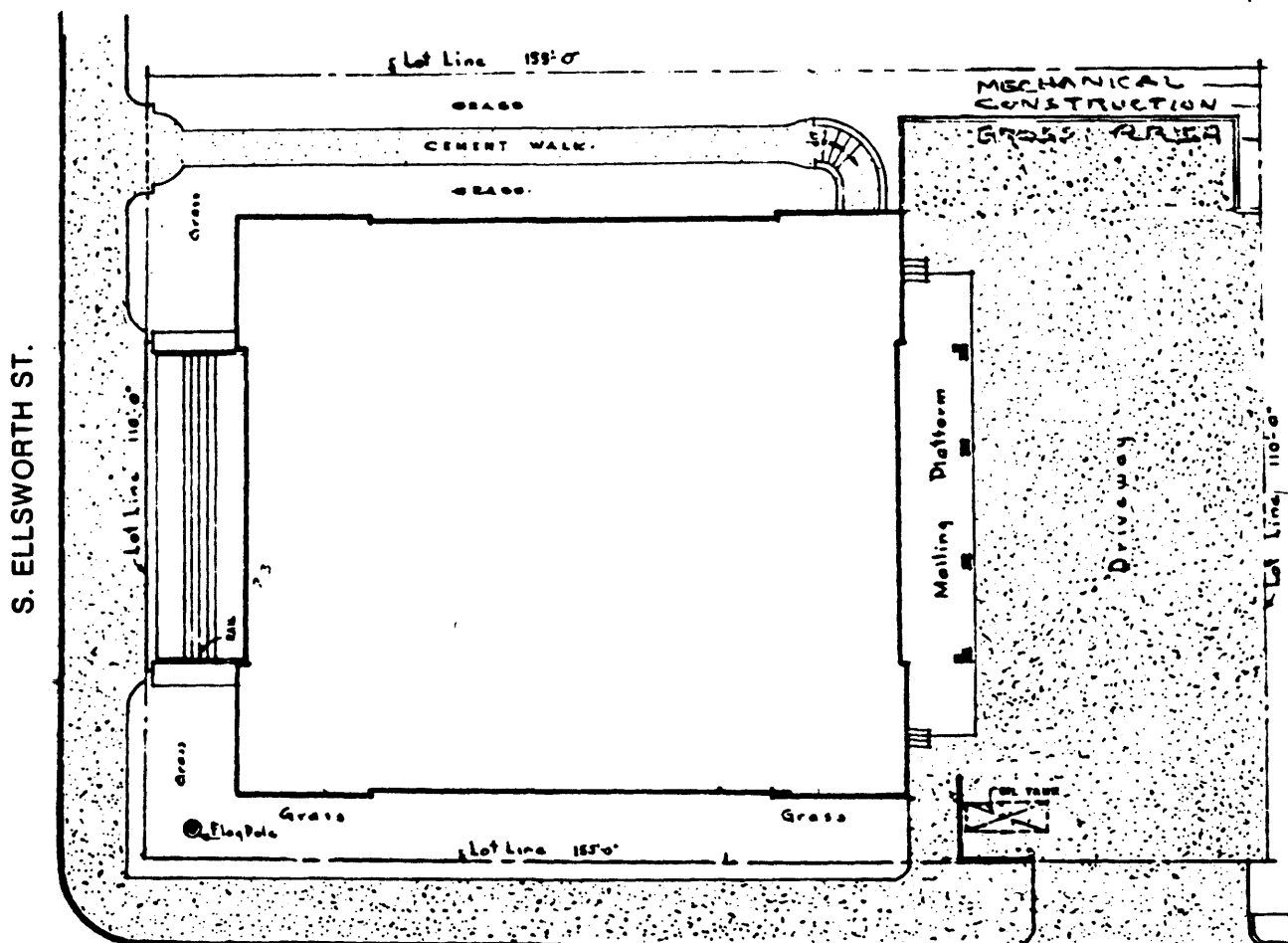
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CONTINUATION SHEET St. Matthew's Stn. ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 3

Source: United States Postal Service, "Approach Plan" 1934,
Saint Matthew's Station, 210 S. Ellsworth Street,
San Mateo, California 94401



SECOND AVE.

U.S. POST OFFICE
Saint Matthew's Station
San Mateo, California
UTM reference:
10/559760/4157750

