

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 27
DATE ENTERED

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

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

Petaluma Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

120 4th Street

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Petaluma

NA VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Sonoma

CODE

097

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 Ave.

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

CA 94099

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Sonoma County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

585 Fiscal Drive

CITY, TOWN

Santa Roas

STATE

CA

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Petaluma Historic Resources Inventory

DATE

December, 1976

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY 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 architectural style of the Petaluma Main Post Office is essentially Spanish Colonial Revival though the bizarre gargoyle-like downspout appear to derive from Spanish Gothic archetypes. The front elevation consists of five arches forming a central portion, flanked by two recessed wings. A terracotta frieze runs the length of the building.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Petaluma is an agricultural town approximately 40 miles north of San Francisco near California's coast. From its founding in the early 1800s, the town's economy has been based on the surrounding agricultural areas, acting as a shipping and processing point for transporting poultry and produce to San Francisco.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building appears to be in excellent structural condition. The grounds have been well maintained and there are no structural or flooding problems.

The foundation and bearing walls are steel reinforced concrete, and the floors are concrete beams and poured slab. The exterior walls are covered with a buff-colored stucco. The lobby is covered with a pitched roof covered with red clay tiles, and the workroom has a flat asphalt-composition roof.

The building is decorated with ornament in an eclectic mix of styles, with a predominately Italianate-Mediterranean flavor, all applied to the standard classical box characteristic of the Supervising Architect's office.

The rigidly symmetrical main facade is articulated with five arches cut into the wall surface. The central arch houses the front entrance, which is elaborated with two dark green veined marble columns carrying a marble entablature. All five arches are decorated with wrought iron scrollwork, suggesting Spanish Baroque archetypes. The bottom of each window opening is filled with the same veined marble used on the front entrance. The cast keystones at the top of the main-facade arches are decorated with inverted chevrons suggestive of Art Deco design, and six terracotta gargoules are placed on the piers that carry the arcade. A classically-inspired egg-and-dart molding decorates the eave line. Two standard cast bronze lighting fixtures flank the main entrance. A large geometricized eagle is placed over the front entrance, and breaks above the eave line on the line of symmetry of the facade.

Two wings flank the arcaded central portion of the front elevation, each containing a mullioned twelve-light window. An oval medallion is centered directly above each of these side windows. Three terracotta plaques are placed on a level with the gargoules. The central plaque medallion contains a fleur-de-lis, identical to those described for the front elevation.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Petaluma MPO ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

The public lobby has white plaster walls, and a dark marble is used for both the floor and wainscoting. A decorative wrought iron screen over the lockboxes and service counter separates the lobby from the workroom. The workroom has white painted plaster walls and a parquet hardwood floor.

ALTERATIONS

The mailing platform on the south end (rear) of the building is currently being expanded to increase capacity. Several minor changes in the building floor plans have been made since it was completed in 1933.

A skylight over the workroom was covered when air conditioning was installed in the basement in the 1960s. The original lights in the workroom have been replaced with fluorescent lighting. The mailing platform is south of the workroom; an addition is currently under construction.

Also to the rear of the workroom is a mezzanine containing the swing room and a toilet. A lookout, originally constructed for the postmaster's use, has been enclosed. The service counter is located in the center of the lobby opposite the vestibule; the original service windows have been replaced with a single open counter. In the late 1960s, the east wall of the lobby was extended into the northeast corner of the work area (in what was the mail order and registry room) and an additional set of lockboxes was installed.

The original brass-framed glass doors have been replaced with black anodized aluminum and glass doors. The front steps are masonry; the original wrought iron railings and window balconies were in poor condition and were recently replaced for safety reasons. The handicap access ramp, now under construction on the west side of the entrance, will be concrete.

The floor of the lobby expansion area was matched to the rest of the lobby floor using marble slabs taken from the original swing room shower stalls. The original service windows have been replaced by an open service counter with a black plastic counter top. Wood panelling behind the counter was installed last year to close the view of the workroom from 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 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 **Designed 1932,
completed 1933.**

BUILDER/ARCHITECT **James A. Wetmore
Louis A. Simon, OSA**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Petaluma Post Office derives its significance from its relation to the federal building programs of the 1920s and 1930s as they developed in California. It is an example of a style transitional between the classicism of the twenties and the Starved Classical style of the thirties.

ARCHITECTURE

Though completed in 1933, the Petaluma Main Post Office was authorized and funded by the 1926 Keyes-Elliot Act, and is an excellent example of the type of building constructed under this Act. The use of a central arcade flanked by projecting or recessed wings came to be a hallmark of designs of the late twenties and early thirties, and was one of the primary signifiers used in post office designs. The concept monumentalized the entrance, and did so without incurring any significant additional cost. The building is thus significant under National Register Criterion C on the state level as an excellent example of a type, period and method of construction. The Petaluma Main Post Office retains substantial integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gebhard, David; and Winter, Robert, "A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California", 2nd. Ed., Santa Barbara, Peregrin Smith, 1976.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .75

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|---------|-------|----------|-------|---|------|---------|--|----------|--|
| A | 1,0 | 5,3,1 | 8,0,0 | 4,2,3,1 | 4,0,0 | B | | | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | | NORTHING | | | ZONE | EASTING | | NORTHING | |
| C | | | | | | D | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Sonoma County Assessor does not record the lot and block numbers of the post office site. The site is on the west corner of 4th and D Streets. The rectangular lot has a 253-foot frontage on 4th Street, and 130-foot frontage on D Street.

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/Assoicates, 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
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

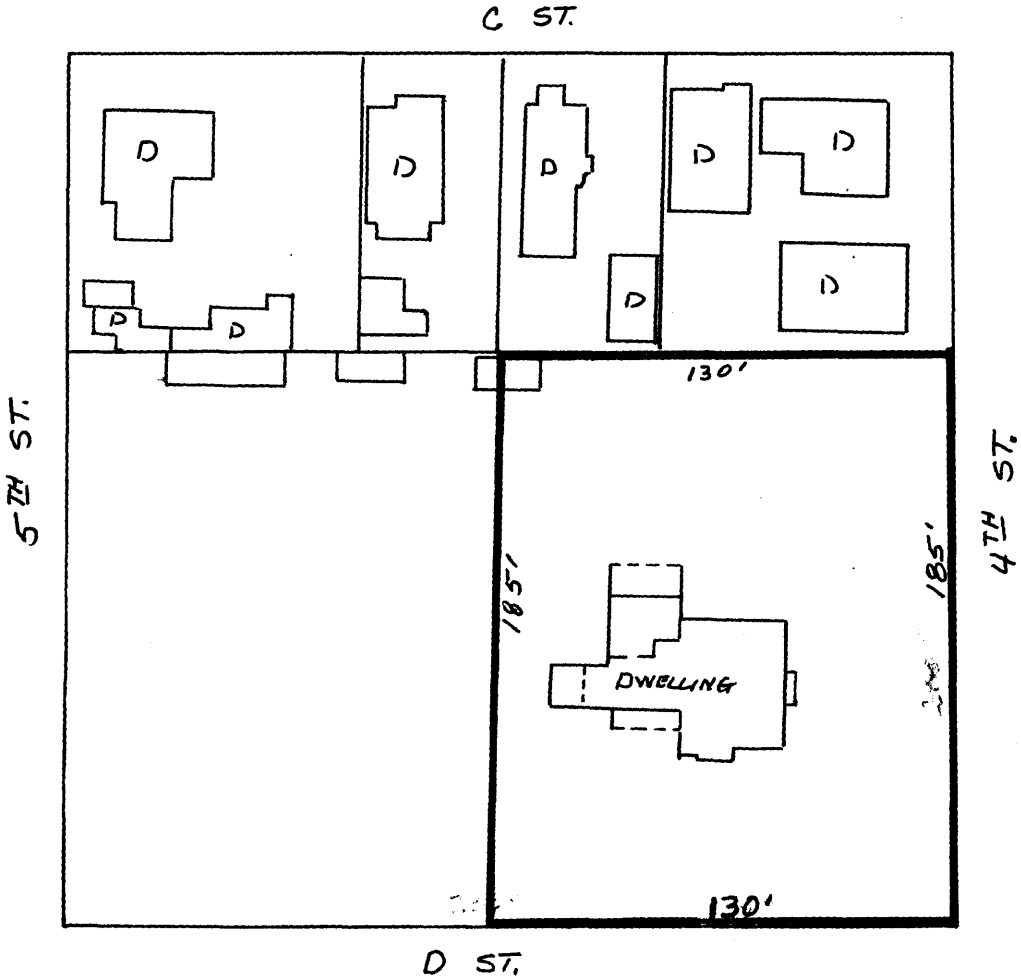
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

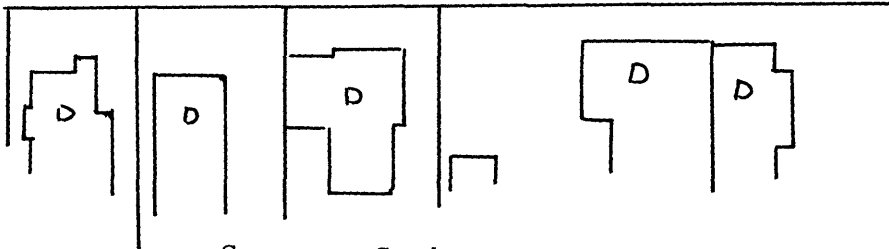
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Petaluma MPO ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE two



Note: Post office site outlined in red.

Structure shown was on the site prior to the construction of the Post office.



Source: Sanborn Map, Petaluma Book, page 28, 1923;
Geography Dept., Calif. State Univ. Northridge, Ca.