

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

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 Barbara Main Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

836 Anacapa Street

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Santa Barbara

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

19

STATE

California

NA VICINITY OF

CODE
06

COUNTY

Santa Barbara

CODE

083

3 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.

Santa Barbara County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

118 E. Figueroa

CITY, TOWN

Santa Barbara

STATE

CA

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Resources Inventory

DATE

2/79

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Santa Barbara City Library

CITY, TOWN

Santa Barbara

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

4/27/84

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Johnson combined decorative elements derived from the Art Deco of the 1920s with architectural forms based on the Spanish Colonial Revival. The two-story building has white reinforced concrete walls and a red terracotta tile roof and the interior volumes are defined by irregular picturesquely varied massing. Angular, zigzag decoration is etched into the glass, and the cast bronze door frames are embossed with a similar pattern.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Santa Barbara is an incorporated city with a 1982 population of 74,600. It is located 120 miles north of Los Angeles on the California coast. The town had its beginnings with the founding of the Mission Santa Barbara in the 1780s, and the military Spanish Royal Presidio in 1782.

Several adobes of the Spanish and Mexican periods exist. Among them is a structure adjacent to the east of the post office, El Cuartel, or guardhouse. This structure was built between 1786 and 1790, originally serving as a soldiers quarters.

Santa Barbara architecture in the twentieth century has been dominated by a subdued and simplified version of the Spanish Colonial Revival.

The Lobero Theater, diagonally across the street from the post office at the northwest corner of Canon Perdido and Anacapa Streets, is an example of the Santa Barbara dialect of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style. The theater was designed in 1924 by George Washington Smith, an important Santa Barbara architect. The building is California State Landmark number 361.

Two historically significant commercial structures are also in the vicinity of the post office. El Paseo, a complex of shops and restaurants, is on the opposite side of Anacapa. It was designed by James Osborn Craig and built in 1922-23.

El Presidio, housing shops and restaurants, was designed by J.J. Plunkett, a prominent Santa Barbara architect, and built in 1942.

Together, the post office, El Cuartel, the Lobero Theater, El Paseo, and El Presidio form a grouping of historically significant buildings by prominent architects.

The 1936 site survey indicates that several wood frame structure occupied the site prior to the construction of the post office. The Santa Barbara Historic Resources Survey identifies these structures as a part of the city's Chinatown. Due to basement excavation for the post office, it is unlikely that any trace of these structures remains.

Portions of the original El Presidio de Santa Barbara quarters and wall run under the easternmost edge of the property, so historic archeological potential does exist. (approximate location sketched onto sketch map).

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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"/> 900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES Began 1935,
completed 1937.

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Reginald D. Johnson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This building is exceptionally significant for its ~~architecture~~ and community planning importance alone, and the original landscaping and sculpture provide additional significance.

ARCHITECTURE

The Santa Barbara Main Post Office possesses exceptional significance under Criterion C as a particularly good and well preserved example of its type (the small, combined post office/federal office), period, and method of construction, based on its architecture. It is also exceptionally significant on the local level in its urban design relationship to the surrounding historic district. Finally, the combined effect of its urban design importance, original landscaping, and federally-sponsored murals forms a definable entity of exceptional local and state significance.

Reginald D. Johnson was a well known Southern California architect during the 1920s and '30s, who worked extensively in Pasadena, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara. His work in the 1920s and early '30s was marked by a singular devotion to the Spanish Colonial Revival, but his later work came, belatedly, under the influence of Art Deco. These divergent tendencies can be seen in the Santa Barbara Main Office; the massing and fenestration are derivative of Mediterranean Revivalism, but the ornament is strongly influenced by Art Deco styles. The exterior has been maintained in its original condition. The modifications to the lobby have consisted solely of new light fixtures and additional post office boxes, and have not impaired its architectural integrity. The building is a ~~successful~~ blending of two highly dissimilar styles, and possesses high artistic values based on the design of its ornament, massing, and in the exceptionally fine craftsmanship found throughout the building.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

The Santa Barbara Main Post Office has a strong urban design relationship with several nearby structures of historic interest, and is included in the Santa Barbara Historic District, a local designation. The architectural style of the post office compliments the other structures, and it is an integral part of the urban fabric.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Johnson, Reginald Davis, Obituary", AIA Journal, Vol. 19, Feb. 1953;
 Gebhard, D. Winter, R., "A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles
 and Southern California". Peregrine Smith, Inc. Santa Barbara and
 Salt Lake City, 1977.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.25

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	1	2	5	1	9	3	0	3	8	1	2	1	4	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING					

C

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING					

D

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
 Block 173, Lots 6,7,8,10,11,20B, 22,24,29: Portion of abandoned ROW of
 Presidio Avenue, Town of Santa Barbara Subdivision, Santa Barbara County.
 The site has a 220' southern frontage on Anacapa Street, a 215' frontage on
 Canon Perdido Street, a 280' eastern border, while the northern border proceeds
 east 45'±, north 65'±, and continues east 175'±.

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 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

[Handwritten Signature]

DATE

1/11/85

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

ATTEST:

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	11 1985

CONTINUATION SHEET Santa Barbara MPODEM NUMBER 7, 8 PAGE one

Item 7

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

A variety of styles and motifs are found in the building, but the Spanish Colonial Revival was intended to predominate, and to harmonize with the local architectural tradition. The terracotta tile roof, piers supporting the second story roof, canales and corbeling of the eaves give the building a Spanish character.

The building's architect, Reginald Johnson, was noted for his Zig-Zag Moderne designs, and several details show this influence. Moderne elements include the following:

- Lanterns flanking front entrance- note chevron motif etched in the glass;
- Chevrons cast in keystone over doors;
- Eagles above north entrance; and
- Molded decoration on pewter-finished bronze doors.

The fixtures in the lobby retain the Moderne style. The lobby has a terracotta tile floor, and the walls are finished with a pink limestone veneer. All original lighting fixtures and lobby furniture remain intact.

The building is constructed of reinforced poured concrete, has two stories, and a full basement. The workroom has a hardwood floor.

The original landscaping is still in place.

ALTERATIONS

Three banks of new post office boxes have been installed in the north end of the public lobby, and additional post office boxes are being installed in the south end of the lobby. An access ramp for the handicapped has been installed at the north entrance.

Item 8

The site survey prepared for the building in 1935, and a survey prepared by the Santa Barbara Historical Society, indicates that the site was occupied by several wood frame and brick buildings, forming Santa Barbara's Chinatown. Further research is needed to determine the circumstances under which the site was chosen.

SCULPTURE

Atkinson was born in 1913 and received his art training in the Chouinard School of Art in Los Angeles. He is not known to have completed any other federal commissions, and is not indexed in standard art bibliographies. The sculpture is typical of the idealized,

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 Santa Barbara MPO ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE two

Sculpture, continued

representational style used on most federal art project murals and sculpture, and, as such, embodies the distinctive characteristic of its type and style. The iconology is also standard for post office lobbies. Though the reliefs are not particularly significant from a purely aesthetic standpoint, they contribute to the overall character and feeling of the public interior, and are essential to the integrity of the interior design. The murals derive most of their meaning from their location in a post office lobby.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

The landscaping of the post office is minimal, consisting of several shrubs and flowering plants placed close to the building. A patio extends to the front (northwest) elevation, planted in flowers and topiary shrubs. The significance lies in the landscaping's preservation. The original planting plan, prepared in 1936, has been kept at the office and used as a guide to all subsequent maintenance and planting. This is the only building surveyed which retained its 1930s planting scheme, and is significant as an example of Depression-era public landscape architecture on the state as well as local levels.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

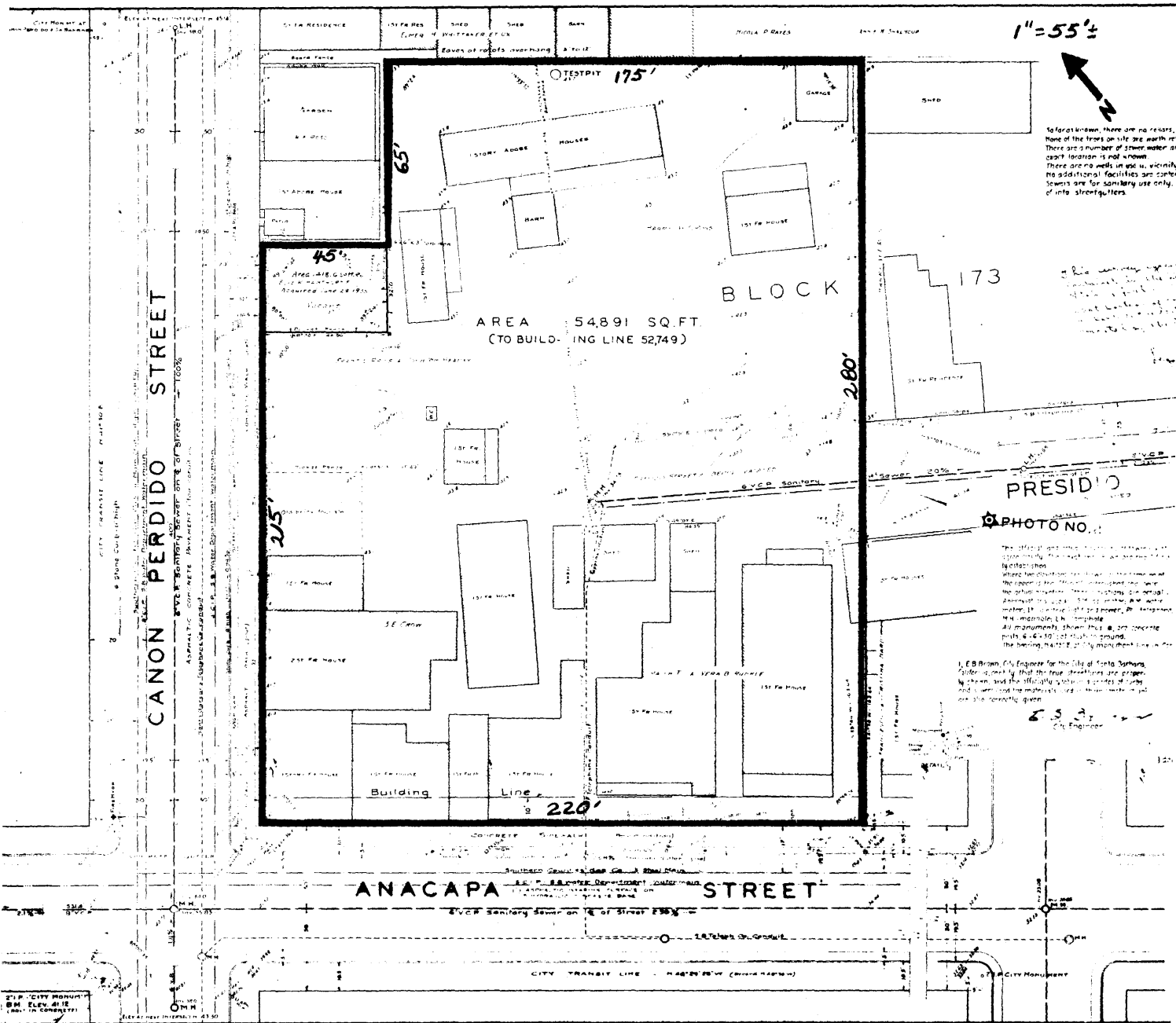
FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Santa Barbara ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE three

Note: Post office site outlined in red.
Source: United States Postal Service, "Survey of U.S. Post Office Site" 6/6/1935; Santa Barbara Main Post Office



1"=55'

As far as known, there are no relics. None of the lines on site are worth ret. There are a number of sewer water or cast? location is not known. There are no wells in and vicinity. No additional facilities are shown. Sewers are for sanitary use only. I. into street gutters.

PHOTO NO. 1

The attached plan shows the proposed site for the Santa Barbara Post Office. The site is located on the corner of Canon Perdido Street and Anacapa Street. The plan shows the proposed building footprint, the existing buildings, and the proposed parking area. The plan also shows the proposed utility lines for water, sewer, and power. The plan is based on a survey of the site conducted on 6/6/1935. The plan is subject to change without notice.

J. C. Brown, City Engineer for the City of Santa Barbara

6.5.35

City Engineer