

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic U.S. United States Post Office (Palo Alto)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 380 Hamilton Avenue not for publication

city, town Palo Alto vicinity of congressional district 12th

state California code 06 county Santa Clara code 085

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
☐ district	☒ public	☒ occupied	☐ agriculture
☒ building(s)	☐ private	☐ unoccupied	☐ commercial
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☐ educational
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment
☐ object	☐ in process	☒ yes: restricted	☒ government
	☐ being considered	☒ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial
		☐ no	☐ military
			☐ museum
			☐ park
			☐ private residence
			☐ religious
			☐ scientific
			☐ transportation
			☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name U.S. Postal Service, Western Regional Office

street & number 850 Cherry Street

city, town San Bruno vicinity of state CA 94099

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Courthouse

street & number 70 W. Hedding Street

city, town San Jose state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic and Architectural Resources of the City of Palo Alto has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

date February, 1979 federal state county ☒ local

depository for survey records Planning Department, City of Palo Alto

city, town Palo Alto state CA 94301

(See Continuation Sheet)

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Hamilton Branch Post Office in Palo Alto is located on the southwest corner of Hamilton and Waverly Streets; the site occupies the entire block between Waverly and Gilman Streets. This is the general Civic Center area with the City Hall two blocks to the southwest and the Main Library directly behind City Hall on Forrest Avenue.

The Post Office building is sited with the main facade along Hamilton Street. The reinforced concrete structure is set back from the lot line on three sides providing a landscaped area with a variety of trees, a redwood, an oak, a copper beech, and a dawn redwood with a plaque dated 1949. The landscaped area contributes importantly to the building's setting.

The structure is a one-story rectangular block with a tiled, hip roof; the tiles are graded in color from a dark reddish brown at the ridge to a lighter, more salmon colored tile at the eaves. The main facade is preceded by an open arcaded section of eight bays with round arches. It is also roofed with tile. Entrances at either end have the form of tall, round arched openings with bronze frames and ornamental bronze transoms above double doors that were originally bronze with grills, but have been replaced with lighter weight metal doors. Metal, openwork lanterns hang in the arcade. The section of the building at the corner of Hamilton and Gilman Streets contains the Postmaster's Office in a slightly projecting corner block which has a shallow bay window with an ornamental wrought iron grill on the Hamilton Street side and another wrought iron grilled window enclosing a flower box on the Gilman Street side. Other office spaces are also on this side of the building.

On the interior, a public lobby extends the full length of the Hamilton Street frontage. The bays correspond to the exterior arcade arches and have round-headed windows with metal frames and amber colored glass. These are repeated on the northwest side of the building. The boxed-beam, wooden ceiling is stained dark; cross beams mark the divisions of the bays. The marble tiled floor has a woven pattern composed with beige and reddish squares. The wainscoting is a variegated, deep red marble. Service windows are framed in wood with the transom section filled with ornamental, wrought iron grills. This window type is repeated in the lock box area. Ornamental metal lantern fixtures hang in front of each entrance.

The architectural style of the building is Spanish Mediterranean Revival with a rich vocabulary of decorative detail such as the blue and white tiles set in the second story wall, the wrought iron grills, and the softly modeled belt courses at the roof cornice. The walls are stuccoed in an uneven surface that mimics adobe.

The rear portion of the building is occupied by the work room. The service platform and employee entrance is served by a private alley running from Waverly Street to Gilman Street.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☒ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400–1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500–1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600–1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700–1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☐ 1800–1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☒ 1900–	☐ communications	☐ industry	☒ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates 1931–33¹ Builder/Architect Birge M. Clark

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The Hamilton Station Post Office is historically significant because it was the main post office building for Palo Alto. The architect, Birge M. Clark, is the son of Arthur B. Clark and worked with his father on the design of Hoover House, built as the residence of Lou and Herbert Hoover in 1919. Arthur B. Clark, also an architect, was a member of the Stanford Art Department faculty. Birge M. Clark has been in practice for over 50 years in Palo Alto.

The Post Office building was designed and built during the Great Depression in 1931–33. Because of the economic conditions, the decision had been made in Washington that local architects be employed to design post office and other government buildings as a means of getting more men back to work in a hurry than would have been possible if all the plans had been made in Washington. Upon taking the first sketches back to the Treasury Department, at that time charged with the design of most government buildings, Clark was informed that, "this is not formal or stiff enough for a federal building." Clark replied, "I realize that it is not formal or stiff, but Mrs. Hoover told me that she hoped that I was keeping to the Monterey or Early California Style and also relating to the arcades and tile roofs of Stanford University. I realize, however, that this is not the way I should get instructions, and will follow your guidance." "Well," the man answered him, "maybe that method is as good as any. Come back after lunch and we will let you know." After lunch they stated, "Proceed with your drawings as presented."

The building is architecturally significant because of its exemplary design in keeping with the Mediterranean influenced architecture that was built in Palo Alto and on the Stanford University campus. It was a rare attempt to design a local post office building in keeping with a popular regional style.

¹The first sketches were made in 1931, with formal drawings completed in 1932. Construction began in 1932; the building was completed in 1933.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Archives of Palo Alto Historical Association

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3/4±

Quadrangle name Palo Alto

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	5	7	4	4	7	0	4	1	4	4	4	9	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

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D

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Corner of Gilman and Hamilton, 225' NE to Waverly, then 110' SE along Waverly, then 225' SW to Gilman, then 150' NW to point of origin.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Birge M. Clark, Architect

organization Palo Alto Historical Association

date July 15, 1980

street & number 3200 Hanover Street

telephone (415) 493-4545

city or town Palo Alto

state California 94304

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature K. M. Egan

title

date 2/9/81

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 4/5/81

DB

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	FEB 19 1981
DATE ENTERED	APR 5 1981

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

SUPPLEMENTAL PAGE ONE

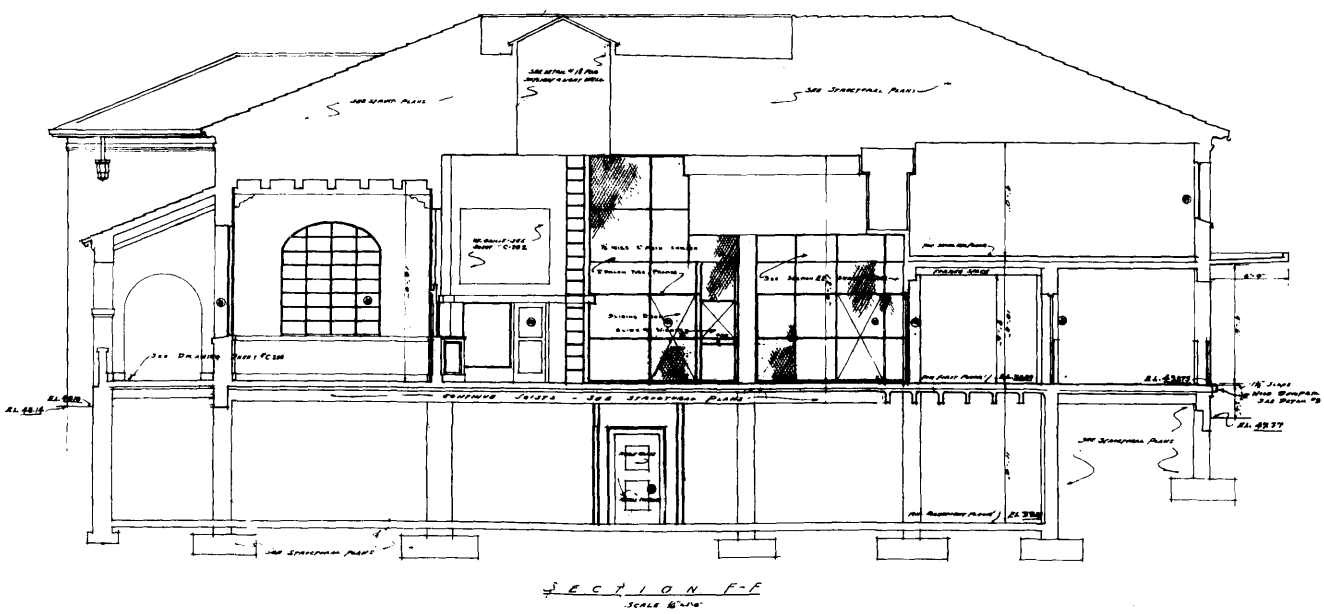
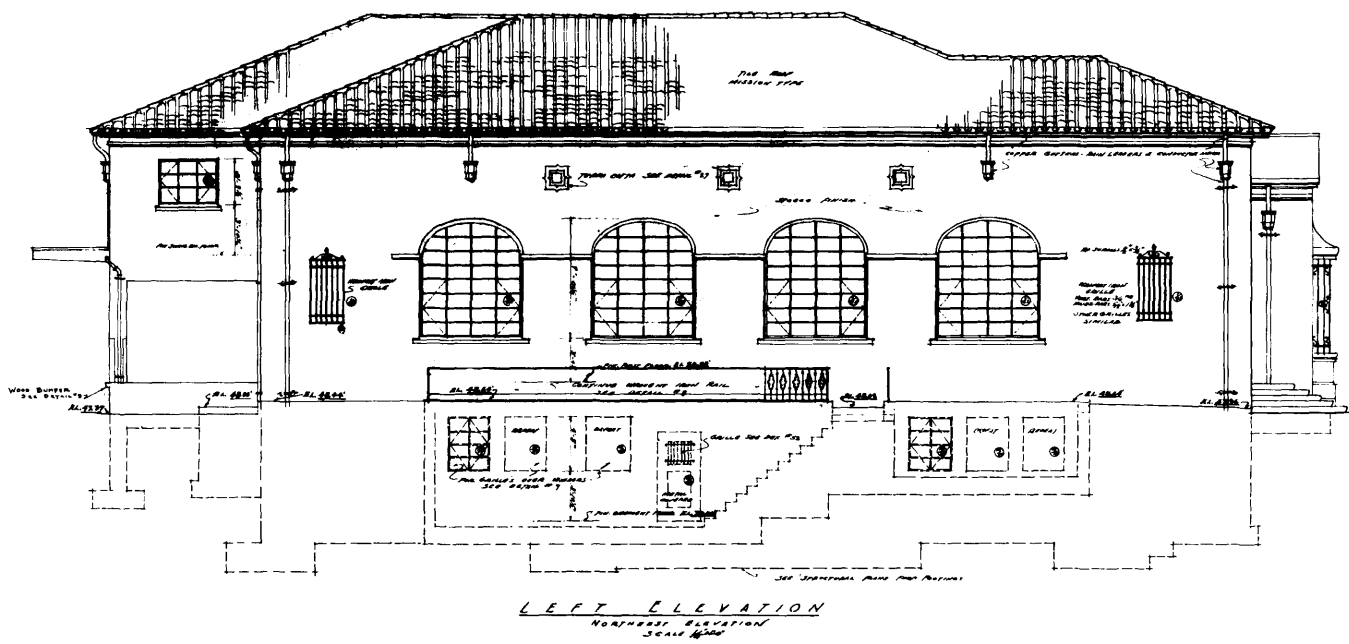
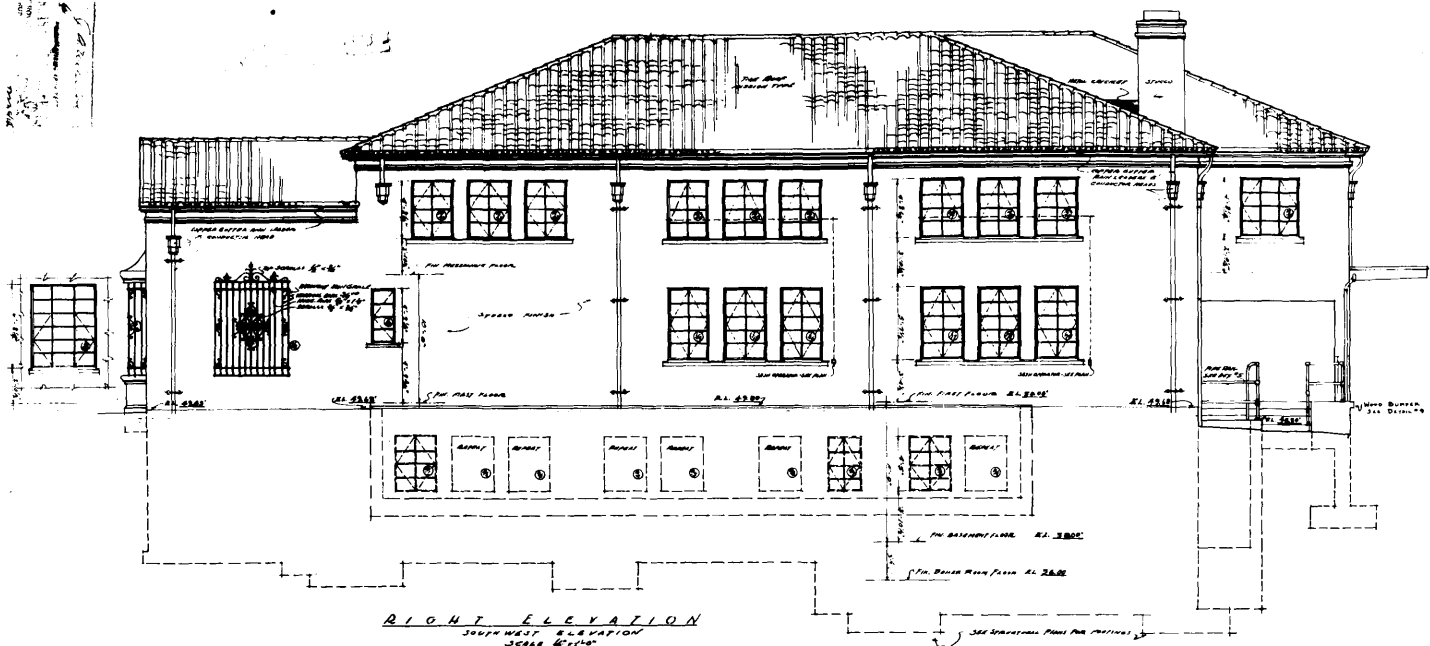
To be added under 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS:

Santa Clara County Heritage Resources Inventory
1979

Depository for survey records: County Planning Department, San Jose

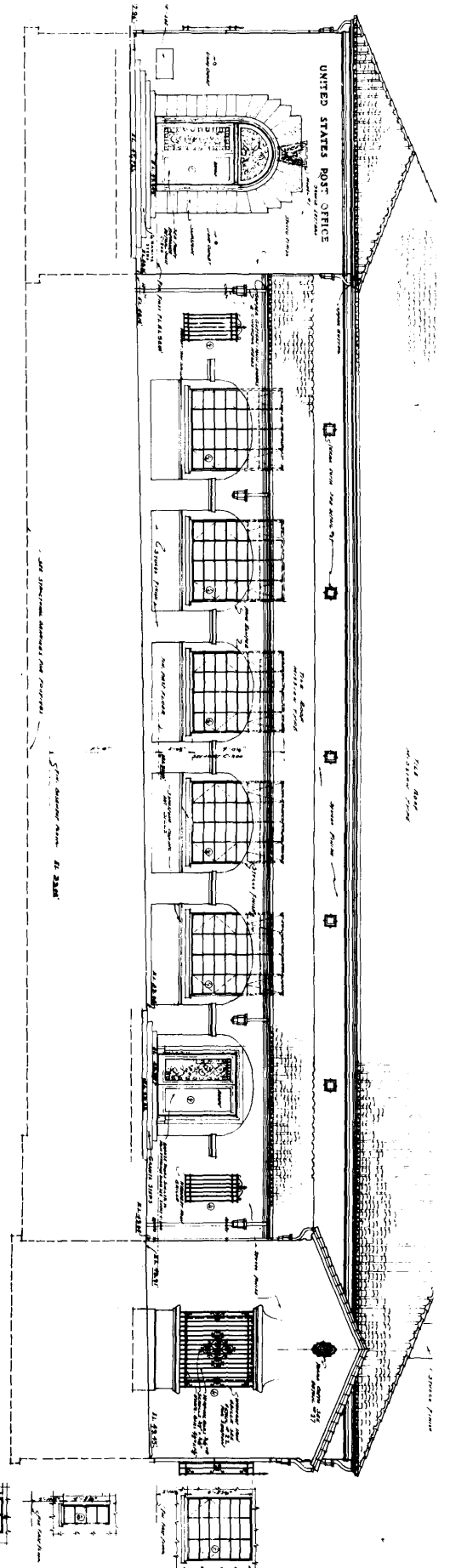
Point of Historical Interest, SC1-043

Depository for records: State Preservation Office
Sacramento, California

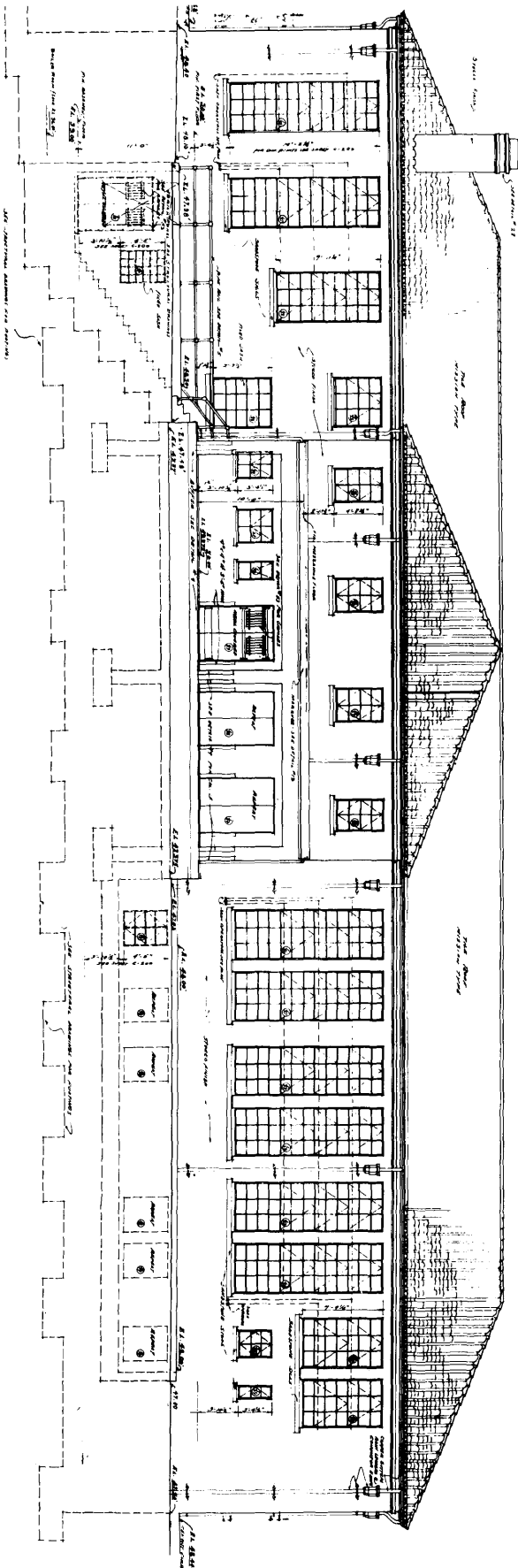


NOTES:
1. STRUCTURE SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED OF
CONCRETE AND STEEL
2. SEE ARCHITECT'S SPECIFICATIONS FOR
DETAILS OF CONSTRUCTION
3. SEE CIVIL ENGINEER'S PLAN FOR
LOCATION OF STRUCTURE

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ENGINEERING DIVISION
WASHINGTON, D.C.



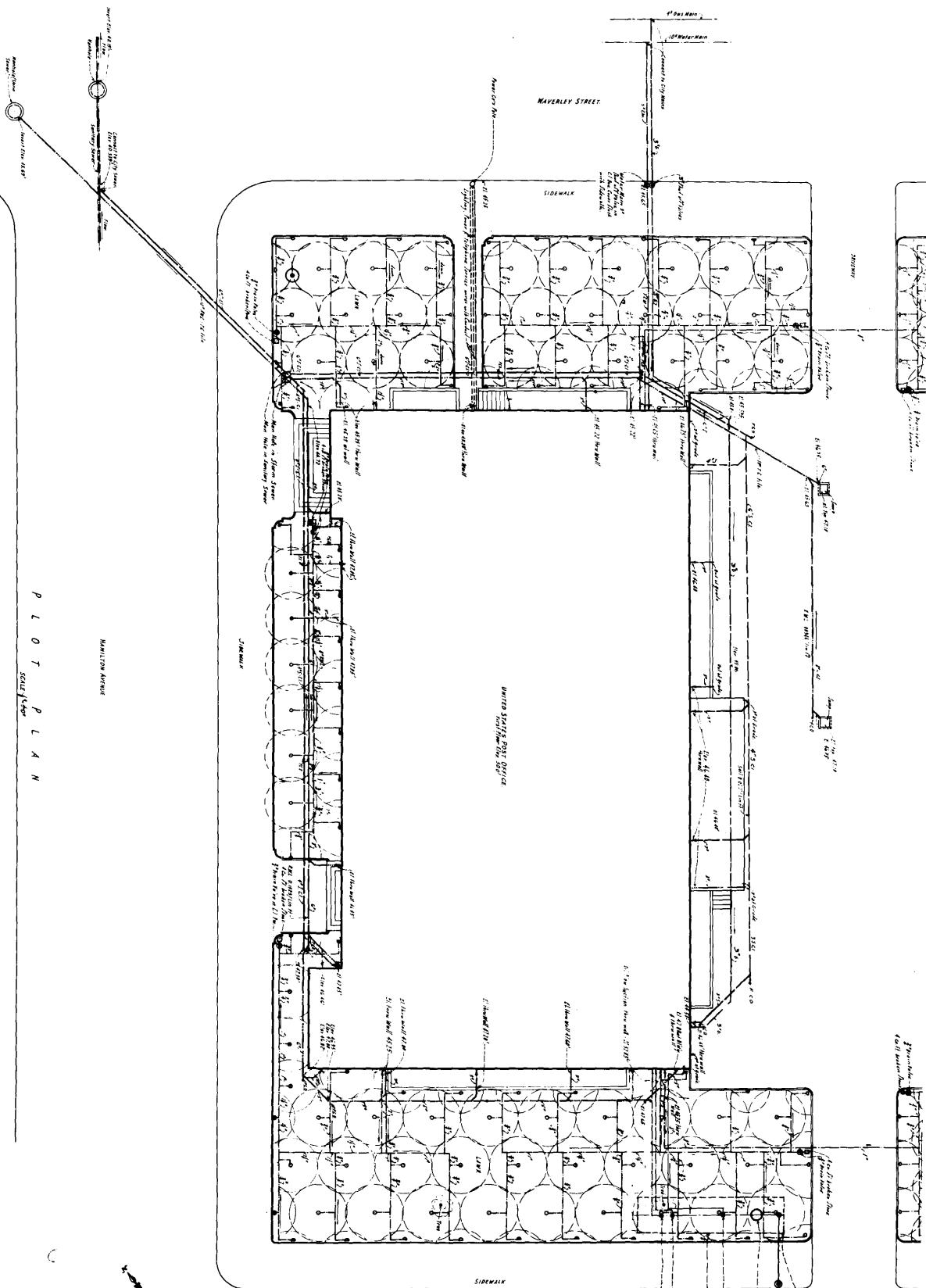
FRONT ELEVATION
NORTHWEST CORNER
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



REAR ELEVATION
SOUTHWEST CORNER
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

NOTES: 1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO FACE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 2. ALL MATERIALS ARE TO BE OF THE BEST QUALITY. 3. ALL WORKMANSHIP IS TO BE FIRST CLASS.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
ARCHITECTURAL DEPARTMENT
BERKELEY, CALIF.



PLANT SCALE/LOT

[illegible]

UNITED STATES POST OFFICE PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA Box 4000, Apartment 310 UNIVERSITY AVE. PALO ALTO, CALIF.	DATE: NOV. 24, 1954.	MANAGER: BENNETT CHPCWASO
Cancellation Extra 40 Cents Made by _____ Entered by _____		

UNITED STATES P
PAO ALTO CA
DRUG IN CLARK
SIPPOVILLIP ONE
Bryce M. Clark



UNITED STATES POST OFFICE

BIRGE M. CLARK
WALTER STROMQUIST
ARCHITECTS
321 CHANNING AVENUE
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA

PALO ALTO POST OFFICE

U. S. Post Office / Santa Clara Co.

Client: U. S. Government

Type of bldg.: Concrete and steel

Location: Hamilton Avenue & Waverley St., Palo Alto

Cost of Building: \$121,000

Date completed: 1933

~~Extent of responsibility: Architect - Plans, specifications, supervision~~

FEB 19 1981

APR 5 1981

1948 DEC 8 AM 10 26

PALO ALTO POST OFFICE
380 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto
Santa Clara County, California
Photographer - Berton Crandall
Photo taken - 1933
View - looking Northeast

Berton Crandall
Photographs
335 Lowell Avenue
Palo Alto, Calif.



UNITED STATES POST OFFICE

CAROLYN CADDES, PHOTOGRAPHER

1181 Harriet Street

Palo Alto, California 94301

(415) 321-2616

U.S. Post Office

PALO ALTO POST OFFICE

380 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto

Santa Clara County, California

Photographer - Carolyn Caddes **FEB 19 1981**

Photo taken - 1980

View - From Hamilton looking southeast

APR 5 1981