

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Englewood Post Office
other names/site number 5AH.269

2. Location

street & number 3332 South Broadway

n/a

 not for publication
city or town Englewood

n/a

 vicinity
state Colorado code CO county Arapahoe code 005 zip code 80110

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
X national statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation, History Colorado
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
1	0	object
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT / post office

GOVERNMENT / post office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS /
COLONIAL REVIVAL

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK AND STONE MASONRY

roof: ASPHALT

other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The 1937 Englewood Post Office Building is located at the southeast corner of South Broadway and East Floyd Avenue in Englewood, Colorado, facing west across Broadway. A rectangular volume measuring 62 feet deep and 68 feet wide forms the main body of the post office. On the east side of the building are two small secondary service volumes. The flat-roofed building is one story in height, set above grade with a full basement beneath. The primary construction material is red brick masonry. There are simple decorative details and a water table of gray limestone. The concrete foundation is visible below grade in three lightwells. The interior features a 1940 mural by American artist Boardman Robinson, depicting a horse auction in rural Colorado.

Narrative Description

The 1937 Englewood Post Office Building is located on an irregularly shaped lot at the southeast corner of South Broadway and East Floyd Avenue in Englewood, Colorado. The building faces west across Broadway. To the north, Floyd runs diagonally from northeast to southwest. To the east is a paved alley. To the south, a one-way driveway separates the post office from an adjacent commercial building. Running between Broadway and the alley to the east, the driveway provides diagonal parking and a drive-through mail drop. A short run of chain-link fencing runs beside the west end of the driveway along a concrete drainage channel and walkway to the south lightwell. More formal metal fencing runs from the northwest corner of the building parallel to Broadway and along Floyd Avenue. North and east of the building is asphalt-paved lot that provides parking and loading access for post office vehicles. Public sidewalks of gray and pink concrete border the north and west perimeters of the lot. The area adjacent to the sidewalk along Broadway and Floyd is landscaped with turf, shrubs, trees and crushed rock. Along Broadway, adjacent to a regional bus stop, are a public bench, trash receptacle, screened newspaper boxes and public art, consisting of large sheet-metal flowers in a concrete planter. There are two street trees in sidewalk pits, one covered with red sandstone, the other by a cast iron grille. A traffic light appears at the northwest corner of the lot and there are streetlights along the alley, Floyd and Broadway. Various signage also appears.

A rectangular volume forms the main body of the post office. On the east side of the building are two secondary service volumes. The flat-roofed building is one story in height, set above grade with a full basement beneath. The primary construction material is running-bond red brick masonry. There are simple decorative details and a base course of gray limestone. The cast-in-place concrete foundation is visible below grade, largely in recessed lightwells.

The facade is composed of a central entrance bay slightly recessed behind two side bays. The central bay is defined by its greater width and a base course carrying six pilasters and an intermediate cornice, all of gray limestone. The entablature of the cornice is engraved with text reading "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE / ENGLEWOOD COLORADO." On the side bays, a plain flush band of limestone appears level with the top of the intermediate cornice of the central bay and continues around the side and rear elevations. A simple limestone cornice appears at the building roofline.

The main entrance is a half-story above grade facing Broadway, accessible by a wide staircase with wrought iron handrails. The stair includes a lower run and landing of cast-in-place pink concrete and an upper run and landing of gray granite. The pair of wood and single-pane glass entrance doors retains its original door pulls and kick plates. The cast iron doorframe includes a decorative molding of raised flat disks alternating with a row of five recessed flattened ovals. Above the doors is a triangular pediment surrounded by a simple molding. An inset panel displays a low bas-relief of the American eagle. Its wings are spread and a circular wreath rests on its shoulders, framing its torso and legs. Below the eagle, running along the base of the panel, is a band of undulating ribbon and arrows. Above the pediment is a recessed course of wood molding that forms the base of a fixed, multi-pane transom window five panes wide and from two to three panes high. On either side of the doors, flanked by pilasters, is a pair of wood double-hung windows. One is a narrow six-over-six sidelight, the other a larger fifteen-over-fifteen window. On each side bay, a single nine-over-nine wood double-hung window appears, flanked by smaller-scale versions of the pilasters in the central bay. Below each window is a framed spandrel panel of limestone that extends to the limestone base course below. The pilasters have simple capitals formed by a raised flat disk with a narrow molding below and a wider molding above.

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On the south elevation, a series of six windows appear above the base course. The two end windows are detailed with pilasters like those on the side bays of the facade. They flank four other windows detailed only by spandrel panels and sills. The fourth window from the west is a blind window infilled with end-course brick. In the lightwell below, a single wood pedestrian door with six panes of fixed glass aligns with the second window from the west. Six-over-six double-hung wood windows with limestone sills appear below the third, fifth and sixth windows. Painted pipe rail appears around the lightwell and forms the handrail of the lightwell stair. Two concrete beams span the top of the lightwell. Just east of the light well, also surrounded by pipe rail, is a series of five freestanding mailboxes mounted on a concrete pad.

The north elevation shares the same window configuration at the first floor level but each opening contains a window. In the lightwell, a pair of wood pedestrian doors, each with six fixed glass panes, aligns with the fifth window from the west. A six-over-six double-hung wood window with limestone sill appears below the easternmost window above, the top frame covered by a sheet of corrugated metal. The lightwell is surrounded on two sides by a painted pipe rail, with an outer rail of steel and wood to protect it from vehicle damage. The pipe rail extends into the lightwell as a handrail for the stair. Within the lightwell, a small electric winch is attached to the wall. On the north wall of the building, a galvanized vent runs from the basement level to the top of the windows. Just north of the lightwell a utility meter is attached to the base course of limestone. A surface mounted conduit runs from the meter to a simple industrial light fixture centered over the lightwell door.

The east elevation of the main volume has pairs of nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows with limestone sills flanking is an L-shaped service wing formed by two low perpendicular volumes. Above the roofline of the service wing, two pairs of six-over-six wood windows appear. South of the service wing is a small lightwell with a pair of six-over-six double-hung wood windows with limestone sills. The lightwell is surrounded by pipe rail. Just north of the service wing is a tall brick chimney with limestone cap that rises a full story above the roofline.

The service wing is composed of two small volumes constructed of running-bond red brick with a base course and simple cornice of gray limestone. On the north service volume, the north elevation has a metal pedestrian door to the west and a wide metal overhead door to the east. Both doors are approximately three feet above grade behind a concrete landing, which is sheltered beneath a cantilevered canopy. A concrete ramp flanked by pipe rail leads to the disabled accessible pedestrian door. An electric lift negotiates the grade change between the parking lot and the freight door. The east wall is unarticulated. Attached to the south wall is a small shed-roof addition of PVC plastic on a raised concrete pad. The PVC addition was added along with the service ramps c1980s.

The east wall of the south service volume has a single six-over-six double-hung wood window and a group of surface mounted utility boxes and lines. A long concrete ramp with pipe rail rises across the east wall to a pedestrian door on the west side of the PVC addition. The south wall has a pair of six-over-six double-hung wood windows with limestone sills.

At various locations around the building are roofline security lights, small ventilation openings with cast iron grilles, scuppers and cast iron drains. A flagpole, accessible by a concrete sidewalk, is located just east of the sidewalk near the northwest corner of the building. At the southwest corner of the building, facing Broadway, is a engraved limestone cornerstone that reads "HENRY MORGENTHAU JR / SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY / JAMES A FARLEY / POSTMASTER GENERAL / LOUIS A SIMON / SUPERVISING ARCHITECT / NEAL A MELICK / SUPERVISING ENGINEER / 1937.

Within the front doors is an enclosed entrance foyer of wood and glass with a door leading south to the service windows and north to the post office boxes. Both doors are wood with a single pane of fixed glass. Within the public lobby, the top of the south wall features the 1940 mural by artist Boardman Robinson, with a narrow frame of simple wood molding applied to the bottom and two sides. The mural depicts the interior of a livestock auction barn in rural Colorado, a small window in the rear wall framing a mountain view. To the left and right are bleachers filled with bidders and spectators, including a few figures that appear to look directly beyond the picture plane at the viewer. In the foreground, beside the bleachers, a young boy, small dog, and seated and standing men in cowboy or farm dress appear, some talking between themselves. In the immediate foreground, at left, a young girl in cowboy dress holds a bottle of orange soda and looks directly at the viewer. At center, a cowboy leans against a wooden gate and a woman stands nearby. Behind them, a cowboy examines the teeth of one of the two horses being offered for sale. In the center, at the rear wall, an auctioneer stands behind a desk and calls the sale while his clerk makes notes.

Centered below the mural is a wood-framed flush panel door with blind transom panel above reading "POSTMASTER" in engraved, gilded lettering. To the left of the door is a bulletin board with a hinged glass door for posting public notices, with the text "BULLETIN" engraved across the top. A matching bulletin board to the west was removed to accommodate

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a surface-mounted postal packaging display. (The removed board is in excellent condition and is stored in the postmaster's office.) Below the east bulletin board is a freestanding metal cabinet with a writing surface over cubbyholes filled with postal forms. A freestanding glass display case with stamps and other post office products forms an aisle south of the entrance foyer.

The south end of the east wall contains the main service windows and counters, framed in wood. The north end of the east wall includes mail deposit slots and a recessed alcove with dropped ceiling. Post office boxes line the north, south and east walls of the alcove. On the upper east wall are four rectangular wall openings with simple wrought iron grilles of alternating twisted and straight vertical square rod. At the north end of the lobby a partial-height, L-shaped wall of post office boxes was added at some later date. Behind and below, all the original lobby finishes remain intact including two bulletin boards, one entitled "UNITED STATES / CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION" and one entitled "BULLETIN." The plaster ceiling features two graduated shallow concentric coves around the perimeter. A simple plaster molding appears at the ceiling line on the north, east and west walls. Four original aluminum lighting fixtures run down the center of the ceiling. The floor, baseboard and wainscot are ceramic tile, largely 4" x 4." The floor is randomly laid in a range of brown tiles. At the perimeter is a linear border worked in diagonal and triangular tiles in beige and red. The baseboard and chair rail are dark brown and the wainscot pale green. Near the north end of the lobby is an original standing desk for the use of patrons. (A matching desk is stored in the basement.) There are miscellaneous contemporary sales displays. Cast iron radiators appear along the west wall and within the entrance foyer.

Integrity

Originally the post office was located mid-block between East Floyd Avenue to the north and East Girard Avenue to the south. However East Floyd and Greenwood, opposite the Post Office west of Broadway, created a dogleg turn that snarled traffic in north downtown Englewood. In the 1980s, the buildings to the north of the Post Office were demolished and East Floyd Avenue angled to connect directly with Greenwood, renamed West Floyd Avenue. As a result of this street reconfiguration the Post Office now occupies a corner lot, giving it greater geographic prominence while retaining its original location, feeling, and association. The historic setting of the Post Office building was not adversely affected. As part of the realignment, the property was enlarged by the addition of some land at the northeast corner of the lot, providing more parking and loading facilities for post office vehicles.

The building exterior and interior retain a remarkable degree of integrity in design and materials. The only alteration to the facade was the application of stamped metal numerals reading "80110," the post office's zip code, at the base of the intermediate cornice directly above the entrance doors. The interior survives in original, well-maintained condition.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

ARCHITECTURE

ART

Period of Significance

1937-1940

Significant Dates

1937 (building), 1940 (mural)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Louis A. Simon, Architect

Mead & Mount Construction, Builder

Period of Significance (justification)

1938 is the year that the construction of the Englewood Post Office was completed. 1940 is the year that the Boardman Robinson mural was completed and installed.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The 1937 Englewood Post Office is eligible for listing on the National Register for its local significance under Criterion A in the area of Politics / Government and Community Planning and Development; for its local significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture; and for its national significance under Criterion C in the area of Art.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

CRITERION A:

The 1937 Englewood Post Office is eligible for listing on the National Register for its local significance under Criterion A in the area of Politics / Government and Community Planning and Development. The Englewood Post Office was the only federal building constructed in the city under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal and the first federal building to be constructed in the city. Extensive lobbying by the city and the Chamber of Commerce, the expansion of the Denver metropolitan area and an increase in nationwide New Deal construction projects to stimulate the economy resulted in the authorization of funds to purchase the site and construct the Post Office. The Post Office's location spurred the growth of the small rural community of Englewood northward, where it would meet the southernmost development of Denver and set the stage for the town's transition into a major post-World War II metropolitan suburb.

CRITERION C:

The 1937 Englewood Post Office is eligible for listing on the National Register for its local significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its New Deal design by the Office of the Supervising Architect under Louis A. Simon. Though modest by many standards, the Englewood Post Office was one of the most architecturally sophisticated buildings in the city when it was built. Designed in a stripped Colonial Revival style, the building displays the emerging modernism of the time overlaid with modest details that refer to the architecture of the Colonial period and, by extension, the inception of the nation and the federal government. The Englewood Post Office mural by Boardman Robinson was commissioned by the U.S. Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts Program as part of a New Deal initiative to incorporate art in federal buildings, including post offices, throughout the country.

The 1937 Englewood Post Office is eligible for listing on the National Register for its national significance under Criterion C in the area of Art for its 1940 mural by important American artist Boardman Robinson. Robinson played a prominent role in the national development of the American mural movement of the 1930s; in the creation of important New Deal murals in Washington D.C.; and, as Art Director of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, in the creation of a mural-painting curriculum that resulted, between 1936 to 1940, in the award of forty federal mural commissions to his students and twenty to members of his teaching staff. The mural is one of only three major murals by Boardman Robinson to survive intact in its original location; it is one of only two examples of Robinson's work associated with the U.S. Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts Program; it is Robinson's only United States Post Office mural; and it has distinction as the sole major Robinson mural to reflect the impact of Colorado regionalism on his stylistic evolution.

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Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

CRITERION A / POLITICS/GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CRITERION C / ARCHITECTURE

During the 19th century, federal buildings were individually funded under bills such as those that provided for the Denver, Pueblo, Leadville and Colorado Springs post offices. In 1903, to address expanding needs, a series of "Public Buildings Omnibus Acts" were passed that created blanket funding for groups of federally funded buildings. This created an environment of pork-barrel politics in which post offices were built more on the basis of political influence than proven need. In response, the 1926 Keyes-Elliott Act included a more rational process for selecting locations and specifying new buildings. Under the later act, classifications for the design and construction of federal buildings were based on the population and service requirements of individual communities. Though the act itself pre-dates the 1929 stock market crash, in 1931, projects under the act were greatly accelerated and expanded under President Hoover. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office, they were further expanded as part of his New Deal programs, with the intention of providing jobs Americans left unemployed by the stock market crash and the resulting Depression. The 1985 Thematic Resource National Register Nomination *U.S. Post Offices in Colorado, 1900-1941* states: "(...) primary responsibility for post office design, construction and allocation remained with the Treasury Department until 1939, when federal building activities were consolidated in a new Federal Works Agency.

The Office of the Supervising Architect was originally founded in 1853 to create a construction branch within the Treasury Department. During the Depression years of 1933 to 1939, the Office was headed by Supervising Architect Louis A. Simon (1867-1958) under the Public Building Branch of the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department. The Office was directly responsible for the design of smaller federal buildings and for the supervision of private architectural firms who were selected for larger commissions through juried competition. Though credited on the cornerstone of the Englewood Post Office along with Supervising Engineer Neal A. Melick, it is difficult to determine how closely Simon or Melick were actually involved in the detailed design of such small federal buildings. During his tenure, Simon incorporated murals commissioned under the U.S. Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts Program in major New Deal federal buildings and in post offices and courthouses all over the United States. Through the program a total of 1,124 murals were commissioned, utilizing 1% of construction costs legislatively mandated for their use. A more complete discussion of the Office of the Supervising Architect under Simon is presented in Antoinette Lee's *Architects to the Nation: The Rise and Decline of the Supervising Architect's Office*.

The 1937 Englewood Post Office

Local talks regarding the possibility of a post office for Englewood were first announced in the city's newspapers in September of 1929. Tom McGrath first introduced the subject at a monthly Chamber of Commerce meeting at the Community Church. McGrath suggested "(...) that the people of Englewood would be given better service if the local post office were not connected with the Denver office." The matter was turned over to a committee including C.A. Stephenson, Tom Race and Jay Hatfield, who had been successful in obtaining additional mail carriers and two daily deliveries throughout Englewood.

In 1935 the Englewood newspapers began to report on the full-scale campaign that had developed, with L. E. Wise now leading the Chamber committee. A June 15, 1935, article in the *Englewood Herald* printed the following letter, which was sent to Postmaster General James A. Farley, United States Senators Edward P. Costigan and Alva B. Adams and Congressman Fred Cummings:

Believing that no city in the United States, not already so provided, is more entitled to a government-owned postoffice [sic], the Englewood Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the city of Englewood is applying for a federal grant to be used in the construction of a postoffice building.

Englewood is a city of 8,600 people with an adjacent territory, served by the local postoffice, having a population of more than 6,000 people. In addition a very considerable nearby territory is at the present time being served by postoffices of smaller towns not as conveniently located to that territory as is Englewood.

One of the richest districts in the entire Denver area is served by the Englewood postoffice. Prominent among those who receive mail thru [sic] this office are Dr. Hubert Work, former postmaster general and secretary of the interior, John T. Barnett, former attorney general of Colorado and Democratic national committeeman from

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Colorado for 20 years, the family of the late W.D. Lippitt, late president of the Great Western Sugar company and others.

Business of the Englewood postoffice has shown a steady increase in recent years. The volume during 1934 was greater by 19.16 percent than that of 1933.

At the present time and since the time that Englewood has had its own mail service the postoffice has been located in a rented building. The quarters provided have never been large enough to give adequate service to this large territory dependent upon this office.

Because of the reasons stated above the Englewood Chamber of Commerce very strongly feels that a postoffice building should be provided for Englewood with as little delay as possible. We are writing this letter to you in the hope and expectation that you will see the situation as we do and will lend your energies and influence to bring about serious consideration of this needed improvement by the proper authorities.

Extensive lobbying by Englewood, the growth of the Denver Metropolitan area and the rise of nationwide New Deal construction programs to stimulate the economy and employ the jobless resulted in the *Rocky Mountain News* announcement in September 1936 that Englewood had been approved as the location of a new post office.

Based on the description provided in the 1985 Thematic Resource National Register Nomination *U.S. Post Offices in Colorado, 1900-1941*, it appears that the Englewood Post Office fell into a Class C Post Office Category, as confirmed by the value of Englewood's 1937 post office receipts (\$32,079), and by the design character and construction specifications of the building. The description of Class C read:

Definition: Buildings that include a post office of the second class with receipts of \$15,000 or over, and of the first class to \$60,000 receipts, valuation of surrounding property that of a second class city.

Character of Building: Brick facing with stone or terracotta trimmings, fireproof floors; non-fireproof roof; frames, sashes and doors wood; interior finish to exclude the more expensive woods and marbles; the latter used only where sanitary conditions demand; public spaces restricted to very simple forms of ornament.

In 1937, Englewood had a population of 8,600 and served an adjacent population of 6,000, which would also allow the construction of a post office under 1929 federal criteria.

Stylistically, the post office can be described as stripped or starved Colonial Revival, consisting of the application of simplified Colonial ornamentation on a plain modern building form. The 1985 Thematic Resource National Register Nomination *U.S. Post Offices in Colorado, 1900-1941* addresses the style under the categories of Colonial Revivalism (1870-Present) and Starved Classicism (1930-1942). Colonial Revivalism specifically details the historic revival motifs including the entrance pediment and pilasters. The entry for Starved Classicism defines the influence of the Depression on architectural ornament in general: "(...) this was the dominant mode of government construction during the 1930s (...) [which,] in an effort to reduce costs and speed construction, eliminated or reduced ornament to a minimum."

In May of 1937 the *Englewood Herald* announced "Postoffice Plans Are Completed. Adams States Work Will Begin When Title Arrives From Capital; Acceptance of Proposal is Result of Four Year Drive By Englewood Citizens, Postmaster Lauds Community for Co-operation." In October of that same year, the front page of the Herald read "Money is Paid for Postoffice Lots; Contract is Let." The article stated that a government check had been received for the property and a \$63,400 contract was awarded to Mead and Mount Construction by the U.S. Treasury Department in Washington D.C. on October 25, 1937. A series of photographs documenting the Broadway site prior to the construction of the Post Office appear in the Englewood Public Library digital photo collection. (See photos at the end of this document.)

The Post Office groundbreaking was announced in the *Englewood Monitor* of November 18, 1937. George Ballard, president of the Chamber of Commerce, was the master of ceremonies. Reverend George Tripp of the Mayflower Congregational Church gave the invocation. Postmaster James Adams turned the first shovel of earth. Veterans and other civic organizations participated, along with Mayor Hugh Graham, members of the city council, and a representative of the construction company. The speakers included John T. Barnett, a prominent Democratic leader in Colorado and resident of Arapahoe county who had lobbied for the building in Washington D.C. and directed the local campaign for the building. Local resident C.C. Conant told of his experiences in the Washington lobbying campaign and expressed appreciation for the aid of Senator Alva B. Adams and Representative Fred Cummings. The Englewood High School marching band was also in attendance. The article lauded the new building as "one of the finest allotted to any of the smaller Colorado cities."

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A cost of \$90,000 was anticipated. Perhaps most importantly, the article reported: "The new building will be a great addition to Broadway, and it is anticipated that it will have a tendency to draw new business ventures to the 3300 block." Photographs of the groundbreaking ceremony show the Englewood City Hall (the former Alexander Aircraft and Film Studio), library (former Dr. Simon's house) and the house of Englewood's first mayor Jacob C. Jones visible across Broadway. A trolley moves north on Broadway behind the gathered crowd. The day of the groundbreaking, Mead and Mount Construction Company of Denver immediately moved a steam shovel onto the lot. Excavation began the following week.

The Post Office cornerstone was laid in March of 1938. The *Englewood Enterprise* and *Monitor* both reported on the ceremony. The Grand Lodge of Masons, under Colorado Grand Master Henry L. Baum, arranged the program and Judge Haslett P. Burke, justice of the Colorado Supreme Court, delivered the principal address. The article listed the contents of the box to be sealed in the cornerstone, including papers documenting all the members of Englewood's city government, school board, civic, fraternal and religious organizations, copies of local newspapers and U.S. Postal Service newsletters, and one Indian head penny. The *Enterprise* reported that Mead and Mount Construction workmen would place the stone under the direction of L. McQuilkin, the supervising architect, about whom no further information is known. Postmaster Adams reported that work was ahead of schedule and that: "Under the contract the building must be ready for occupancy on September 9. The total cost of the structure, with its grounds and furnishings has been placed at approximately \$94,000." A series of photographs documenting the entire construction of the Post Office appear in the Denver Public Library digital photo collection. Photographic documentation of the Englewood Post Office during construction shows a sign reading: "This project being constructed under the control of the Treasury Department, Public Buildings Branch, Procurement Division."

The *Englewood Herald* of September 22, 1938, reported on the dedication ceremony. Charles T. Hansen, US Post Office Inspector for the district, gave the main address with a history of the growth of the post office from cash receipts of \$3,000 in 1910 to \$32,079 in 1937. City Attorney H.H. Davies accepted the building on behalf of the city, as Mayor Graham was out of town. Other speakers included Congressman Fred Cummings of Fort Collins and Joseph Howard, Assistant Postmaster of Denver. Reverend Roland Terry of the Englewood Community Church gave the invocation. Letters of regret at not being able to attend from a number of national and regional elected and post office officials were read. N.S. Nielsen, President of the Englewood Chamber of Commerce, acted as presiding officer and the Englewood High School band provided music. It was reported: "The Cherrelyn branch No. 14 of the Trans-Mississippi Philatelic Society will have a desk in the lobby to stamp covers containing souvenirs of the dedication."

Commercial development of north Englewood along Broadway quickly followed. In February of 1939 an *Enterprise* article entitled "Landmark to be Removed on Broadway" reported that the Jones House, the home of Englewood's first mayor, was to be demolished for a Miller Stores Supermarket.

The 1940 Englewood Post Office Mural

The United States National Archives retains records pertaining to the Englewood Post Office Mural in its file RG 121 Stack 650 21:15:3 Box 11; Folder: Englewood - PO. Unless otherwise noted, all of the quoted documents and correspondence in the following section were taken from photocopies of that file.

On April 7, 1939, Postmaster James Adams wrote to the US Post Office's Division of Building Operations and Supplies, Equipment and Supplies Branch, in Washington DC. In it, he inquired as to whether Englewood might be provided with murals:

I do not, of course, know whether or not there is a balance remaining in the Equipment Appropriation for this Building, but if there is, would it be possible to use a portion if it in the purchase of murals for the decoration and beautification of the walls in the Postmaster's office and the lobby of the building?

I believe that murals of President Roosevelt or George Washington or similar great men would add dignity and beauty to the walls in the Postmaster's office, and that murals of western scenes or historical incidents would do likewise for the lobby of the building.

People in this city, as a whole, patrons of the office, are inordinately proud of their new Post Office Building and murals of the kind mentioned would add another distinctive touch thereto.

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The Fourth Assistant Postmaster General forwarded the letter to the Director, Procurement Division, Public Buildings Branch, Treasury Department, which responded to Adams that his request had been approved and stating that the work would be undertaken in the near future. It also took note of his suggestions for subject matter.

In May of 1939, an *Englewood Herald* article entitled "Postoffice to Get Mural Paintings" appeared:

Contracts have been authorized by the United States government to paint murals in the Englewood postoffice [sic]. No one has yet been designated to paint them. According to Postmaster J. E. Adams, two or three murals depicting early Colorado leaders may be chosen as subject matter. Also suggested by the postmaster for one mural would be a portrait of the first and present presidents of the United States, Washington and Roosevelt. Either plan was declared suitable to him, however, by Adams. If Colorado pioneers are chosen, men such as Tabor, Teller, Palmer, Evans, or their contemporaries would likely be chosen.

On June 26, 1939, Edward Bruce, Chief of the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts (the Section), wrote to artist Boardman Robinson at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, where he served as its Art Director. Though many of the Section's post office mural commissions were awarded through competitions, others were awarded to established artists on the basis of merit. Bruce and Robinson were already well acquainted through a broad circle of friends and the artist's previous murals for the Section in the new Justice Department Building in Washington D.C.:

When last here you mentioned the fact that you would be interested in executing a small mural panel for one of the Colorado Post Offices. There is an allocation for the Englewood, Colorado, Post Office, price \$880.00, dimensions 14' side by 4' high. Would you be interested in doing this job? If so, I will see that a formal letter of invitation is sent to you.

In early July, Robinson went to Englewood to look at the post office. He replied in the affirmative and, on July 13, Edward B. Rowen, Assistant Chief of the Section, wrote to formally invite Robinson to submit designs for the project. It outlined the terms of contract that would be issued upon the approval of his design by the Commissioner of Public Buildings and stated that the mural was to be completed and installed within one year.

In September, Robinson submitted a first preliminary sketch. An internal memo in the National Archives indicates that the sketch was not well received and reveals, perhaps, some personal animosity on the part of the reviewer, Forbes Watson, Special Advisor to the Section:

Knowing the distinguished abilities of this artist we can naturally accept a "rougher" sketch from him than from some lesser light. However the faults of this design do not touch upon its unfinished state. The spirit of the design is wrong, or at least inappropriate. As one portion of a large scheme this comedy might be entertaining. I would in that case still have some doubt. As a single panel I find the forced comedy (note kid with man's hat, Bentonian figure [referring to Thomas Hart Benton] and fat girl, gals and cowboys) just too cute for words.

Admitting Mr. Robinson's eminence I would advise asking him for more serious more studied and more dignified subject matter. Just because the subject isn't cute it does not have to be dull. What are the main activities of Englewood? How about a good well-studied local scene with local people in it? Done not with the tongue in the cheek but like a serious artist who observes for himself.

Robinson can't take criticism and will probably throw down the job with a great bearded snort not realizing that there are plenty of younger men catching up with him, not to say passing him. Last word: Frivolous.

Rowan's formal letter to Robinson was more respectful and speaks to the goals of the Post Office mural program:

The sketch has been studied by the members of the Section and while we find it amusing we question the appropriateness of the subject matter which you have chosen for the decoration in question.

This work of art will probably be the one important original work of the art in the community and will be taken seriously by most of the citizens and from our experience we know that a great many would resent the frivolity of the scene that you have depicted.

In this program we are attempting to procure works of art which are reflective of the spirit and locale of a community feeling that thereby we procure a work of greater interest and significance to the citizens. If the design which you submitted of girls amusing themselves with cowboys were part of a larger scheme it might be

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acceptable but since it must stand along it is our feeling that a more dignified theme is necessary (...) It is hoped that you will submit further proposals of a well studied scene with local people in it.

Robinson sent a second sketch in October of 1939. Rowen's response was positive: "The subject and general treatment are regarded as entirely dignified and I am pleased to tell you are acceptable." He requested a two-inch scale color sketch of the design. On the required technical outline, Robinson specified that the work would be executed on linen canvas in tempera with oil-varnish glazes. The Section specified the mural size as 13' wide by 6'6" high. White lead and Damar varnish was to be used as an adhesive to apply the canvas to the plaster wall. The subject matter was identified as "Colorado Stock Sale" and July of 1940 was given as the completion and installation date.

On April 9, 1940, the Section authorized an initial payment of \$200 to Robinson. A second payment of \$290 was made on May 1, 1940. On August 23, 1940, Robinson sent a photograph of the "practically-finished" mural on Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center stationery, reporting: "We are hanging it for exhibition, along with Manuel Bromberg's [mural for the Greybull, Wyoming, post office] here in the Fine Arts Center for a week or two." Rowan responded: "You will be interested to know that Ned Bruce looked at the photograph and said 'This is really swell, who did it?' He, of course, was delighted when he found it was one of your paintings."

On October 4, 1940, Robinson sent a letter to Rowen stating that he expected to install the mural within ten days. A Rowen letter of November 5, 1940, confirmed the installation and requested a report from Postmaster Adams regarding the community's response. Adams relayed the complimentary comments of patrons. A final letter from Rowan offered recommendations for cleaning the mural and, on December 4, 1940, final payment was issued in the amount of \$390.

According to Mary Motian-Meadows in her article "Western Visions: Colorado's New Deal Post Office Murals," in the *Colorado Heritage Magazine* of Autumn 1991, a total of sixteen post office murals were executed in Colorado between 1936 and 1942. In addition to the Englewood Post Office mural, they included two post office murals in Colorado Springs and Glenwood Springs and one each in the Denver, Florence, Golden, Gunnison, Littleton, Loveland, Manitou Springs, Rifle, Rocky Ford, Walsenburg and Grand Junction. By 1991, only ten of the murals remained in their original locations.

In the 1940 *Modern American Painting*, author Peyton Boswell, Jr., says: "(...) Americans can view in their post offices, the courthouses and other public buildings paintings by some of the best artists contemporary America has to offer. (...) American art was thus brought before the eyes of millions of American people who daily pass through the buildings of their government. It is the world's largest art gallery." The 1985 Thematic National Register Nomination *U.S. Post Offices in Colorado 1900-1941* states: "A central contention of this nomination is that the murals and architecture of 1930s post offices are mutually interdependent for aesthetic and iconographic meaning. As [Holger] Cahill [of the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts] observed in 1937, (...) the transportable murals lose much of their significance apart from their setting (...)." A primary motivation for the submission of the current nomination is the desire of the community to promote the preservation of the Boardman Robinson mural in its original architectural context and location, the 1938 Englewood Post Office.

Integrity

The Englewood Post Office retains all seven characteristics of integrity as defined by the National Park Service. The building was well maintained and remains in its original location. The design of the building is intact and displays the same form, plan, space, structure and style that it did in 1940, the end date established for the building's period of significance. Though a street reconfiguration resulted in the transformation of the building's original location to a corner site, its geographic importance only increased and its relationship to the city's commercial district remained intact. The materials and workmanship survive intact. The feeling evoked by the building, a small-town New Deal single-purpose post office, remains intact. The strength of all six of these characteristics combine to retain the historic association for which the property is significant – the history of the New Deal building programs, its role in the economic and commercial growth of Englewood, and its Boardman Robinson mural in the post office lobby.

CRITERION C / ART

The 1937 Englewood Post Office is eligible for listing on the National Register for its national significance under Criterion C in the area of Art for its 1940 mural by important American artist Boardman Robinson. Robinson played a prominent role in the national development of the American mural movement of the 1930s; in the creation of important New Deal murals in Washington D.C.; and, as Art Director of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, in the creation of a mural-

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painting curriculum that resulted, between 1936 to 1940, in the award of forty federal mural commissions to his students and twenty to members of his teaching staff. The mural is one of only three major murals by Boardman Robinson to survive intact in its original location; it is one of only two examples of Robinson's work associated with the U.S. Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts Program; it is Robinson's only United States Post Office mural; and it has distinction as the sole major Robinson mural to reflect the impact of Colorado regionalism on his stylistic evolution.

The first half of the twentieth century was an important transitional period for the fine arts in the United States. Since Independence, European traditions and forms dominated American fine arts. With the emergence of the United States as an urbanized industrial power in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, artists began to collectively challenge the hegemony of Europe and pursue a truly American art.

Social Realism was an early manifestation of this movement. It first emerged with the initial 1908 group exhibition of New York City's Ashcan School. These artists found their subjects in the world of the urban poor and working class. Their sympathies often extended to the lives of their subjects and many were actively involved in leftist politics that championed labor rights, human rights and economic and social equality.

With the stock market crash of 1929 and the emergence of the Depression, artists, their labor undervalued in the best of times, were disproportionately affected by the economic collapse. Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs were extended to assist unemployed artists and to commission accomplished and established artists to decorate the many Federal construction projects that employed other out-of-work Americans.

Central to these New Deal art programs was a developing American mural movement modeled on the emergence of the Mexican mural program of the early 1920s. Both considered the mural, in its public presentation of accessible subjects and styles, the only true democratic art form. Such murals spoke to the experience of the workingman and had special resonance during the depths of the Depression. They appeared in locations ranging from major federal buildings in Washington, D.C. to the smallest rural post offices of the American West. This geographic dispersal mirrored the mandate of these New Deal programs to broadly benefit artists and communities throughout the country. Regionalism, a more rural version of social realism, began to dominate. It reflected a rejection of urban values associated with the causes of Depression and focusing on the social, agricultural and cultural life of rural America and the American past.

With the emergence of an independent American art scene, art education in the United States also expanded. Historically, American artists pursued their educations in Europe, most often in Paris at conservative institutions like the École des Beaux-Arts. Now those institutions, and American academies that had been modeled upon them, were brought to task for stifling the artistic freedom to explore new subjects and styles of expression. These attitudes, combined with the economic constraints of the Depression, supported the development and growth of American schools of art that cultivated the talents of local and regional artists.

Boardman Robinson (1876-1952)

Boardman Robinson was an important figure in all these aspects of the development of the American art scene. He is widely recognized as a major artist of the twentieth century for his seminal and distinguished accomplishments in political cartooning, mural painting and book illustration. Robinson is also acknowledged as an influential teacher, playing an important role in the development of a whole new generation of American artists.

Boardman Robinson was born in Somerset, Nova Scotia, the son of Canadian sea captain John Henry Robinson and Lydia Jane Parker Robinson, an American mother from Connecticut. He grew up in Canada and Wales. He studied at the Massachusetts Normal Art School, Boston, working as an elevator operator to support himself. The position led to a chance encounter with a wealthy patron who took an interest in Robinson's career and contributed funds for his studies in Paris from 1898 to 1900 at the École des Beaux-Arts and the Académie Colarossi.

In Paris, Robinson met his future wife, Sally Senter Whitney, a fellow American studying sculpture with Auguste Rodin. Through her Robinson became acquainted with the French master who stressed the importance of drawing and continuously sketching scenes from daily life.

In 1904, after stays in Boston, San Francisco and Paris, the couple married and moved to New York City. There, Robinson first struggled as an artist. In order to support his family, he took a position as an investigator for the Society for

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the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor. His work there contributed to his growing sympathy and empathy for the disadvantaged and downtrodden, which grew into leftist political activism.

Between 1905 and 1914 Robinson served as art director, illustrator and political cartoonist for a series of New York magazines and newspapers including *Vogue*, the *Morning Telegraph*, *New York Tribune*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Scribner's* and *Puck*. He established a reputation as one of the most important political cartoonists of the time. Politically radical in concept and artistically powerful in execution, the influence of his work was lauded by the New York art community. John Sloan, a leading member of the Ashcan School and the "Eight," a group that challenged the conservative traditions of New York's National Academy, acknowledged the influence of Boardman Robinson's work. His cartoons abandoned the fussy crosshatching of nineteenth century American cartoonists such as Thomas Nast and pioneered a new style of bold drawing rooted in the contemporary fine art of the period. By 1915 a collection of Robinson's best work was published in the book *Cartoons on the War*.

The power of his work attracted *Metropolitan Magazine*, which hired Robinson and radical writer John Reed to travel as war correspondents to the Balkans and Russia. Upon their return, Robinson illustrated Reed's 1916 book *The War on the Eastern Front*, based on their shared travels. The drawings were taken directly from the small notebooks in which Robinson often sketched from memory at night to avoid the watchful eye of suspicious observers.

Once back in New York City, Robinson became associated with increasingly radical publications including *The Masses*, *The Liberator* and *The New Masses*, which shared many prominent leftist participants. *The Masses*, for example, was organized as a co-operative, with contributors sharing in its management. Writers and artists associated with magazine included many luminaries of the day such as Floyd Dell, John Reed, William Walling, Crystal Eastman, Sherwood Anderson, Carl Sandburg, Upton Sinclair, Amy Lowell, Louise Bryant, John Sloan, Art Young, Robert Minor, K. R. Chamberlain, Stuart Davis, George Bellows and Maurice Becker.

The leftist, anti-war content of *The Masses* was tolerated after World War I began, though Robinson's cartoon "Making the World Safe for Capitalism" was one of four cited as objectionable works by the Postal Service, resulting in the loss of the magazine's mailing privileges and permits. After the US entered the war, however, seven individuals associated with *The Masses* were personally tried for violating the Espionage Act. Though the group included a number of cartoonists, Robinson was not among them. A first and second trial both resulted in hung juries; when the war ended their prosecution was abandoned.

Boardman Robinson and the American Mural

By 1920, Robinson's focus began to shift. He established a successful teaching career at the Art Students League of New York and began a comprehensive exploration of the design and painting of murals. Robinson first became acquainted with mural painting through the work of Puvis de Chavannes and John Singer Sargent, which he saw in the Boston Public Library during his early education. Now, along with other American artists, he observed with interest the development of a vital public mural program in Mexico under newly elected leftist president Obregon. Largely the work of Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Jose Clemente Orozco, the murals employed a graphic modern style in the service of historical and contemporary social and political themes. They were seen as appropriate art for a modern, democratic society. Integral to the form was an apprentice system in which young artists assisted the master artist in order to learn the art and craft of mural painting.

Though opportunities for mural commissions were few, Boardman Robinson and his friend and fellow artist Thomas Hart Benton began to explore mural design in the studio. Mural studies, historically known as cartoons, began to appear beside their other work in New York City galleries and shows. Their murals eschewed traditional mythological scenes in favor of historical and contemporary American themes. In 1928 a friend of Robinson brought department store magnate Edgar Kauffman to his studio to view some mural studies. Impressed, Kauffman hired Robinson to paint a series of murals for the walls of his department store in Pittsburgh. (Kauffman was a well-known patron of the arts who later commissioned architect Frank Lloyd Wright to design his Pennsylvania summer home, the National Historic Landmark "Fallingwater.") For the project, Boardman Robinson designed a series of ten murals that portrayed the history of commerce. They were executed in automobile paint on canvas, their qualities of line and mass distinctly modern in style. Awarded a gold medal of honor by the Architectural League of New York, their appearance was widely heralded as the inception of a new era of American murals.

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In her book *Wall-to-Wall America; A Cultural History of Post-Office Murals in the Great Depression*, Karal Ann Marling states:

In 1930 (...) the unveiling of two large and influential mural cycles (...) signaled the emergence of a mature native [mural] movement. One was Boardman Robinson's *History of Trade*, a ten-panel ensemble for the mezzanine of the Kauffman Department Store in Pittsburgh. The other was Thomas Hart Benton's nine-part panorama of *America Today* at the New School for Social Research in New York City.

A *New York Times* article of 1930 entitled "Walls Call; Time for Mural Art to Develop Here" stated:

Unless all the talk spends itself without arriving at the point of action, mural painting promises to come prominently to the fore in America. As a matter of fact there has already within the last few years been considerable activity in this direction. Mural art such as truly reflects our own age has been proved feasible. Some paintings, like the Boardman Robinson murals now installed in the Kaufmann department store of Pittsburgh, are on canvas; others, like the Orozco 'Prometheus' out in California, are in true fresco. (...) Boardman Robinson reminds us that "most of the great painting of the past was spread upon walls, in cooperation with architecture, in public places, and the same was relatively true of sculpture."

By the time the Kaufman murals were unveiled to the public on May 1, 1930, the stock market crash had already begun to plunge the country into a deep economic depression. That same year, Robinson shocked the New York art world by announcing that he had accepted a teaching position in Colorado Springs, Colorado. His involvement with the east coast art establishment continued, however, and bets were quickly taken on how long it would take for him to return to New York City, the center of the American art scene.

Boardman Robinson in Colorado

Robinson had been invited by his friend Mrs. Elizabeth Sage Hare to join the faculty at the Fountain Valley School for boys, which she founded in the fall of 1930 for the education of her own sons. Robinson, then fifty-two years of age, said that the installation of the Kaufmann murals seemed to mark the end of a chapter in his life and that he felt no particularly strong ties to New York at the time. The health of his family also appeared to play a role in his decision.

Hare was a wealthy doyenne with connections to avant-garde intellectual and cultural circles in New York City and abroad. She counted many artists teaching at the Art Students League among her friends including Robert Reid, John Carlson and Boardman Robinson. Her association with Colorado Springs and Santa Fe, where she and her husband had also resided, was due to the beneficial affects of the climate on his health.

Colorado Springs was founded in 1871 by Civil War cavalry hero General William Jackson Palmer as an upper class resort. The 1891 discovery of gold in Cripple Creek brought a flood of wealth and affluence to the city and the nearby mineral waters and dry climate drew well-to-do health-seekers. Spencer Penrose, who made a fortune in the gold fields, was responsible for the construction of many of the organizations and landmarks that still define the city today, including the Broadmoor Hotel, the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, the Will Rogers Shrine, the Pikes Peak Highway and his El Pomar Foundation, still a major charitable foundation in the state. Penrose and his wife Julie were also responsible for the founding of the city's most important cultural institution, the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. In 1919 the Penroses donated their home to house the newly incorporated Broadmoor Art Academy. Early instructors at the Broadmoor Academy were drawn from the developing regional art scene in Taos and Santa Fe, many of whom also had strong connections with New York City. Artists Robert Reid and John Carlson were the first instructors at an initial three-month summer session in 1930. Other art instructors of the 1920s included Birger Sandzen, Randall Davey, Ernest Lawson and Lloyd Moylan. Given the setting of the school at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, their work and their teaching focused largely on the landscape.

Shortly after Boardman Robinson assumed his teaching position at the Fountain Valley School in 1930 he was hired as a figure-drawing instructor by the Broadmoor Art Academy. In 1931 he was appointed its director. Boardman Robinson's reputation as a teacher was already well established by his tenure at the New York Art Students League. His presence at the Broadmoor Academy was a magnet to students from all over the country. It also drew a wide circle of fellow artists with whom he was acquainted to practice their own work or act as instructors.

Though Robinson began to establish a new life for himself in Colorado, he continued to play a major role in the national development of the new American mural movement. As Rockefeller Center neared completion in 1932, a call was raised

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by the New York art community for the inclusion of work by American artists. In a January 24, 1932, article for *The New York Times*, art writer Edward Alden Jewell asked:

On what American artists might the builders of Radio City safely call? (...) As a starter one enthusiastically recommends Thomas Benton [his mural at the New School for Social Research followed closely on the heels of the Kauffman murals] and Boardman Robinson, both of whom have already painted distinguished murals (...) An invitation to American artists would be pretty sure to result in the submitting of worthy projects. And it is high time that our artists should be given an opportunity to collaborate, on a big scale, with architects and engineers, all striving honestly to bring to crystallization "a distinctive American style."

In July of 1932 *The New York Times* announced "Robinson to Design Mural; American Artist will Decorate Lobby of Rockefeller Center Building." Robinson painted the mural in Colorado Springs with the assistance of his student and teaching assistant Tabor Utlej. The article related:

The mural is sixteen feet long and is allegorical in character. It depicts a man, with his family, looking out into space at tall buildings, factories and other evidences of modern civilization. "I have tried to show," Mr. Robinson said, "how relatively unimportant is all the machinery of material progress compared to man and his fundamental needs. We have forgotten this in recent years."

In 1932, as the Depression dragged on, Boardman Robinson's friend and fellow artist George Biddle wrote future president Franklin D. Roosevelt suggesting that the many young artists who found themselves unemployed by the Depression could create a vibrant a school of American mural painting that could rival that of Mexico. Biddle, scion of the wealthy and prominent Philadelphia family, wrote, as quoted in *Pikes Peak Vision: The Broadmoor Art Academy, 1919-1945*:

The Mexican artists have produced the greatest national school of mural painting since the Italian Renaissance. Diego Rivera tells me that it was only possible because Obregon [the President of Mexico] allowed Mexican artists to work at plumber's wages in order to express on the walls of the government buildings the social ideals of the Mexican revolution.

The younger artists of America are conscious, as they never have been, of the social revolution that our country and civilization are going through [with the Depression], and they would be very eager to express these ideals in a permanent art form, if they were given the government's cooperation.

They would be contributing to and expressing in living monuments the social ideals that you are struggling to achieve. And I am convinced that our mural art, with a little impetus, can soon result, for the first time in our history, in a vital national expression.

Biddle's appeal was well received by Roosevelt, his former classmate at Groton and Harvard, and his idea first manifested itself in the 1933-34 Public Works Art Project. His concept was more fully realized in the 1934-1943 Section of Painting and Sculpture, later called the Section of Fine Arts, directed by Edward Bruce under the Treasury Department, which was charged with the construction and decoration of federal buildings. "The Section," as it became known, was one of several art programs set up by the federal government. In contrast to other New Deal art programs formed to assist unemployed artists, Section artists were appointed based on their qualifications or chosen from national and regional competitions.

Before Biddle wrote to Roosevelt, he and a small group of fellow artists agreed on a list of qualified artists in order to ensure that the highest quality of art would result from a federally subsidized mural program. For the two most important new buildings in Washington, the Justice Department and Post Office, participating artists were selected by a committee of museum directors and artists. Of the eleven painters chosen to decorate the Justice Department, eight were from Biddle's original list: George Biddle, Henry Varnum Poor, Maurice Sterne, Reginald Marsh, John Steuart Curry, Boardman Robinson and Thomas Hart Benton. The others were Leon Kroll, Eugene Savage and Rockwell Kent.

Robinson's Justice Department mural commission was executed on canvas at the Fountain Valley School for Boys in Colorado Springs assisted by a number of his Broadmoor Academy students including Kenneth Evett. He incorporated the painting of the murals into the wider school curriculum, anticipating a trend underway in education today. A *New York Times* article on private schools, under the subheading, "Murals in Education" related:

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A series of murals to decorate the grand stairway in the new Department of Justice Building in Washington will be planned and executed during the next two years in the art studio of a college preparatory boarding school near Colorado Springs. Day by day the boys of Fountain Valley School will see the progress of the work under the planning and draftsmanship of their teacher, Boardman Robinson, to whom the contract has been awarded. Not only will the technique of mural painting be observed, but preliminary research will be made a part of the studio discussion and history work. The theme of the mural is to be "The Great Codifiers of Law – Ancient, Anglo-Saxon and American." Thus the subject covers the history of organized society in its aspect as a crystallization of custom and traditions into legal forms. Mr. Robinson has lived at the school since its opening five years ago, in an effort to made the fine arts an actual part of a liberal education. The school attempts constantly to link the work in art with the courses in English and history. In connection with the different periods studied, exhibits of the reproductions in the liberal arts library, given to the school by the Carnegie Foundation, are frequently arranged.

"All boys who study art don't become artists," said Francis Froehlicher, the headmaster. "Those with ability and interest are allowed more time in the studio. Others gain much in art appreciation through contact with Mr. Robinson. Still others, who have less ability, are at least aware that art has played a great part in the civilization of man."

In 1934 Betty Hare, Julie Penrose and Robinson were instrumental in convincing local philanthropist and art collector Alice Bemis Taylor to build a facility to house her important collection of American Indian and Hispanic art, provide a new home for the Broadmoor Art Academy and provide a theater for musical and theatrical events. To mark the transition, the name of the Academy was formally changed to the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. Hare's friend Stanley B. Lothrop, most recently the director of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation in Oyster Bay, Long Island, was appointed the general director. Boardman Robinson was appointed director of the art school. Architect John Gaw Meem was hired to design the National Register-listed Colorado Springs Fine Art Center building (5EP.622). *Architectural Forum*, quoted in *Pikes Peak Vision: The Broadmoor Art Academy, 1919-1945*, lauded the new home of the Center when it opened in 1936:

Here is a building which is modern, monumental, and unlabored. Its simplicity reveals assurance, not sterility. Its character is local, but it is not the result of any attempt to fake a pueblo (...) There is a freshness here, a kind of youthful vigor which defies analysis, but which is the building's greatest charm.

The frescoes (murals worked in wet plaster) by Boardman Robinson over the main entrance give the key to it: five figure panels symbolizing the arts – a perfectly orthodox thing to do in front of a museum – but let it be noted that they are not the usual wearily attitudinizing gods filched off dusty pediments; they are busy young people, apparently having a rather good time at their work. It is something of this spirit that characterizes the entire building, a spirit that is the very essence of the new architecture.

In 1937 Robinson completed the Justice Building murals. Prior to their installation in Washington, D.C. they were displayed at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. *The New York Times* announced "Mural Panels Ready in Justice Building:"

Eighteen mural panels, which Boardman Robinson worked more than two and a half years to complete, have been installed in the ceremonial office leading from the Court of Honor in the Department of Justice Building. The murals cover 1,100 square feet. They constitute the largest group of panels by one artist under the Treasury Department art program. "Mural painting in American has been, up to comparatively recent times, an academic art," Edward Bruce, chief of art projects, said today. "Without waiting for the passage of time it is safe to say that Robinson's series of great figures of the history of law will rank among the most notable achievements of modern mural paintings."

Under Robinson's direction the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center became a national center for the American mural movement and the education of young artists. A *Life* magazine article of October 7, 1940, entitled "This is Work at Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center; It is an Art Students' Paradise" noted: "In the last four years 40 Government mural competitions were won by students and 20 by teachers from the Arts Center." Robinson himself was on the mural selection committee for the South Denver post office, for which Ethel Magafan, a student of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, was selected to paint her composition "The Horse Corral" in 1942. "The *Modern American Painting* by Peyton Boswell, Jr., expressed the role that the New Deal art programs played in dispersing art education and the practice of art throughout the nation:

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More important to the future than the financial help the [Federal Art] Project has extended to individual artists is its creation of a reservoir of art interest and activity throughout the nation, and particularly in those sections once artistically arid and despoiled by the migration of artists to such metropolitan centers as New York's Greenwich Village. Thomas C. Parker, Deputy Director of the Federal Art Project, states that when the government entered art, 85 per cent of the artists were concentrated in only nine metropolitan centers. The Project has worked continually to check this cultural erosion by encouraging the artists in their home regions. And on the impulse thus given by the government other forms of art are flourishing and will continue to flourish, so deeply rooted are these in the national life (...)

Photographs in the *Life* magazine article showed Boardman Robinson critiquing student work at an outdoor life drawing session and working on the Englewood Colorado Post Office mural. His student Manuel Bromberg is pictured posing for the seated cowboy figure that appears at the lower right of the mural. Bromberg had been commissioned to paint the mural for the Greybull, Wyoming, post office at the same time that his teacher, Boardman Robinson, readied his mural of the horse sale for installation in the Englewood Post Office. Paul Parker, then director of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, described both murals for *Parnassus* in 1940, quoted in *Pikes Peak Vision: The Broadmoor Art Academy, 1919-1945*:

The medium in both cases is egg tempera on canvas prepared on canvas prepared with a half oil ground. The surfaces are built up with heightened glazes; superficially, the employment of considerable impasto in the lighter passages suggests an oil painting technique.

Preliminary procedures were similar (...) Both [Robinson and Bromberg] used the Renaissance devices of clay models and cartoons. But instead of pouncing the cartoons on the canvases, the artists made slides from the cartoons, drawing the projected images on the canvases with diluted India ink (...)

Robinson's skill and preoccupation with draftsmanship, together with the observations of ten years' residence in the West, are displayed in individuals rather than types. His accent on drawing is never concealed by the color, which is high in key. The composition depends not on patterns, but on the rhythmic curves of figures against architectural elements (...)

In the latter stages of his mural (Robinson) placed a window in the upper left portion not only to give variety to the background behind the rear tier of figures, but to introduce in Dutch fashion a complementary deep space note.

The Englewood Post Office mural was the final mural painted by Boardman Robinson.

During his seventeen years in Colorado, Robinson's career as an illustrator, begun while he was still working in New York, also continued to grow in stature. His projects included editions of the *Brothers Karamazov* (1933) and *The Idiot* (1935) by Dostoyevsky, Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1938), *The Spoon River Anthology* (1942) by Edgar Lee Masters, Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1943) and *Leaves of Grass* (1944) by Walt Whitman. A September 27, 1946, article in *The New York Times* also reported a project to illustrate the stories of Edgar Allen Poe that was "abandoned because the work was deemed too shocking and powerful by the publishers."

Boardman Robinson was a constant exhibitor throughout his artistic career. In September of 1946 he was honored by a lifetime retrospective of his work at the Kraushaar Gallery in New York City. The *New York Times* review of the show by Howard Devree reads, in part: "Although he has not been actively identified with the New York scene for many years, Boardman Robinson is even here a notable figure in contemporary art (...) The retrospective exhibition at Kraushaar's puts him before us in full stature. Nearly a hundred paintings and drawings, portraits, landscapes and figure subjects from 1904 to 1946, reveal his range from satire to tragedy and from illustration to semi-abstract mountain landscape."

In June of 1947, declining health forced Boardman Robinson's retirement as Professor Emeritus from the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. Following the advice of his doctors, he and his wife Sally relocated to a lower altitude, joining their son Bartlett at his home in Darien, Connecticut. He died on September 5, 1952, the eve of his 76th birthday, at a nursing home in Stamford, Connecticut.

Boardman Robinson's work is widely represented in museum collections throughout the United States. The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center has assembled the single largest collection of his work in its permanent collection, including the Kauffman department store murals.

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Boardman Robinson's Murals

Though Boardman Robinson is recognized as a seminal figure in the American mural movement of the 1930s, his role in its development is founded on the relatively small number of five major murals/mural cycles that were originally open to public view, as catalogued in *Boardman Robinson* by Albert Christ-Janer:

- 1930 History of Commerce (series of ten murals)
Oil on canvas, adhered to plaster
Kauffman Department Store, Pittsburgh, PA
Removed from their original location and now in the collection of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado
- 1932 [Man's material progress versus his fundamental needs]
Egg tempera on canvas, adhered to plaster
RKO Building Lobby, Rockefeller Center, New York City
- 1936 The Five Arts
Fresco, dry pigment in wet plaster (series of five murals on facade)
Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado
Integrity lost through over-painting
- 1937 Great Figures in the History of Law (series of eighteen murals)
Tempera base with oil glazes on canvas, adhered to plaster
Department of Justice Building, Washington, D.C.
- 1940 Colorado Stock Sale/Colorado Horse Auction
Tempera base with oil glazes on canvas, adhered to plaster
Englewood Post Office, Englewood, Colorado

Robinson's only other murals are an early experimental portable fresco (*Sermon on the Mount*, now in the private collection of the Fountain Valley School, Colorado Springs, CO) and three painted for private clients – one in oil on canvas glued to pressed board (*Quixote and Sancho*, originally for the Gilpin Residence, Colorado Springs, CO, current location unknown) and two in fresco (a mountain scene with horses and riders and a mountain road-building scene, both for the Fountain Valley School, Colorado Springs, CO).

The Englewood Post Office mural assumes national significance as one of only three major Boardman Robinson murals to retain their historic integrity and remain in their original location. The National Register Nomination for Rockefeller Center does not include significance in the area of "Art" and does not itemize the Boardman Robinson mural in its statement of significance. The Department of Justice Building is not listed on the National Register, though it has been determined eligible. The Englewood Post Office mural is commensurate with both in terms of materials and installation. As one of two murals associated with New Deal arts programs, it is commensurate with the Department of Justice murals. It is the only Boardman Robinson mural executed for a United States Post Office.

The Rockefeller Center and Department of Justice murals both resemble the Kauffman murals in their grand themes and stylized figural rendering. The Englewood mural marks a turning point in Robinson's subject, form and style to a softer and more naturalistic regionalism that reflects his 1930 move to Colorado. In her book *Wall-to-Wall America: A Cultural History of Post-Office Murals in the Great Depression*, Karal Ann Marling discussed the respective roles that Boardman Robinson and Thomas Hart Benton played as the two primary artists in the inception of the American mural movement of the 1930s. Of Robinson's Kauffman murals, she says:

Robinson's Cubism is a sober effort to solve the formal problem of painting three-dimensional reality on an architectural plane without negating the structural integrity of the building, and this high degree of aesthetic seriousness lends a complementary mood of dignity and gravity to the episodes pictured.

(...) Despite factory-fresh colors and streamlined shapes, *The History of Trade* possesses the monumental solemnity of a fresco by Piero della Francesca, as the saga of commerce slowly unfolds from primitive origins to a triumphant culmination in a Pittsburgh still heedless of the perils of prosperity in the waning

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'20s. Despite cubistic simplifications and compressions of form, the characters enacting this costume pageant of capitalism on the march are instantly recognizable human beings. (...) Albeit modernistic, semi-abstract, and – by some operative standards of the day – radical, degenerate, and ugly, style does not impede appreciation of story line, the historical epic which was Robinson's principal contribution to the gathering American Renaissance.

Robinson taught the new American mural of the '30s to tell a story, and a kind of story uniquely suited to the public arena.

In contrast, Marling says: "Benton countered Robinson's 'usable past' with his own commitment to a usable present – to murals grounded in contemporary life, stylistically and iconographically 'arguable in the language of the street.'" She goes on to describe his figures "drawn like animated cartoon characters," and the juxtaposing of frenetic images from the street and popular culture that draw on photographic montages from cinema or the pages of the tabloids of the day.

The post office muralists of the 1930s adopted and melded these approaches to style and subject matter to express regional culture and history across the United States. The Englewood Post Office mural reflects a similar evolution in Boardman Robinson's own work. Unlike his previous murals, which dealt with grand historical themes, Robinson presented a regional scene drawn from life in rural Colorado. This reflected national trends in New Deal post office murals as well as his own adoption of regional landscapes and themes after his move to Colorado Springs. Still, like his earlier work, the composition remained formal and made direct references to early European art. Robinson also abandoned the simplification and abstraction of the human form that characterized his earlier murals and rendered the figures in a more naturalistic style that related to his drawings and illustrations. The resulting work, his final mural, encompasses elements that reflect the entire scope of his career and the evolution of the American mural movement that he was so instrumental in founding.

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U.S. National Archives, RG 121 Stack 650 21:15:3 Box 11; Folder: Englewood - PO.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: U.S. National Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 5AH.269

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.) (NAD 27) The UTMS were derived by OAHP from heads up digitization on Digital Raster Graphic (DRG) maps provided to OAHP by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

1	<u>13</u>	<u>501 140mE</u>	<u>43 89 390mN</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

BEG 155 FT S & 50 FT E OF NW COR OF S 1/2 OF SE 1/4 TH S 150 FT TH E 125 FT TH N 150 FT TH W 125 FT TO BEG POST OFFICE ENGLEWOOD 34-4-68

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated parcel includes all the land historically associated with the Englewood Post Office.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diane Wray Tomasso, Consultant (on behalf of the city and citizens of Englewood, Colorado)
organization _____ date June 5, 2010
street & number 2907 South Elati Street telephone 303-552-8254
city or town Englewood state CO zip code 80110
e-mail dwtomasso@earthlink.net

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Englewood Post Office

City or Vicinity: Englewood

County: Arapahoe State: Colorado

Photographer: Diane Wray Tomasso

Date Photographed: March 28, 2010 and May 5, 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo # 0001	North elevation (left) and west elevation/facade (right), camera facing southeast.
Photo # 0002	Detail, main entrance, west elevation/facade, camera facing northeast.
Photo # 0003	West elevation/facade (left) and south elevation (right), camera facing northeast.
Photo # 0004	South elevation (left) and east elevation (right), camera facing northwest.
Photo # 0005	East elevation (left) and north elevation (right), camera facing southwest.
Photo # 0006	Detail, cornerstone, west elevation/facade, camera facing southeast
Photo # 0007	Interior, main service windows and Boardman Robinson mural, camera facing south.
Photo # 0008	Boardman Robinson mural, camera facing south.

Historic Photo Log

H1	H1: Historic photo of the November 1937 groundbreaking ceremony for the Englewood Post Office shot from the center of post office site to the southwest. The former Englewood city hall, library, and Broadway trolley appear in the background. (Source: Englewood Public Library, Digital Photo Collection.)
H2	H2: Historic photo of the November 1937 groundbreaking ceremony for the Englewood Post Office shot from the center of post office site to the northwest. The former residence of Englewood's first mayor appears in the background. (Source: Englewood Public Library, Digital Photo Collection.)
H3	Denver's Mead and Mount Construction begin the excavation of the Englewood Post Office site, November 1937. (Source: Englewood Public Library, Digital Photo Collection.)
H4	Building concrete forms for the Englewood Post Office foundation, December 23, 1937. (Source: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Digital Photo Collection.)

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- H5 The Englewood Post Office under construction, April 25, 1938. (Source: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Digital Photo Collection.)
- H6 The Englewood Post Office under construction, May 23, 1938. (Source: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Digital Photo Collection.)
- H7 The Englewood Post Office nearing completion, August 23, 1938. (Source: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Digital Photo Collection.)
- H8 The completed Englewood Post Office. (Source: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Digital Photo Collection.)
- H9 Photograph of the Englewood Post Office staff at the September 1938 Dedication Ceremony. Postmaster James Adams is at front left. (Source: Englewood Public Library, Digital Photo Collection.)
- H10 Boardman Robinson painting the Englewood Post Office mural at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. The photograph appeared in a *Life* magazine article in the October 7, 1940, issue entitled "This is Work at Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center; It is an Art Students' Paradise."(Source: Google Books.)

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name United States Postal Service (contact: Dallan C. Wordekemper, CCIM, Federal Preservation Officer)

street & number 4301 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 300 telephone 703-526-2779

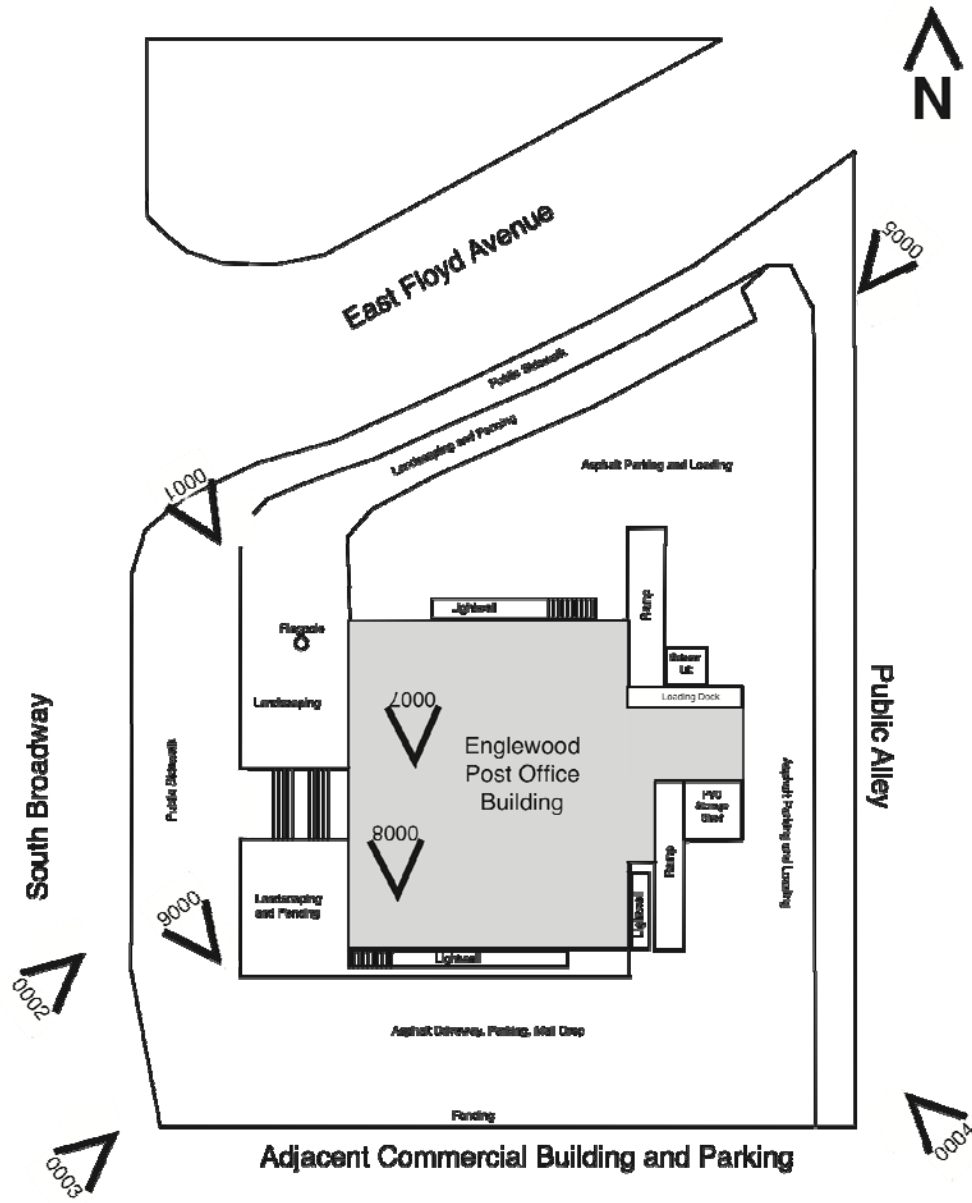
city or town Arlington state VA zip code 22203-1861

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Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Sketch Map of the Englewood Post Office
(not to scale)

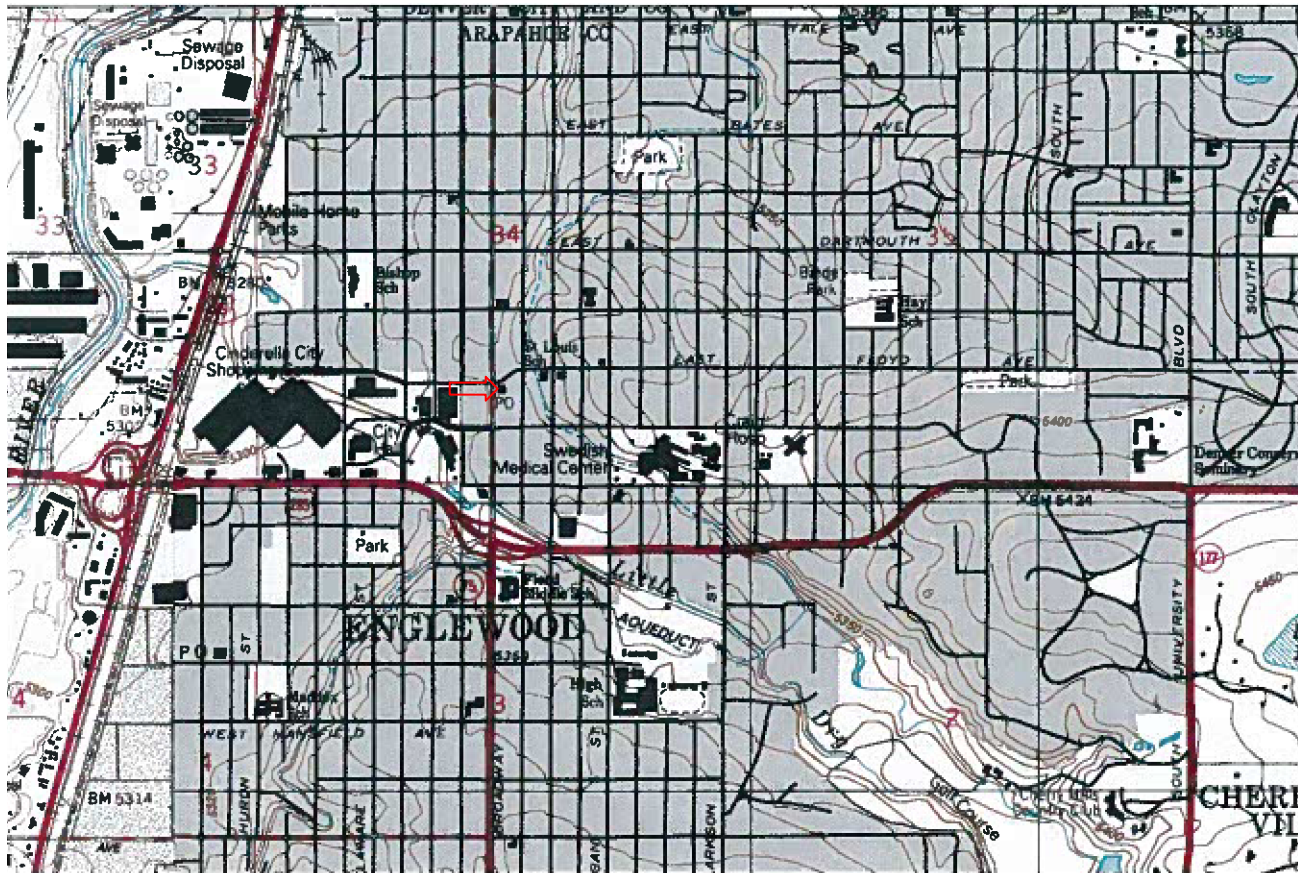
3332 South Broadway, Englewood, Colorado 80110

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USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
Englewood Quadrangle, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series

UTM: Zone 13 501 140 mE / 13 438 9390 mN
PLSS: 6th PM, T4S, R68W, Sec. 34
SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$
Elevation: 5320 feet



0 0.5 Mi
0 2000 Ft

Map provided by MyTopo.com

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H1: Historic photo of the November 1937 groundbreaking ceremony for the Englewood Post Office shot from the center of post office site to the southwest. The former Englewood city hall, library, and Broadway trolley appear in the background. (Source: Englewood Public Library, Digital Photo Collection.)



H2: Historic photo of the November 1937 groundbreaking ceremony for the Englewood Post Office shot from the center of post office site to the northwest. The former residence of Englewood's first mayor appears in the background. (Source: Englewood Public Library, Digital Photo Collection.)

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H3: Denver's Mead and Mount Construction begin the excavation of the Englewood Post Office site, November 1937. (Source: Englewood Public Library, Digital Photo Collection.)



H4: Building concrete forms for the Englewood Post Office foundation, December 23, 1937. (Source: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Digital Photo Collection.)

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H5: The Englewood Post Office under construction, April 25, 1938. (Source: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Digital Photo Collection.)



H6: The Englewood Post Office under construction, May 23, 1938. (Source: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Digital Photo Collection.)

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H7: The Englewood Post Office nearing completion, August 23, 1938. (Source: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Digital Photo Collection.)



H8: The completed Englewood Post Office. (Source: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Digital Photo Collection.)

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H9: Photograph of the Englewood Post Office staff at the September 1938 Dedication Ceremony. Postmaster James Adams is at front left. (Source: Englewood Public Library, Digital Photo Collection.)

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H10: Boardman Robinson painting the Englewood Post Office mural at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. The photograph appeared in a *Life* magazine article in the October 7, 1940, issue entitled "This is Work at Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center; It is an Art Students' Paradise."(Source: Google Books.)