

United States Department of the Interior



IN REPLY REFER TO:
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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park
440 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 300
Richmond, CA 94804

June 26, 2017

Dean Cameron
United States Postal Service
1300 Evans Avenue, Suite 200
San Francisco, CA 94188

Dear Mr. Cameron,

As the superintendent of Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park, I am writing in regards to the Richmond Post Office located at 1025 Nevin Avenue, Richmond, CA 94801. This unique, nationally significant, 1939 Art Deco building has played a vital role in the Richmond community through WWII to the present and its preservation is essential to ensure the economic health and historic legacy of Downtown Richmond. It is our opinion that the United States Postal Service's proposal to close, relocate, and/or sell the Richmond Post Office would be detrimental to this preservation effort.

The mission of Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front is to preserve and interpret the wide array of stories, places, and legacies of our nation's home front response to WWII. Establishment of this national park in Richmond, California, brings national focus and attention to the World War II-era resources of Richmond and recognizes the important role the city played in the war effort and the significant contributions and sacrifices of its citizens. In 2009, the City of Richmond, in partnership with the National Park Service, completed Project PRISM (Preserve Richmond to Interpret and Support Memories) as a way to expand knowledge of the historical and physical development of three of the city's oldest neighborhoods, as well as identify resources that are significant to the mission of Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park.

Within the PRISM report, the Richmond Post Office, located at 1025 Nevin Avenue, was recognized for its architectural, historical and cultural significance. The vitality of Richmond's downtown business district in and around Macdonald Avenue, was instrumental in accommodating the needs of the enormous influx of residents and workers to Richmond during WWII. Completed in August of 1939, the unique Art Deco building was a part of this bustling community, playing a vital role in accommodating the explosion of postal services needed at that time. The site has ties to the legacy of civil rights struggles in Richmond during WWII; it was at the Post Office on Nevin Avenue, that people of Japanese descent, including those who were U.S. citizens, were required to register as enemy aliens. Additionally, the Nevin Avenue Post Office served as headquarters for a special wartime census which showed that Richmond's population had soared from 23,000 in 1940 to 114,899 just two years later.

An important outcome of the PRISM study was the finding that, based on the significance described above, the Nevin Avenue Post Office is eligible for individual listing on the National Register, the nation's official list of properties recognized for their significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Additionally, the Nevin Avenue Post Office is a contributing resource of the "Macdonald Avenue Historic District" which is listed in the City of Richmond Register and includes the largest and most intact concentration of buildings that once comprised the "heart" of

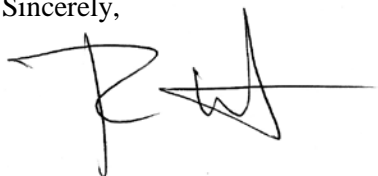
downtown Richmond which was historically centered at the intersection of Macdonald Avenue and Harbour Way.

As a historically significant and rare example of a building that has retained both its original form and function, the Nevin Avenue Post Office serves as an important landmark for residents and visitors. The relocation of retail operations, and the inevitable closure and sale of the building that would follow, raises serious historic preservation concerns. Downtown Richmond has already lost a large portion of its historic buildings; others have been abandoned or left vacant for many years, with owners who do not have the financial means or desire to restore them. A vacant post office and nationally historically significant site would be a setback for Downtown's revitalization and preservation efforts.

For all of the reasons stated above, the Post Office on Nevin Avenue is a vital and irreplaceable resource for Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park, the City of Richmond, and the nation.

Please take this information into consideration when you make the decision regarding the post office at 1025 Nevin Avenue, Richmond, CA 94801.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Leatherman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tom Leatherman
General Superintendent

cc Mayor of Richmond, Tom Butt
Richmond Historic Preservation Commission Chair, Rosemary Corbin