600

RECEIVED 2280
JUL 25 2014
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. Aug. 2002)

OMB No. 1024-0018
(Expires 1-31-2009)

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo, Texas

Other names/site number: Convent Border Station; Gateway to Americas Bridge; Laredo Inspection Station

2. Location

Street & Number: 100 Convent Avenue — Not for Publication: N/A

City or Town: Laredo — Vicinity: N/A

State: Texas — Code: TX — County: Webb — Code: 479

Zip Code: 78040

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ✓ 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 ✓ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide ✓ locally. (___See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official: Federal Preservation Officer — Date: 7/23/14

U.S. General Services Administration

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property ✓ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title: Mark Wolfe, SHPO — Date: 2/8/12

Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of Keeper: for Edson H. Beall — Date of Action: 9.10.14

✓ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.

___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain): ___

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property Contributing	Noncontributing	
___ private	x building(s)	1	1	building(s)
___ public-local	___ district	___	___	sites
___ public-state	___ site	___	___	structures
x public-federal	___ structure	___	___	objects
	___ object	1	1	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
U.S. Border Inspection Station and Associated Points of Entry, States Bordering Canada and Mexico

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Government Sub: Government Office

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Government Sub: Government Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th Century Revivals/Spanish Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
roof Terra Cotta Tile
walls stucco
other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Please see Section 7 Continuation Sheets.

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)

x 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.

x 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.)

___ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

___ B removed from its original location.

___ C a birthplace or a grave.

___ D a cemetery.

___ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

___ F a commemorative property.

___ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
Architecture
Politics/Government

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Period of Significance
1941–1943

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Dates
1941–1943

Architect/Builder
Simon, Louis A
Melick, Neal (supervising engineer)

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Please see Section 8 Continuation Sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Please see Section 9 Continuation Sheets.

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

___ previously listed in the National Register

x previously determined eligible by the National Register (as per local GSA field office, 1997 and TX SHPO, 10/05/2004)

___ designated a National Historic Landmark

___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #___

___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #___

Primary Location of Additional Data

___ State Historic Preservation Office

___ Other State agency

x Federal agency

___ Local government

___ University

___ Other

Name of repository: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 1.0

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	449948	3041883	3			
2				4			

_____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)
U.S. Government owned property associated with 84 Main Street (U.S. Route 5).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)
The current U.S. Government owned property boundary is consistent with the original limits.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title	Kathryn Haley, Architectural Historian; Daniel D. Paul, Architectural Historian; and Richard Starzak, Senior Architectural Historian				
Organization	ICF Jones & Stokes	Date	July 2011		
Street & Number	811 W. 7th St., suite 800	Telephone	(213) 627-5376		
City or Town	Los Angeles	State	CA	Zip Code	90017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

Photographs

Representative photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

Name					
Organization	U.S. General Services Administration, Region 7	Telephone	(817) 978-4229		
Street & Number	819 Taylor Street				
City or Town	Fort Worth	State	TX	Zip Code	76102

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

Description

The U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo is located at 100 Convent Avenue in Laredo, Texas just north of the Rio Grande River in Webb County. The inspection station consists of a 2-story Spanish Colonial Revival style building with a 3-story tower, with stucco walls and a terra cotta roof. Some interior architectural details remain unchanged, while the building contains mostly modern office and storage space. Over time the Laredo Inspection Station has been altered mainly due to flooding and the modernization of the interior office space.

Exterior

The U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo is a 2-story Spanish Colonial Revival style building with a basement. The main 2-story section of the building has a front-gable roof clad with Spanish tiles. A chimney/vent is located on the center of the roofline along with a 3-story tower, which is situated atop the roof on the west elevation. The southern half of the gabled roofline covers the southern portion of the building, which is 1-story. This southern portion of the building contains the building's basement. The tower, which is the most distinctive architectural feature of the building, features a Moorish type radial dome with a roof clad with mosaic tiles in a simple orange and blue design. The dome is topped with a wrought iron star finial. Four-light, casement windows and one small access door surround a small whispering gallery directly below the dome. A 2-story square-shaped tower supports the dome structure and features one three-light awning casement window centered on each tower elevation.

Attached to the west elevation is a large metal and wood canopy roofed with asphalt sheet material projects from the second story and extends approximately 20 feet past the end of the building. The canopy, supported by metal columns with concrete piers, shelters a paved area used to inspect vehicles, as well as a small rectangular modern office structure. On the same elevation, under the canopy, centered between two paved pedestrian walkways located on the far north and south portions of the west elevation, is an enclosed corridor with dark metal-framed fixed in place windows. A series of stairs lead to and from the enclosed corridor to the vehicle inspection area under the canopy. The building has a concrete foundation. Security lights and cameras are present on each elevation.

The east elevation of the building is symmetrical in appearance. The north 2-story section of the elevation features two rows of evenly spaced wood-framed double hung windows and the bottom row of windows continues on to the southern end of the elevation. The second to last window on the southern end is the same style but slightly smaller than the rest of the windows in the row. Adjacent to this elevation is a long sloped driveway that runs the length of the building. A chain link fence divides the driveway and directly west of the fence is a paved staircase that leads to an entry door to the lower level of the building.

The gable end on the north elevation of the building has a decorative circular vent and three modern metal vents of various sizes. Below the vents is a wooden canopy that shelters three in-filled bay doors and one entry door. The infilled bay on east end of this elevation has a modern metal door that provides access to the building from a modern handicapped access ramp.

The south elevation of the building features an older decorative circular vent and a small modern rectangular vent on the gable end. Below the vents is a row of five evenly spaced wood-framed double hung windows. At the lowest level are another row of smaller wood-framed single hung windows and the entry door protected by a semi-circular extruded wood awning. The window directly west of the door has been replaced with a smaller window protected by security bars.

Interior

Some original interior details and finishes remain intact throughout the building, particularly the plaster walls, staircases, windows, and door trim. Most of the interior consists of modern office spaces and storage areas. The original built-in safe which remains empty is in excellent condition and is located on the first floor of the building in an area that is used for storage. The interior of the tower, which encases a staircase and leads to the whispering gallery, has sustained some water damage over time.

Setting and Property

The U.S Inspection Station--Laredo is located on the border of the city of Laredo, TX, just north of the Rio Grande River and the United States Customs Port of Entry Toll Bridge on Convent Avenue. Thousands of people pass through the Laredo station daily which equates to over seven million people who cross the inspection station annually (Laredo Convention and Visitors Bureau 2005).[1] The downtown area consists of a variety of nineteenth, and twentieth century non-residential architecture including commercial buildings, churches, and local government. Directly south of the Laredo Station is a small modern non-contributing building that is used for storage/office purposes and built in a similar style as the main building. Landscape features south of the Laredo Station include private government driveways, parking areas, and fencing that serves as a border between the building and the Rio Grande. A large modern commercial building and a landscaped park with pedestrian walkways is situated to the west of the Inspection Station.

Alterations

The U.S. Inspection Station--Laredo facility has been modified and repaired over time to support its continuing function as an inspection station. While the majority of dates and details of repairs and alterations of the building are unknown, the building underwent repairs from damage sustained by a 1954 flood of the Rio Grande. The flood decimated the International Bridge on Convent Avenue and ultimately resulted in the construction of the current Second International Bridge (Laredo Convention and Visitors Bureau 2005). In the 1980s, officials remodeled and modernized the Laredo Station to support increased traffic and inspections. Modifications included the expansion and elongation of the canopy along the west elevation over the automobile inspection area, and the enclosure of the pedestrian walkway. Other changes to the building were limited to a few in-filled windows, bays, doors, on the exterior, and interior rooms converted to modern office space.

[1] Laredo Convention and Visitors Bureau, *History of Laredo, Texas,* http://www.cityoflaredo.com/LCVB/history.html, Accessed on April 12, 2007.

Statement of Significance

Summary

The U.S. Inspection Station--Laredo was included in the Multiple Property Submission for U.S. Inspection Stations, States Bordering Canada and Mexico (Inspection Station MPS). As demonstrated in this registration form, the U.S. Inspection Station--Laredo retains exceptional integrity and meets the registration requirements in the MPS to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C, at the local level of significance, period of significance 1941-1943. The Laredo Inspection station is the earliest remaining inspection station in the state of Texas. It retains the majority of its program elements, and displays the historic characteristics of Inspection Station MPS Property Type Number 3: 7-bay Special Inspection Station. The Region 7 GSA field office determined the Laredo Inspection Station National Register eligible in 1997. The Texas SHPO concurred with a similar finding in a letter dated October 5, 2004, well after alterations were made to the building.[2]

Under Criterion A, the U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo retains the associative attributes necessary to convey that it was one of the first set of purpose-built U.S. Border Inspection Stations that were planned, designed and constructed by the U.S. Government to improve land border security. Designed in 1940, and constructed in 1941-1943, it was sited alongside a border highway at one of the locations noted in 1928 by H.A. Benner of the Bureau of Customs and J.L. Hughes of the Bureau of Immigration Benner and Hughes. Its construction was, therefore, in direct response to a chain of events including the imposition of head taxes and country quotas on immigration in 1917 and 1921, smuggling arising from the prohibition of alcohol in 1919, and the increase in usage of the automobile and improved roads in the 1920s.

Under Criterion C, the U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo retains adequate integrity to convey the design, plan, and program from the time it was constructed by the Treasury Department. The exterior and interior of the station's buildings still convey the historical design, workmanship, and materials of the facility's original construction. This Spanish Colonial Revival detailing makes itself present through the combination of: a rectangular plan and gabled primary building fronted by a tower that is church-like in its program; planar, stucco clad surfaces with small, recessed window bays; terra cotta half cylinder mission tile roofs; decorative iron window grilles; and a tall square tower topped by a Moorish inspired dome of an abstract, brightly colored tile pattern. The buildings retain a high degree of integrity and are distinguished, both in its exterior and interior features and materials, as a good example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, particularly for its associative values as a record of the self-image of Federal government buildings during the 1930s through early 1940s.

[2] As per telephone conversation with Steven Kline, Historic Contact, GSA Region 7 Office, Fort Worth Texas, 17 April 2007.

U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo, Texas: Significance

In their Report on Standard Type of Customs-Immigration Inspection Buildings for Border Highways dated March 13, 1928, H.A. Benner and J.L. Hughes, representatives of the Bureau of Customs and Bureau of Immigration, respectively, made the following analysis and recommendations that led to the authorization for the U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo:

> *All ports on the international boundary east of Fabens, Texas, are located on the Rio Grande River, and the highway crossings are over toll bridges. Steps should accordingly be taken to secure adequate quarters for inspection purposes, without cost to the Government, from the bridge companies, as outlined under the general discussions in this report.*[3]

The U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo was built as a Property Type No. 3, what Benner & Hughes termed "the Special Office Building." In terms of design, the Property Type No. 3 inspection station was often the most lavished of the PWA-era inspection stations. The Property Type No. 3 design is also the largest, and was intended to service high traffic areas. Seven of the ten Property Type No. 3 inspection stations were built at the U.S.-Canada Border, and are designed in the Colonial Revival design system. Largely as a result of U.S. Centennial in 1876, it was the Colonial Revival design that, particularly in the eastern United States, became associated with American Heritage. Individuals of the Western and Southwestern United States also became highly interested in their architectural heritage as a result of the centennial. However, they did not see the Colonial Revival as contextual to that part of the country, which from the 17th century until 1821 was under the rule of Spain, and from 1821 until 1845 was under the rule of Mexico; Spanish Texas would gain independence from Mexico slightly earlier in 1836. In contemplating the earliest architectural heritage of the west, individuals at first referenced the Spanish missions, which were among the earliest non-indigenous architecture in the western portion of what later became the U.S. Over time, the Mission Revival would open the door to appreciating other forms of Spanish Colonial architecture. The appreciation of the Spanish Colonial Revival peaked following the Panama-California Exposition that took place in San Diego in 1915. Bertram Goodhue, who designed the exposition, referenced the richness of Spanish precedents from Spain itself and its Latin American colonies.[4] In so doing, he influenced a variety of architects and made the Spanish Colonial Revival, like the Mission Revival before it, architecture of proper context to the southwestern United States. In addition to the station at Laredo, the U.S. Inspection Stations at Calexico and San Ysidro, California, were both Property Type No. 3 stations designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

The Supervising Architect of the Treasury, Louis Simon, designed the U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo in 1940. Simon had become the Supervising Architect of the Treasury in 1933, though he worked with the office continually since 1896.[5] Simon would retain the post until 1939. "Simon, trained in architecture at MIT, was instrumental in the image of government projected by its public buildings, an image derived from classical western architecture, filtered perhaps through the English Georgian style or given a regional gloss, but one which continues to operate in the

[3] Benner, H.A. and J.L. Hughes, Report on Standard Type of Customs-Immigration Inspection Buildings for Border Highways. Congressional report to the Commissioner General of Immigration. Washington D.C., May 13, 1928: 53.
[4] McAlester, Virginia and Lee, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003) 418.
[5] Craig, Lois and the Staff of the Federal Architecture Project, The Federal Presence : Architecture, Politics and Symbols in United States Government Buildings (Cambridge and London : The MIT Press, 1978) 328.

collective public vision of Government. Simon was unwavering in his defense of what he considered a "conservative-progressive approach to design in which he saw "art, beauty, symmetry, harmony and rhythm."[6]

During Simon's tenure, the Department of the Treasury was the largest architectural office in the United States, with over $700 million dollars worth of various Post Offices, Border Checkpoints, Custom Houses, and other Federal buildings. The construction of United States inspection stations, and customs and immigration inspection stations was approved by Legislation under the Act of June 25, 1910. The spate of Public Works Administration (PWA) era of construction, and the construction of this particular inspection station, initially resulted from the Public Buildings Act of 1926, a Congressional enabling act that doubled the number of U.S Federal buildings in existence.

The U.S. Inspection Station--Laredo evolved from the contexts of Prohibition (1919-1933), the increased popularization of automobile travel, the Public Works Administration that developed out of the Great Depression of the 1930s, and a more stringent entry regimen for immigrants passed in 1917. That year, the Federal Government began the imposition of head taxes and literacy tests on Canadian and Mexican Immigrants. This was a practice formerly done only to oversee immigrants. This reform resulted in a sharp increase of illegal entry attempts into the United States across various Canadian and Mexican borders, and heightened the need for an increase in Inspection Station facilities.

Significance within the Related Multiple Property Submission

Within the context developed in the Inspection Station MPS, the U.S. Border Inspection Stations are considered significant as the nation's first set of purpose-built customs and immigration inspection stations for land crossings. Properties are eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C if they served this function and retain their essential physical characteristics and integrity from their original plan and design by the Supervising Architect of the Treasury. Properties are eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A if they retain overall integrity and the associative attributes that demonstrate the significant chain of events that led to their need, planning, and construction, including: the increased motor vehicle traffic at border highways in the 1920s, increased illegal immigration after the 1917 and 1921 immigration laws, and increased smuggling activity after the 1919 prohibition law. Under Criterion C, Criterion A, or both criteria, properties would be eligible at the local level of significance with a period of significance based on the year construction was completed, between 1930 and 1943.

Evaluation under Criterion A

In order to qualify for listing in the National Register under Criterion A in the area of government, a property must have been used by the U.S. Government as a customs and immigration border inspection facility and must represent the government's response to the important chain of events related to customs and immigration law and the increased use of motor vehicles at border crossings. The border inspection stations must have been purchased, planned, designed or constructed by the U.S. Treasury Department in response to a chain of events including the imposition of

[6] American Architect and Architecture, August, 1937, vol. 151, p. 51 in US General Services Administration, Historic Building Preservation Program: Inspection (Mooers) dated 04/27/94: 3.

head taxes and country quotas on immigration in 1917 and 1921, smuggling arising from the prohibition of alcohol in 1919, and the increase in usage of the automobile and improved roads in the 1920s. Properties that retain the aspects of integrity necessary to convey the associative attributes would be significant at the local level, within the period of significance beginning in 1930, when the first station of this group was constructed and closing in 1943, the year construction of the last station of this group was completed at Laredo.

Associative Attributes

U.S. Government Ownership and demonstration of federal authority and presence: To represent the government's response to this chain of events, the U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo was planned, designed and constructed by the U.S. Government between 1928 and 1943 for use as a customs and immigration station at a land border crossing. It was designed in 1940 by the Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury, built in 1941-1943, and sited just north of the Rio Grande River and the United States Customs Port of Entry Toll Bridge on Convent Avenue, near the International Border with Mexico. It was sited at one of the locations recommended by Benner and Hughes in their 1928 report, as follows: "All ports on the international boundary east of Fabens, Texas, are located on the Rio Grande River, and the highway crossings are over toll bridges. Steps should accordingly be taken to secure adequate quarters for inspection purposes, without cost to the Government, from the bridge companies, as outlined under the general discussions in this report."[7] Federal authority is symbolized by the prominent location of the inspection just north of the bridge crossing. It remained under U.S. Government ownership through and after the end of the Inspection Station MPS period of significance (1943), continues to demonstrate federal authority and presence from the historic era, and continues to retain overall integrity of **location**, **setting, feeling**, and **association**.

Proper location: To represent the proper location to inspect motor vehicles and control illegal immigration and smuggling at land borders, the property must be located at the border before traffic can disperse, or after major roads conjoin, and must be located on the right side of inbound traffic. The U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo retains ***integrity of location*** because it is still in its original location just north of the Rio Grande River and the United States Customs Port of Entry Toll Bridge on Convent Avenue.

Proper facilities: To represent the proper facilities for a border inspection station, a property must convey the protection of officers, motorists, and goods from the elements. At Laredo, protection from inclement weather was provided by a porte-cochere (later expanded) and an adequate range of government offices within the special office building. Despite some alterations, the property retains a high degree of integrity of design and materials, and continues to convey its original range of proper facilities.

Dignified and attractive surroundings: To represent the government's efforts to create an environment to raise morale and convey an impression of federal authority, a property must be well sited and retain elements such as flagpoles and landscaped areas. To be eligible for listing, it must retain ***integrity of setting, feeling, and association***. The setting of the U.S. Inspection Station--Laredo has undergone some changes, particularly as a result of the expansion and elongation of the porte-cochere. Its prominent siting at the end of the bridge crossing the Rio Grande is

[7] Benner, H.A. and J.L. Hughes, Report on Standard Type of Customs-Immigration Inspection Buildings for Border Highways. Congressional report to the Commissioner General of Immigration. Washington D.C., May 13, 1928: 53.

still maintained, although the I-35 bridge has been introduced. Its regionally appropriate Spanish Colonial Revival architecture has been maintained, and it continues to be used as an inspection station, and therefore retains integrity of feeling and association.

Fair and adequate service to the public: To represent the government's responsibility to the treatment of the public, a property must have features or spaces to protect goods against dust and the elements, provide privacy from onlookers, and have adequate capacity to serve the increasing volume of motor vehicle traffic. Generally, a property meeting the requirements for proper facilities would also represent this associative attribute. However, private detention areas and porte-cocheres for additional lanes are also important to represent this attribute. At Laredo, adequate service to the public is demonstrated by the design of the porte-cochere, later expanded and elongated, and by the provision of ample office space in the station building, upstairs as well as downstairs.

Decent living quarters for officers: To represent the government's responsibility to retain quality officers, a property may have separate living quarters downstairs, upstairs, or in detached residences. The Benner and Hughes report of 1928 recognized that the need for living quarters was flexible and could be changed to accommodate the needs of a particular station over time. Therefore, because of the changing needs of Customs and Immigration over time, alteration of the living quarters for another use or removal of detached residences would not disqualify a property for listing. At Laredo, upstairs quarters were provided for some of the officers.

Evaluation under Criterion C

The U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo is included in the Inspection Station MPS as an example of Property Type Number 3: 7-bay Special Inspection Building. As described in the Inspection Station MPS, in order to be eligible for listing under Criterion C in the areas of government and architecture, the border inspection stations must retain adequate integrity to convey their design, plan, and program from the time they were purchased, designed or constructed by the Treasury Department. The border inspection stations must exemplify the regional designs, standardized plans and program developed by the Supervising Architect of the Treasury to make land border customs and immigration inspections more efficient and secure, demonstrate federal authority and presence, provide protection and privacy to automobile travelers and their goods, and provide better working and living conditions for officers. Stylistic variation is quite limited according to the region and climate, employing the Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival with classical details, Log Cabin Rustic, Spanish Colonial Revival and Pueblo Revival styles. In general, to qualify for registration under Criterion C at the local level of significance, the U.S. Border Stations designed and constructed from 1930 to 1943 should retain the essential design characteristics of their original style, materials, and plan, and their original location and setting alongside a roadway near the U.S. borders with Canada and Mexico. To be eligible under Criterion C, the property must adequately retain a majority of design features and retain most of the seven aspects of integrity. Properties that retain their essential physical characteristics and integrity would be significant at the local level, within the period of significance beginning in 1930, when the first station of this group was constructed and closing in 1943, the year construction of the last station of this group was completed at Laredo.

The U.S. Inspection Station--Laredo exemplifies the regional designs, standardized plans and program developed by the Supervising Architect of the Treasury to make land border customs and immigration inspections more efficient

and secure, demonstrate federal authority and presence, provide protection and privacy to automobile travelers and their goods, and provide better working and living conditions for officers. Stylistic variation within border stations is quite limited according to the region and climate, and like many other inspection stations along the southern United States border, the station built at Laredo exhibits the Spanish Colonial Revival design system.

The U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo is an intact example of the Spanish Colonial Revival design system as expressed on Inspection Station designs of the Federal PWA period of the 1930s. This Spanish Colonial Revival detailing makes itself present through the combination of: a rectangular plan and gabled primary building fronted by a tower that is church-like in its program; planar, stucco clad surfaces with small, recessed window bays; terra cotta half cylinder mission tile roofs; decorative iron window grilles; and a tall square tower topped by a Moorish inspired dome of an abstract, brightly colored tile pattern.

Discussion of the Seven Aspects of Integrity

According to the Registration Requirements of the Inspection Station MPS, to qualify for registration under Criterion C at the state level of significance, the U.S. Border Stations designed and constructed from 1930 to 1943 should retain the essential design characteristics of their original style, materials, and plan, and their original location and setting alongside a roadway near the U.S. borders with Canada and Mexico. To be eligible under Criterion C, then, the stations must adequately retain most of the seven aspects of integrity. As described in the Inspection Station MPS, certain modifications may have occurred in response to changing traffic volume or staffing that is part of the changing historic function of the border inspection stations, and would not necessarily disqualify the properties from registration.

The ***location*** of the U.S. Inspection Station--Laredo has not changed since its construction, therefore the building retains its integrity of location

The ***setting*** of the U.S. Inspection Station--Laredo has not been significantly changed from the historic period, as evidenced by its prominent location just north of Rio Grande River and the toll bridge on Convent Avenue and the relationship of the porte-cochere to the highway.

The architectural ***design*** of the original U.S. Inspection Station--Laredo building continues to have integrity of design, interior as well as exterior despite the substantial alteration of the porte-cochere. The building continues to retain various design features that demonstrate the Spanish Colonial Revival design aesthetic.

The ***feeling*** of the U.S. Inspection Station--Laredo property is reinforced by its close proximity to the border, toll bridge and highway, and its regionally appropriate Spanish Colonial Revival design system.

The ***materials*** of the U.S. Inspection Station--Laredo appear to be original. These include stucco, tile and woodwork.

The inspection station is ***associated*** with the advent of the automobile, and increasing measures taken by the U.S. Government to regulate the inflow of immigrants during this time. This association is demonstrated by the porte-cochere and relationship to the toll bridge and highway.

The ***workmanship*** evident in the building's features continues to demonstrate the skill and care that went into the tile work, stucco work, plasterwork, metalwork, and woodwork.

Integrity Considerations

As discussed in the Inspection Station MPS, alterations which have changed the character of the original design by substantially changing the exterior wall surface or window and door openings would typically disqualify the building from registration. However, certain modifications may have occurred after the period of significance in response to changing traffic volume or staffing that is part of the changing historic function of the border inspection stations, and would not necessarily disqualify the properties from registration. While properties must retain the aspects of integrity necessary to convey their essential physical characteristics, the following common modifications may be taken under consideration when evaluating a property for listing:

- Alterations conforming to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- Raising the porte-cochere height from 12 feet to 14.5 feet in response to the 1956 minimum vertical clearance design standard of the Interstate Highway System[8] or otherwise altering it to accommodate larger vehicles.
- Alteration or removal of detached garages or residences, in cases where the main building retains integrity.
- Interior modifications that reflect the intended flexibility of program.
- Filling in of the inspection pit(s).
- Minor or reversible exterior alterations.

At Laredo, the porte-cochere was expanded and elongated, and while it detracts from the overall design quality evident from the historic era, it is in the original location, and can be easily differentiated from the historic design and materials. Other changes to the building do not detract from the overall design integrity of the station, and are offset by the large scale of the building and its retention of many original features.

[8] "When the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) issued design standards for the Interstate System, the minimum design value of 14 feet was included for vertical clearance (that is, the distance from the Interstate pavement to the bottom of overpasses)." The minimum value of 14 feet was approved on July 17, 1956. In 1960, the minimum value was increased to 16 feet. U.S. Department of Transportation-Federal Highway Administration website entitled Highway History: Right of Passage: The Controversy Over Vertical Clearance on the Interstate System, http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/50vertical.cfm, 2/19/2006.

Significance – Conclusion

The U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo was included in the Multiple Property Submission (MPS) for U.S. Border Inspection Stations, States Bordering Canada and Mexico. As demonstrated in this registration form, the U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo retains all aspects of integrity and meets the registration requirements in the Inspection Station MPS to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C, at the local level of significance, period of significance 1941-1943. Designed in 1940 and constructed in 1941-1943, it was sited alongside a border highway and toll bridge in direct response to a chain of events including the imposition of head taxes and country quotas on immigration in 1917 and 1921, smuggling arising from the prohibition of alcohol in 1919, and the increase in usage of the automobile and improved roads in the 1920s. The building is distinguished, both exterior and interior, as a good example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, particularly for its associative values as a record of the self-image of Federal government buildings during the 1930s and early 1940s as interpreted by the Supervising Architect of the Treasury. It retains all of its original program elements, and well demonstrates the historic characteristics of MPS Property Type Number 3: 7-bay Special Inspection Station.

On an individual basis, the Region 7 GSA field office determined the U.S. Inspection Station—Laredo eligible for the National Register in 1977. The Texas SHPO concurred with a similar finding in a letter dated October 5, 2004, well after the major alterations were made to the building.[9]

[9] As per telephone conversation with Steven Kline, Historic Contact, GSA Region 7 Office, Fort Worth Texas, 17 April 2007.

Bibliographic References

Benner, H.A. and J.L. Hughes. Report on Standard Type of Customs-Immigration Buildings for Border Highways. Congressional report to the Commissioner General of Immigration. Washington: May 13, 1928.

Berger, Louis & Associates, Inc. U.S. Border Stations, Vermont. Historic Preservation Plan: Draft Submission. East Orange, NJ: Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. October, 1994.

Craig, Lois and the Staff of the Federal Architecture Project. The Federal Presence : Architecture, Politics and Symbols in United States Government Buildings. Cambridge and London : The MIT Press, 1978.

ICF Jones & Stokes on behalf of U.S. GSA. U.S. Border Inspection Stations, States Bordering Canada and Mexico. Multiple Property Submission Historic Context Statement. Los Angeles: ICF Jones & Stokes, 10/14/2008.

Kline, Steven: Historic Contact, GSA Region 7 Office. Fort Worth Texas. Telephone Correspondence. 17 April 2007.

Laredo Convention and Visitors Bureau. *History of Laredo, Texas.* http://www.cityoflaredo.com/LCVB/history.html. Accessed on April 12, 2007.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

U.S. Department of the Treasury, Cabinet Sketch No. 43. United States Border Station-- Laredo, TX. dated 21 Jul 1940. in Records Group 36, at National Archives and Records Administration. College Park, Maryland.

U.S General Services Administration. Historic Building Preservation Program: Inspection (Mooers) dated 04/27/94.

Please refer to the primary MPS National Register application for bibliographic entries related to the shared themes and context of the U.S. Inspection Stations.

Geographical Data

Boundary Description

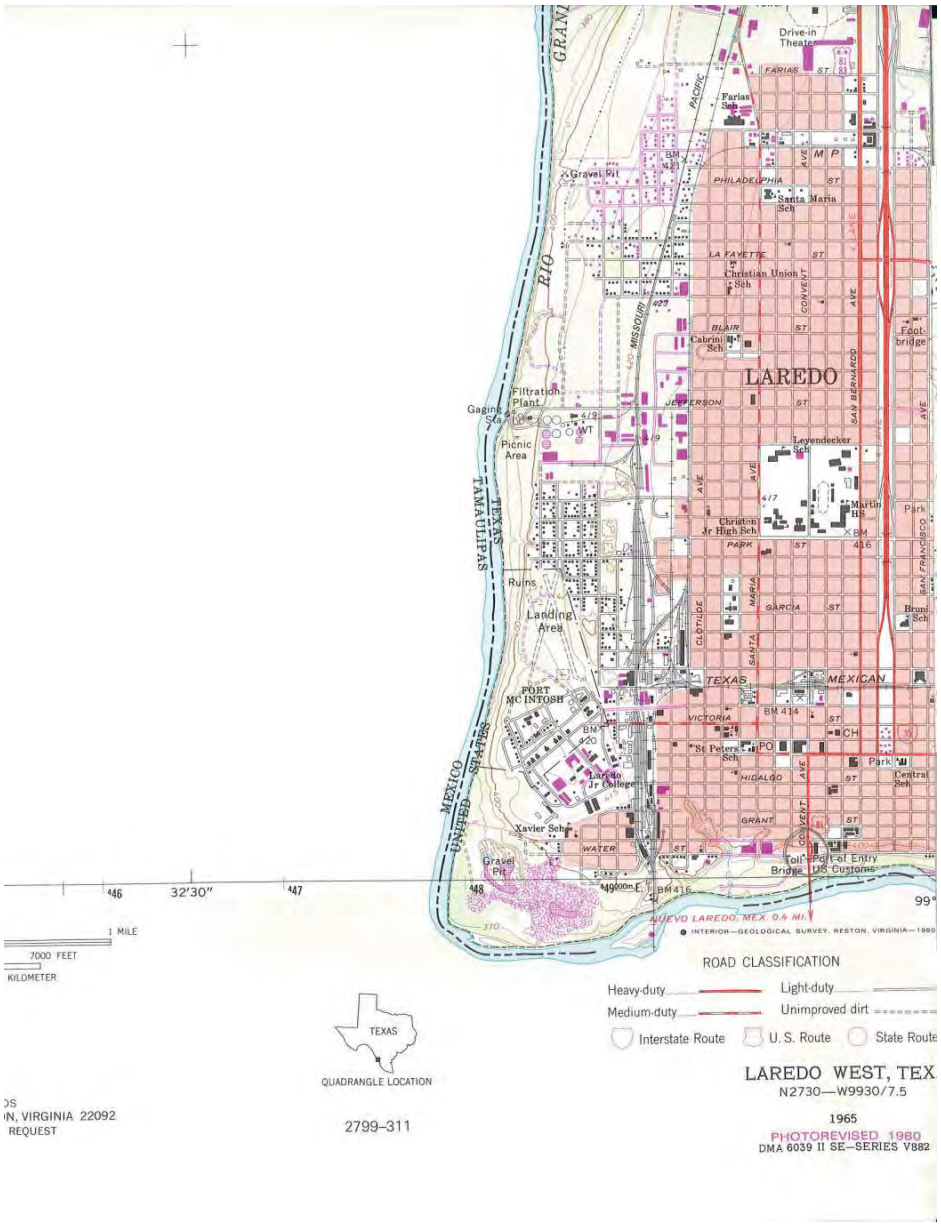
Beginning at a point 175.6 feet from the center line bridge and 133 feet from the north line of Water Street, the property boundary extends 354.98 feet to the north, bounding La Posada Hotel to the east. Then proceed along the concrete walkway of Zaragoza Street, 154.7 feet to the west, at the concrete walkway of Convent Avenue, and proceed 351.25 feet to the south. Then proceed east 154.7 feet along the rear property line, where the property is bounded by a fence on the top of the retaining wall, to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification

The current U.S. Government owned property boundary is consistent with the original limits.

USGS Map
Copy of map also included as supplemental information.

UTM References:
Zone: 14
Easting: 449948
Northing: 3041883



U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: north end of west elevation, commemorative plaque, view: east
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation1.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: northwest elevation, view: east from Convent Avenue
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation2.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: northwest elevation, view: east
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation3.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: north elevation canopy – automobile inspection area, view: south
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation4.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: north elevation, view: east
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation5.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: east elevation and original bus lane/driveway, view: south
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation6.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: east elevation and original bus lane/driveway, view: north
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation7.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: southeast elevation, view: west
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation8.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: south elevation, tower, view: east from the canopy roof
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation9.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: southwest elevation, tower detail, view: east from canopy roof
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation10.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: south elevation, canopy, view: north
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation11.tiff

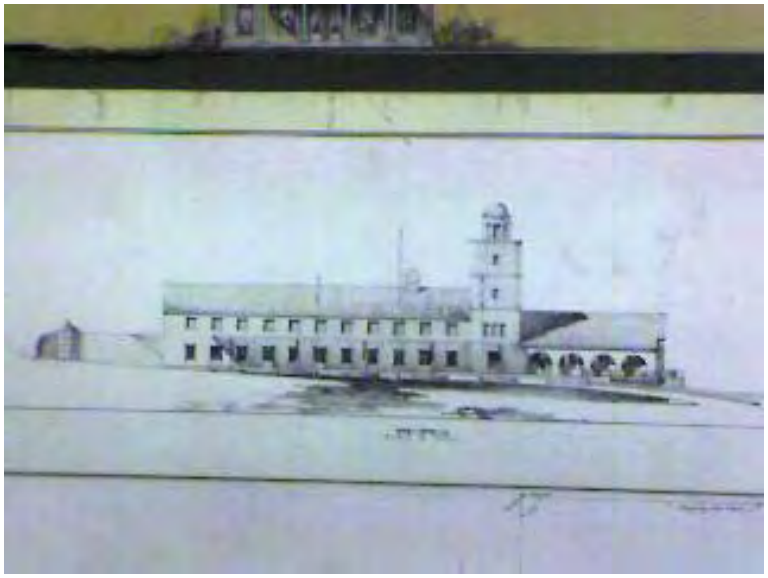
U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: vehicle inspection area under canopy, west elevation, view: east
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation12.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: first floor interior, original safe, view: west
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation13.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: first floor interior, original safe, view: west
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation14.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Photographer: Kathryn Haley, Jones & Stokes
Date of photograph: November 2006
Negative: GSA
Description of view: first floor interior, original safe, view: north
Photo number: TX_WebbCounty_BorderStation15.tiff

U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Courtesy: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)
Date: 1940
Description of view: front elevation



U.S. Inspection Station – Laredo
Webb County, Texas
Courtesy: Special Collections, Laredo Public Library
Date: 7-22-1944
Description of view: northwest elevation, view: east

HENRY MORGENTHAU JR
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
ROBERT H JACKSON
ATTORNEY GENERAL
JOHN M CARMODY
FEDERAL WORKS ADMINISTRATOR
W. ENGLEBERT REYNOLDS
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS
LOUIS A SIMON
SUPERVISING ARCHITECT
NEAL A MELICK
SUPERVISING ENGINEER
1941

WARNING

Danger!
Keep Away
¡Peligro!
No Se Acerque

Gateway to the American International Bridge
Laredo, Texas

AVOID MULTA! DECLARE
AVOID FINES! DECLARE
ZONE 8

102

ized Entry

THE SCHWAB SAFE CO.
LAFAYETTE, IND. U.S.A.
1942