



National Postal Forum

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Modernizing Postal Facilities

Design Strategies for the Repair and Preservation of USPS Facilities



Presented By:

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Jim Sarro and Muhlenberg Greene Architects



About the Presenter and the Firm

- Jim Sarro is Principal at Muhlenberg Greene Architects and leads the firm's postal and civic architecture work.
- The firm has served as a design professional for the United States Postal Service since 2007 through an open-end design services contract.
- Experience includes modernization and preservation of historic postal facilities.
- Projects support operational improvements while maintaining community identity and architectural heritage.
- **The firm's work blends historic preservation, operational efficiency, and sustainable building strategies.**

The Changing Landscape of Mail & Shipping

Why Postal Facilities Must Evolve

- Key industry trends:
 - Growth in **package volume and e-commerce logistics**
 - Changes in **mail processing and sorting technologies**
 - Increased emphasis on **last-mile delivery efficiency**
 - Need for **flexible workspaces for changing operations**
 - Growing focus on **energy efficiency and sustainability**
- Operational challenge:
 - Many existing facilities were designed for **different mail volumes, equipment, and workflows** than what exists today.

Challenges of Aging Postal Facilities



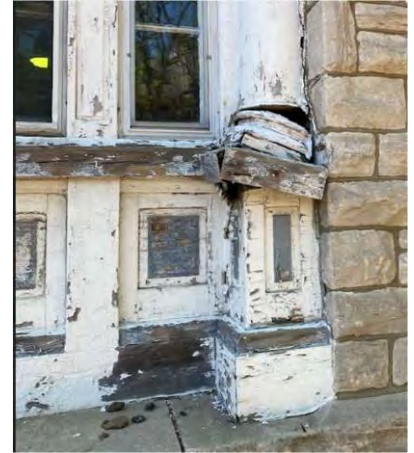
EASTON, PA USPS

For many communities, postal buildings are also **historic civic landmarks**, which adds complexity when upgrades are needed.

- Common issues in legacy postal buildings:
 - Limited space for modern sorting and package handling equipment
 - Inefficient circulation between public, operational, and loading areas
 - Outdated building systems (HVAC, lighting, electrical infrastructure)
 - Accessibility limitations
 - Energy inefficiencies and higher operating costs

Modernizing Without Losing Character

- For historic postal facilities, modernization must balance:
 - Preservation of architectural integrity
 - Functional improvements for staff and logistics
 - Cost-effective upgrades to infrastructure
 - Compliance with preservation guidelines
- Effective strategies include:
 - Sensitive restoration of historic spaces
 - Introducing modern systems without altering defining features
 - Adaptive reuse of underutilized areas



*WEST CHESTER, PA
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The goal is to **extend the life of a historic facility while enabling modern operations.**

Case Study 1: Upper Darby Havertown Post Office

- Project Highlights:
 - Removal of existing lift and installed dock leveler
 - Targeted facility upgrade to improve loading efficiency and safety
 - Streamlined bidding support and responsive RFI coordination after Study
 - Construction Administration support



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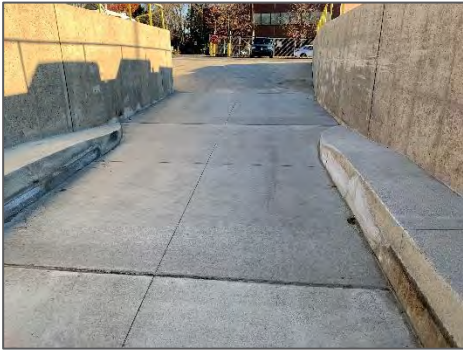
Existing Conditions

Case Study 1: Upper Darby Havertown Post Office



Completed Project

Case Study 1: Upper Darby Havertown Post Office



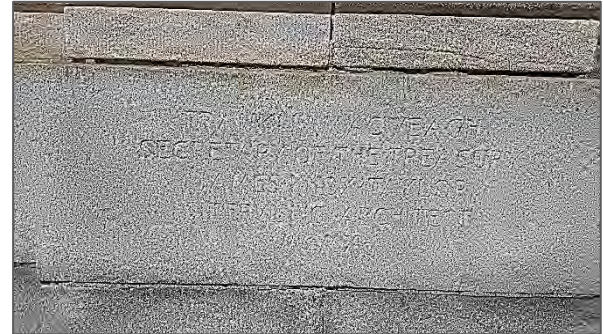
Case Study 2: Easton Postal Facility Modernization

This historic postal facility, constructed in 1910, is located within the historic district of Easton.

- Project Focus:
 - Exterior wall condition study and repair recommendations
 - Window study and historically appropriate replacement
 - Loading dock paving study to improve durability in operational areas
 - Development of specifications required for Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) approval

Key lesson: Operational improvements often come from **strategic planning and reconfiguration**, not just expansion.

 Targeted building studies can guide cost-effective improvements that maintain historic integrity while supporting ongoing postal operations.



Existing Conditions

Case Study 2: Easton Postal Facility Modernization



Completed Project

Case Study 2: Easton Postal Facility Modernization



Case Study 3: West Chester Historic Post Office

- Project Highlights:
 - Modernization of a historic civic building while preserving its architectural character
 - Infrastructure upgrades supporting improved building performance
 - Restoration of historically significant elements
 - Improved operational functionality for postal services



Existing Conditions

Case Study 3: West Chester Historic Post Office



Completed Project

Case Study 3: West Chester Historic Post Office



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Operational Benefits of Facility Modernization

When facilities are modernized strategically, postal operations gain:

- Improved workflow efficiency
- Better accommodation for modern sorting equipment
- Enhanced employee work environments
- Lower energy and maintenance costs
- Improved service reliability for customers



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Key Takeaways & Discussion

Modernizing postal facilities requires balancing three priorities:

- Preservation
 - Respecting historic civic architecture
- Performance
 - Supporting modern logistics and operations
- Cost Effectiveness
 - Delivering long-term value through thoughtful upgrades



EASTON, PA USPS

Questions and Discussion

Muhlenberg Greene Architects

- USPS Contract Since 2007
- Licensed: DE, MA, MD, NC, NH, NJ, NY, PA, SC, VA, VT & DC
- Architectural Projects, Code Studies, Reports, Repairs, and more



JIM SARRO, AIA
CONTACT INFORMATION

National Postal Forum – June 2nd thru 5th, 2024 in Indianapolis!

- **Connecting at the Crossroads thru Education and Networking**
 - Over 120 workshops and many USPS Officer Led sessions
 - Networking events starting on Sunday night and closing at the Indiana Rooftop Ballroom on Wednesday
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 - Take advantage of an additional \$100 discount and discounted room rates by booking your hotel thru **NPF**