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NATIONAL REGISTER

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Langdon Post Office

other names/site number same

2. Location

street & number 323 Eighth Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Langdon

N/A vicinity

state North Dakota code ND county Cavalier

code 019 zip code 58249

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
_____	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
U. S. Post Offices in North Dakota, 1900-1940

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register none

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Bradford W. Meador
Signature of certifying official

8-22-89
Date

U. S. Postal Service
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

James E. Sperry
Signature of commenting or other official

September 15, 1989
Date

James E. Sperry
State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota)
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- 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:)

Patrick Andrews

11/1/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

post office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

post office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

other: Starved Classicism

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation poured concrete

walls brick

roof composition

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheets.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Multiple Property: U.S. Post Offices in North Dakota, 1900-1940

LANGDON, DESCRIPTION:

The Langdon Post Office is located on the northeast corner of Fourth Street and Eighth Avenue facing south on Eighth. One block to the north is Ninth Avenue, also known as Highway 5, the major east-west business artery through town. The post office is on the edge of the business district. To the west and south are residential areas. To the immediate east, north and southeast is the commercial district. Langdon has a nice group of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century commercial to the east, but the post office has no direct or indirect impact on these earlier-build structures.

The Langdon Post Office is in excellent condition. It is clean and well-kept. The skylight on the rear roof was filled in when the roof was resurfaced in the mid-1980s. The brick is in good condition and the building is structurally sound. There is a small metal utility building on the rear of the post office. The grounds are well kept. The post office building is set back 15 feet from Eighth Avenue and 18 feet from Fourth Street, and is separated from the sidewalk by lawn. A concrete driveway runs along the east side of the building to the rear paved parking area. The building has a few low evergreens as foundation plantings.

The building is of fireproof construction, with concrete foundation and hollow tile walls, and steel structure. It has red matte face brick laid in American bond on the exterior. Wood trim is used for the windows, storms, and front entry surround. Front steps are concrete. Limestone is used for the window lintels and sills, and for the parapet coping.

The interior walls and ceilings are plaster. The lobby floor and wainscot is quarry tile in burnt orange and medium-colored brown squares. The vestibule and all wood trim are maple or birch stained a dark oak. The service windows are original. The secondary interior doors in the lobby vestibule are metal. They are a later addition, as are the front doors, which are aluminum and glass. The ceiling lights on the first floor are flourescents. The postmaster's office has a maple floor with wood trim, chair rail and picture mold. The workroom has plaster walls, painted woodwork, and maple floors.

The original blueprints on file with the postmaster are too large and fragile for photocopying; they are not attached. The public lobby

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stretches across the front with an ell to the west along the Fourth Street side. The postmaster's office is on the east side of the lobby. To the rear of the postmaster's office is the vault and finance section, carrier swing room, and women's toilet, from front to back. Behind the lobby is the workroom. The original mailing vestibule and loading platform are at the rear of the building on the north side and form an ell at the back of the structure. In the northeast corner of the basement is the boiler room. South of this is the fuel room, which once held coal. In the northwest corner of the building are two postal storage rooms. Across the front of the basement the space was left unfinished when the building was put up.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Politics/ Government
Architecture
Economics
Community Planning
Art

Period of Significance

1937-1939

Significant Dates

1937

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

OSA/ James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

State Historical Society of N.D., Bismarck

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	4
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5	4	6	3	7	5
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5	4	0	0	8	9	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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N/A See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, & 18, Block 27, Original Townsite, Langdon, ND.

N/A See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all city lots which have been historically associated with the property.

N/A See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Norene Roberts, President
organization Historical Research, Inc. date July, 1989
street & number 7800 Tessman Drive telephone (612) 560-4348
city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55445

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LANGDON, SIGNIFICANCE:

The Langdon Post Office is significant under Criteria A and C on a state and local level as one of a small group of 20 extant federally-built post offices in North Dakota constructed between 1900-1940. Under Criterion A, this post office is associated with various federal policies in post office funding, design, and method of construction in the early 20th century. Under Criterion C, this facility shares the distinctive characteristics of federally-funded post offices as a property type built in North Dakota before the Second World War. The major areas of significance are Politics/Government, Architecture, Economics, Community Planning and Art. Under Art, it is one of only three post offices in North Dakota with a New Deal lobby mural. Under economics, the Langdon Post Office is one of nine post offices in the state erected as a result of the federal government's efforts to relieve economic suffering and provide jobs in the aftermath of the Depression. Historically, it was built around the time that surrounding smaller post offices were closed, but this was happening all over the country. Architecturally, it is one of six post offices built between 1935-1940 in Starved Classical style and shares the attributes of its group, although not particularly outstanding on its own. Locally, the Langdon Post Office is the oldest of the public buildings in Langdon and the only federal building. The city hall, a hospital, a school, and the county courthouse are all new.

The Langdon Post Office is designed with Colonial Revival massing and minimal similar detailing. It is considered an example of the "Starved Classicism" during the years that Louis Simon, an engineer, was Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department. The facade is symmetrical and the chief design element is the front entry with fluted wood pilasters and a full entablature with dentilled molding. The double front doors are aluminum and glass, and are a recent addition. There is a glass transom over the front doors located under the frieze. Two tall windows flank both sides of the front entry. They are wood with wood storms, both with 8 over 12 lights. The windows have a recessed brick spandrel below each opening. Cast iron lamps are mounted on both sides of the front door, and a decorative railing brackets the front concrete steps.

The design of the post office has little architectural richness. The structure as built in 1937-1938 is a good, but typical, example of the design work under Louis A. Simon, the Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department at that time. It is similar to many late 1930s post

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offices in the upper midwest. By the mid-1930s, the Colonial Revival style was attenuated, and less attention was paid to "traditional" detail. However, proportion and massing remained basically classical.

In the face of no local mention of what Class of post office was built in Langdon, it appears to be a Class C post office in a second class city. According to Secretary of the Treasury William McAdoo's 1915 classification system for federal buildings, a Class C building included post offices with receipts of \$15,000 or more in a second class city. The character of the building included brick faced with stone, fireproof construction, and interior finishes which exclude the more expensive woods and marbles, with public spaces restricted to very simple forms of ornament. The 1934 postal receipts for Langdon were only \$13, 216. This, however, represented nearly a 23% increase over 1933. The increase was enough in itself to justify a new facility.

The plain facade of the structure might reflect the fact that the receipts did not come up to the required \$15,000 necessary for a Class C facility, but did show sharp growth (The Cavalier County Republican [hereafter CCR], 1/1/35, p. 1). In fact, receipts did climb to \$14, 187.40 for the calendar year 1937 (CCR, 1/1/38, p. 1). The Langdon facility was described as resembling the new post office in East Grand Forks, Minnesota, but Langdon's was larger (CCR, 1/1/38, p. 1). The two buildings cost the same, and their lobbies are virtually identical in layout, materials, and color. East Grand Forks's post office was a Class C facility, but that building was designed in a more traditionally Colonial Revival style with a hipped roof, cupola and more stone trim.

Since it was beginning to be a policy of the government to close post offices with small receipts as a cost-cutting measure, the Langdon appropriation for a new facility occurred around the same time that smaller post offices in the area were being discontinued: Mona (1935), Elkwood (1931), Homen (1932), and Vang (1935). These closings of smaller leased facilities in the surrounding hinterland left Olga, Mt. Carmel, and Malda as the only post offices north and east of Langdon in the state (CCR, 3/14/35, p. 1). By May 1936, Langdon was handling these discontinued patrons via rural routes as well as 400 patrons in town and 300 others on rural routes (CCR, 5/14/36, p. 1).

Three times as many post offices were constructed between 1930 and 1939 as during the previous 50 years - a total of 1,861 - so the Langdon design is

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a common one. The Langdon facility was authorized at a total cost of \$70,000 and was one of 320 federal projects built out of a 60 million dollar emergency construction fund under the Deficiency Appropriation Act passed by Congress. It was described when built as "similar to Grafton" and the local paper noted that the new post office for Hettinger was authorized at the same time as Langdon's (CCR, 7/2/36, p. 1).

It does not appear that the construction of the Langdon post office affected development in town as far as land use is concerned. As it was meant to do, the construction of the post office did provide some jobs locally. The low bidding contractor was J.H. Mackley of Minot. Mackley brought four men with him, expecting to hire others in Langdon. This places the number of local jobs at just under 20, since there were 23 laborers and carpenters on the project (CCR, 9/23/37, p. 1; 10/7/37, p. 1; 11/11/37, p. 1). The roofing contractor was not local: Art Greenburg of Grand Forks (CCR, 1/20/38, p. 1).

The Langdon Post Office is a rare example in North Dakota of a post office with a New Deal mural. On the east side of the lobby is a large mural over the postmaster's door, dated 1939. The artist was Leo. J. Beaulaurier. It was the practice of the Fine Arts Section of the Treasury to reserve one-tenth of the cost of the building for a mural in these years, with the purpose of providing work for unemployed artists and sculptors.

The Leo Beaulaurier mural measures 12 x 5 feet and is located over the postmaster's door. It depicts a meeting on horseback between three Indian men and a scout from a wagon train. It is executed in tawny golds and medium browns under a blue sky. According to postal service information, it was entitled "Indians Demanding Toll from Wagon Train for Crossing Their Land" (Forbes). The subject of this mural is unusual, because artists normally spent time searching for a local theme before picking the subject of their work. In this case, Beaulaurier mistook the Red River trails for the Santa Fe Trail thinking wagon trains of settlers travelled over the former, which was not the purpose of the Red River Ox Cart Trails. We found no mention of the completion of the work in the local newspaper in 1940. According to his son James Beaulaurier, of Great Falls, Montana, Leo Beaulaurier died in 1984. He was born in Great Falls in 1911, attended the University of Notre Dame and the Art Center School in Los Angeles. He did two other post office murals in addition to Langdon. One in Billings, Montana, and another in one other unknown small town, according to his son ("Mural Painting by Leo Beaulaurier").

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LANGDON, BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Beaulaurier, James. Personal Communication. Telephone interview to Great Falls, Montana, by Norene Roberts regarding Leo Beaulaurier, his father, September, 1988.

The Cavalier County Republican, January 1, 1935.

The Cavalier County Republican, March 14, 1935.

The Cavalier County Republican, May 14, 1936.

The Cavalier County Republican, July 2, 1936.

The Cavalier County Republican, September 23, 1937

The Cavalier County Republican, October 7, 1937

The Cavalier County Republican, November 11, 1937

The Cavalier County Republican, January 1 and 20, 1938.

Forbes, George S., General Manager, Real Estate Division, U.S.P.S., Central Regional Office, Chicago. Letter dated November 30, 1981 (CE331: WCChristiansen::ym0331) to Managers: Field Real Estate and Buildings Office. A chart (possibly compiled by the General Services Administration) attached to this letter includes information on post office murals in North Dakota and other states.