

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED **APR 17 1987**
DATE ENTERED **MAY 19 1987**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Douglas Main Post Office
AND/OR COMMON
Douglas Main Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
129 North Third Street
CITY, TOWN
Douglas
STATE
Wyoming 82633
VICINITY OF
NA
COUNTY
Converse
CODE
056
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
NA
CODE
009

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thematic Group	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED NA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*
United States Postal Service, Western Regional Headquarters
STREET & NUMBER
850 Cherry Avenue
CITY, TOWN
San Bruno
VICINITY OF
NA
STATE
CA
94099

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Converse County Assessor's Office
STREET & NUMBER
PO Box 57
CITY, TOWN
Douglas
STATE
Wyoming
82633

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None
DATE

____ FEDERAL ____ STATE ____ COUNTY ____ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>NA</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Douglas Main Post Office is a two-story red brick building on a raised basement. Well-proportioned and flat, the front facade is symmetrical and is divided by five equally spaced bays. The first floor bays consist of brick-framed, semicircular arches over which are aligned the flat-arched window bays of the second floor. Fan windows occupy the arches above the centered entry bay and flanking window bays. (Two fan windows have been replaced by plain wooden panels.) A copper-clad hipped roof with projecting wooden eaves completes the building. An important feature of the building is its fine brickwork as exemplified by a woven herringbone pattern with diamond inset beneath the first floor window bays, paired header and stretcher courses forming the bay arches and decorative band dividing the first and second floors. Although the building received a one-story addition to the rear in the 1950s (consistent with original detailing) the design quality of the original building has been maintained.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Douglas Post Office consists of the original two-story structure and a single-story rear addition (circa 1950). Both are set on a raised basement platform. The footings and basement are constructed of reinforced concrete. Concrete and structural steel support the main and second floors. Red brick faces the exterior walls. The roof of the main building is hipped and clad with copper. Built-up tar composition covers the roof of the single-story wing to the rear. Granite is used for the entry stairs and other detailing.

The front facade (west) is flat and symmetrical in elevation. Although relatively simple, the facade is distinguished by fine brickwork. Red brick in Flemish bond faces the basement, first floor, and second floor walls. The facing of the basement wall rests upon a granite belt course set at grade. The water table dividing the basement and first floors is defined by two brick courses--a single vertically aligned stretcher course which is set beneath a course of

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES	Site Acquisition	1909	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Federal Government/Oscar Wenderoth,
	Building Completed	1916		OSA

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Douglas Main Post Office is a well-preserved example of a small combined post office and federal office building. Designed in the Neo-Classical mode, the building exhibits a quality of design and detailing that distinguishes it as the best example of its type in Douglas. Notable features include the exquisite detailing of the brickwork and the broad overhanging eaves of the hipped roof. This design treatment is rare and only one other example exists in Wyoming (Rock Springs) and only a few examples exist in the entire West. This building is the first and only federal building constructed in the city and came during the period of the city's most significant growth. It represents the recognition of the city's importance by the federal government as well as efforts by local citizens to secure a federal building for their city.

ARCHITECTURE

Quality of design and skilled craftsmanship are projected in this imposing building. Fine brickwork distinguishes the facade which is flat and otherwise relatively plain. The design is rigidly formal in its proportions and symmetry; however, a pleasing rhythm is established by the arched window and entry bays of the first floor. One of the few remaining federal buildings under USPS control from the early-1900s, the building is representative of the Beaux Arts tradition which eventually gave way to the modernism of the 1930s.

The building dates from the city's most significant growth period and with the city hall is one of the few remaining public buildings from that era. It is also the best example of period public architecture in the city, particularly in its use of the Neo-Classical style. Accordingly, the building is of local significance under Criterion C.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Hall, Lawrence, "Federal, State and County Buildings", WPA Ms. #1401 (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives, Museums and Historical Department).
2. "Douglas - General History", Unpublished Manuscript (Douglas: City Library files).
3. Sanborn Maps - Douglas, Wyoming: June 1894 and April 1903.
4. Bill Barlow's Budget - various articles 1908-1913.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.37

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 3	4 6 8 65 0	4 7 3 4 0 90	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 20-24 inclusive, Block 11, original town of Douglas.

The site is rectangular with 125 feet of frontage along Third Street (western boundary) and a depth of 130 feet with frontage along Walnut Street (northern boundary).

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

H J. "Jim" Kolva, Senior Associate

ORGANIZATION

Institute for Urban & Local Studies

DATE

April 1986

STREET & NUMBER

W. 705 1st Avenue

TELEPHONE

(509) 458-6219

CITY OR TOWN

Spokane

STATE

WA

99204

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local .

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

Realty Acquisition Specialist, Principal

DATE

2-9-87

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

MAY 19 1987

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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paired stretchers and headers, also vertically aligned. The arches and surrounds of the first floor window bays are delineated by an intrados of headers and extrados of stretchers. The sills consist of a header course. A woven herringbone pattern consisting of headers and stretchers with a centered quarry tile inset in a diamond shape is located beneath the sills.

Demarcation of the first and second floors is provided by a decorative brick pattern. The pattern consists of a series of diamond-shaped quarry tiles individually inset in a white plaster field in the shape of a thickened cross. Three horizontal brick courses framed by a vertically aligned stretcher define the insets.

A vertically aligned Norman brick header course, which also marks the sill line of the second story windows, is set above the decorative pattern. A vertically aligned Norman brick stretcher course along the entire facade marks the tops of the second story windows. Between this course and the roof fascia are three brick courses in Flemish bond which project slightly. The facade is topped by the overhanging wooden eaves of the hipped roof. Scrolled brackets support the exposed rafters, which in turn support the narrow wooden strips of the soffits.

Five bays divide the front facade--a centered entry bay flanked by two window bays. All are framed with brick semicircular arches as described above. The entry bay is approached by six concrete steps to a concrete landing which narrows to a series of six granite steps to a granite approach landing. Concrete and granite buttresses flank the stair run. The entry consists of double metal-framed glass panel doors with 10 lights each. A wooden door head with two recessed panels tops the doors. A plain wooden panel is set above the door head within the arch. Single cast iron lanterns are affixed to the wall on either side of the entry.

The windows consist of double-hung wood sash with 4-over-4 lights. An 8-light fan window tops the double-hung sash. The fan lights of the northwest

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corner have been removed and replaced by a plain panel identical to that over the entry. The second floor windows are double-hung wood sash with 3-over-3 lights. A flat gauged brick arch tops the window bays.

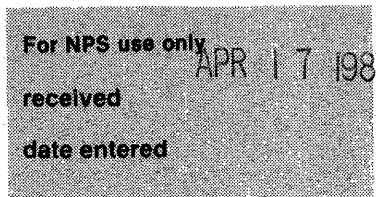
The side facades of the original building are essentially identical and are detailed similarly to the front facade. Three window bays divide the facades. The first and second floor windows are identical to the corresponding windows of the front facade. Slight variations in the facades are related to placement of air handling equipment in the original window; placement of an additional small window on the second floor of the north facade; and the placement of smaller brick-surrounded windows within the larger bays.

The rear wing (added in the 1950s) is a single story in height and terminates at the second floor level of the main structure. The decorative brickwork dividing the first and second stories is extended to the parapet of the rear wing. A narrow cornice of sandstone lies beneath the parapet which is topped with a molded sandstone coping course. Three window bays divide each facade which are identical to each other. The windows, including the brickwork of the bays, are identical to those of the first floor of the front side facades of the main building.

The rear facade of the building consists of the rearward projecting loading platform, the single-storied wing, and the second floor of the original building. The loading platform is concrete enclosed by brick walls on the north and east sides. A single overhead loading door is located on the east end. The south side is open and covered by a flat metal roof with a projecting marquee. The rear of the single-story wing contains two flat-arched window bays on each side of the loading platform. The windows and detailing are identical to the remainder of the first floor windows. Five window bays, identical to those of the second floor windows of the front and side facades, divide the facade of the second story.

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POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

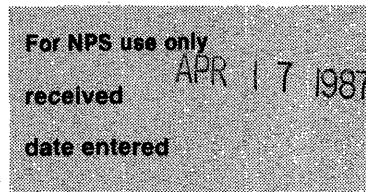
The Douglas Post Office symbolizes the federal presence in the community, one that was manifested during the era of the city's most significant growth. It also represents the effort of local citizens through their congressional delegation to receive federal recognition in the form of a federal building. As reported in Bill Barlow's Budget, the building was a source of pride to the community. This pride was further reflected in the fact that local brick was used to construct "the ornament to the city" as the building was termed in the Budget. In providing this symbol of government and the city's growth, the building is locally significant under Criterion A.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Douglas, with a population of approximately 6,000, is the county seat of Converse County in east central Wyoming. The city is located on the Platte River and along the old Oregon Trail. Agriculture, retail trade, and oil production contribute to the area's economic base.

Prior to its settlement in 1886, the Douglas area was sparsely inhabited with the nearest settlement located at Fork Fetterman (11 miles northwest of Douglas). In 1885, the Fremont, Elkhorn, and Missouri Valley Railroad announced that it would be extending its rails up the Platte River into Wyoming. In anticipation of the opening of Fetterman County, settlers congregated at Fort Fetterman and the fort's population rose to 1,000 by mid-1886. The Douglas townsite was surveyed and platted but not open for settlement until the railroad actually entered. By September a town of a almost 1,600 people occupied a temporary settlement of tents and rough board shacks. A post office had also been established in "Poverty Flats" with J.F. McReynolds as postmaster (June 28, 1886). The rails reached Douglas on August 22nd and lots in the town of Douglas were sold at auction beginning on September 30th. Within 90 days 1,600 people inhabited the new town and "Poverty Flats" had melted away.

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Douglas "boomed to death" after the winter of 1886-1887 (a major cause of the destruction of 80% of the area's cattle). In 1887 Douglas was incorporated. Westward extension of the railroad also cost Douglas position as Wyoming's frontier outpost, its trade base, and its population. Buildings were abandoned and a census taken in the winter of 1888 by local townspeople showed a population of less than 300. However, Douglas won the election as the county seat of the newly formed Converse county in May of 1888.

In 1889 the rebuilding and beautification of the city began. The population grew from 491 in 1890 to 734 in 1900. In the next decade the population exploded to 2,246. With the planting of trees and development of water and sewer, Douglas was becoming a solid city. A 1911 issue of Bill Barlow's Budget featured the fine public buildings of Douglas. They included the Carnegie Library, Converse County Courthouse, Douglas School Building, United Temple of the Masonic Lodge, several churches, and several "handsome" business blocks. The development of the residential and commercial districts continued and with the production of oil, cattle and sheep ranching, and farming, the area prospered. The population reached 2,294 in 1920 then remained around 2,000 until 1950 when it grew to 2,544.

The Douglas Post Office is located on the southeast corner of Third and Walnut streets at the north edge of the downtown business core. The adjacent properties to the south and across Third Street to the west are commercial (retail and offices) in use. The buildings consist of a variety of storefronts (mix of early 1900s to 1980) ranging from one to two stories in height.

The Douglas public library (occupies site of original Carnegie Library) is located across Walnut Street to the north and a bank building is located to its east (both are single-storied of modern design). The northwest corner of the intersection diagonally across from the Post Office is used as a parking lot. The Hotel La Bonte (three-story brick, 1914) is located

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west of the parking lot. Adjacent to the rear of the Post Office across the alley to the east is a single-story office building (brick Neo-Classical, circa 1920), and to its east is the Masonic Lodge (two-story brick, Neo-Classical, 1926).

LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DOUGLAS
MAIN POST OFFICE

Douglas was booming. The population had more than tripled from 1900 to 1910 and Douglas moved from 11th to 8th place in population among Wyoming towns. This dramatic rise in population spurred the desire for a federal building in the city.

On May 30, 1908 a sum of \$10,000 was appropriated for a post office site in Douglas. Bill Barlow's Budget in reporting the contents of a letter from Senator Francis E. Warren indicated that Wyoming had fared well in the most recent session of Congress. In addition to federal buildings already under way or completed, Rock Springs received appropriations for a site and building, appropriations of \$10,000 each were made for sites in Casper and Douglas. An article of September 16, 1908 reported that a representative of the Treasury Department was in Douglas to inspect sites that had been offered for the future federal building. When mention was made that the only reasonably priced site was outside of the business district, a petition was signed protesting this location. The location was considered to be totally inappropriate because it was outside of the population center and main business area. The present site was finally acquired on February 13, 1909. Although \$65,000 was allocated for construction of the building in June of 1910, a couple of years would pass before an appropriation was made.

In an article of January 24, 1912, the Budget reviewed the public buildings that had been constructed or were under consideration for the state. In spite of the possibility that a Mr. Collier would "break out again and deplore the fact that the members of the Wyoming delegation have been so fortunate in securing public buildings and sites in the various cities and towns in

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that state ..." the Budget did not believe that many Wyoming people would feel particularly downhearted at the construction of the buildings.

The article listed the following public building projects within the state: completion of Cheyenne, Laramie, Evanston, and Sheridan federal buildings; sites purchased and contracts in force for Lander, Rawlins, and Rock Springs; buildings authorized in Cody and Douglas (each to cost \$75,000); and sites authorized in Basin, Cody, Green River, and Buffalo. Bills had also been introduced by Representative Mondell for \$75,000 buildings in Newcastle and Sundance. Only Thermopolis, Wheatland, Shoshoni, and Worland had not received action. Later in the year, on October 24th, the Budget announced that \$40,000 had been appropriated for "our federal building". Test holes had been dug at the federal site in the previous month, and it was expected that construction would begin in the spring.

In spite of the optimism, construction did not begin in 1913. However, the year was one of substantial development with many new buildings rising from the earth. According to the Budget: "Prosperity stalks abroad through every street and avenue." The north Platte Valley irrigation project and newly opened Douglas oil fields fueled the local optimism. The farmers and townspeople prospered.

Finally, on February 16, 1914, it was reported that the construction contract for the federal building was let to J.F. Jenkins Co. of Ocala, Florida in the amount of \$60,850. The article discussed the building boom and anticipated that more construction would take place in 1914 than any previous year. The commentary also chided the owners of the properties along Third Street (where the federal building would be sited) in stating: "Something should be done by the property owners on Third Street". It was suggested that the building of a new county building opposite the federal site would help to establish Third Street as a business street, and other property owners along the street would be encouraged to improve their holdings.

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On April 2nd the Budget announced that work on the Federal building would begin soon. Local bricks would likely be used in the "ornament to the city". An article of July 2nd listed the many new structures that were under construction, among them the Federal building, Hotel La Bonte, high school building, and public school. The Burlington Northern Railroad reached Douglas on August 12th and placed the city on the main line.

On October 14, 1915 it was reported that the Massachusetts Bonding Company had taken charge of the federal building construction project. Since only the work on the interior remained, it was expected that the building would soon be completed. Its original completion date had been slated for the past July. Other new projects in the city included the new city hall and the Burlington Northern Depot.

Finally, in February of 1916, the federal building was completed and the new courthouse was dedicated. An article of February 24th entitled "Post Office Moves--Almost" reported that the post office would "get into the new building Saturday, maybe". On March 2nd Postmaster Kidwell and his staff were in the new building. The article added that Douglas now had a post office that will compare with any in the country, considering the size of community it serves. "In fact, there are few towns of the size of Douglas that can boast such a building."

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