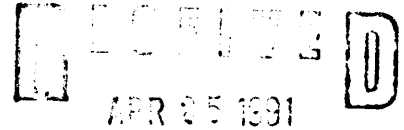


660

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

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 Walla Walla Main Post Office
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 128 North Second Street N/A not for publication
city, town Walla Walla N/A vicinity
state Washington code WA county Walla Walla code 071 zip code 99362

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/district/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic U.S. Post Offices In Washington, 1893 - 1941

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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. Signature of certifying official: [Signature] Date: 1/11/90 State or Federal agency and bureau: U.S. Postal Service

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: [Signature] Date: 12/15/89 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):

for Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Mediterranean

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Brick

roof Metalother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Walla Walla Main Post Office is a two-story brick building on a raised basement. Its footings, basement, and first and second floor slabs are reinforced concrete. Structural steel frames the first and second stories. Sandstone faces the basement walls while the first and second stories are faced with gray brick. The symmetrical front facade is divided by seven bays--semi-circular bays on the first story and flat-arched bays on the second story. Iron balconets adorn the second-story windows. Corbeled corners and entablature, other decorative brickwork and stonework, and bracketed over-hanging eaves further embellish the richly detailed facade. A low hipped roof covers the building. A five-bay brick addition was added to the rear of the building in 1965. It is covered by a flat tar composition roof.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The front facade (along Second Avenue) is symmetrical in elevation, two stories in height, and topped with a ribbed low hipped roof. The first story facade is divided into seven semi-circular-arched bays: three window bays flanking each side of the main entry. Slightly projecting flat pilasters separate the bays. They rest on rectangular sandstone bases which, in turn, support two smaller sandstone bases: one at each of the pilaster corners. From these bases rise slightly projecting pilasters which define the corners of the larger pilaster. The arches are formed by vertically-aligned alternating brick header and stretcher courses with a header course extrados. Scrolled keystones of Tenino sandstone complete the arches and act as brackets for a sandstone belt course which divides the first and second floors.

The entry consists of double aluminum-framed glass doors topped by a single-light transom window (originals replaced). Half-round smooth columns resting on square sandstone bases and supporting a flat-arched entablature frame the doors. A sandstone panel with a bas-relief circle is set in the tympanum of the semi-circular brick arch. The two window bays immediately flanking each side of the entry contain nine-

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over-nine-light, double-hung, wood-sash windows. These windows are flanked by three-over-three-light, double-hung side-lights and are topped with a ten-light fanlight. A heavy wooden arched-mullion divides the fan window into two arches. Flat sandstone sills supported by flat sandstone brackets define the bottoms of the windows. A brick soldier course lies between the sill brackets and sandstone water table. The windows of the end bays are smaller than those of the interior. They are framed by molded sandstone architraves which are set within the brick-filled niches of the arched bays. The flat sills and molded cornice window heads project slightly. The sash is six-over-six-light, double-hung, wood.

The second floor contains seven flat-arched window bays aligned over the first floor bays. The sash is wood with a four-light fixed section over a sixteen-light hung section. The windows are framed by alternating courses of double headers and stretchers. A flat sandstone keystone completes the flat voussoired brick arch. Wrought-iron balconets front each of the windows. The terminating entablature is supported by an arched corbel table, formed by slightly projecting brick headers. Molded sandstone corbels support the arches. The brick fields within the arches, with the exception of the two arches midway between the window bays, are embellished with small sandstone diamonds. These midway-arches spring from an elongated corbel. The fields within these arches contain marble circles. The marble circles are supported by a narrow column of very slightly projecting brick stretchers which rest on a three-brick soldier course.

The corbel table supports a dentil band formed by brick headers with half-header-wide gaps between. A stretcher course separates the dentil band and molded sandstone belt course. Resting atop the belt course are projecting scrolled wooden brackets. Between the brackets are brick stretchers which extend to a wooden fascia. The brackets support a wood beam on which rests the exposed overhanging eaves of the hip-ped roof. The roof is low-sloping and covered with painted tar paper and patterned with vertical metal-clad wooden ribs. Behind this portion is a flat built-up tar composition roof.

The north facade of the original building (on Sumach Street) is divided into nine bays which are configured identically to the front. The cornice-headed windows occupy the

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center and east corner bays. An entry bay occupies the west corner. Between the corners are six fan windows, which are divided into two groups by the contrasting center bay. The entry bay contains double aluminum-framed glass doors over which is set a solid brick panel. Above the panel is a five-light transom window which melds with a ten-light fan window.

The 1965 rear addition (east side) projects nine feet forward of the plane of the north facade of the original building. One story in height, its roof line extends from the belt course dividing the first and second floors of the original building. Though the addition is not totally consistent with the original building, it is complementary: the elevation is symmetrical, the brick is matched, and the window style is maintained. The flat facade, however, lacks the detailed brickwork of the original. It contains five equally-spaced window bays, each containing a fixed fifteen-light section flanked by five-light sidelights and topped by a seven-light fanlight. A single brick header course forms the sills. Below the sills are plain brick panels which descend to the tops of the basement windows. Completing the facade is a slightly projecting cast-concrete cornice. The roof is flat built-up tar composition.

The south facade is essentially identical to the north facade. It is divided into nine semi-circular-arched window bays, one which is bricked-in (original construction). The rear addition extends flush with the original building and contains five bays identical to the north facade. The loading platform extends from the rear of the addition. Two doors (personnel and loading) provide access to the platform. The roof is flat, poured concrete; a marquee extends rearward from the end of the loading platform wall.

The rear facade is dominated by the loading platform which extends from the edge of the south wall for approximately three-quarters the length of the rear wall of the addition. Since the loading platform is stepped down from the main portion of the addition, the plain brick exterior of the addition's rear wall is visible above the platform roof. A single semi-circular arched window (identical to side facade) is located in the portion of the main addition north of the loading platform. The rear of the original building is visible above the roof of the addition.

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1914-1941

Significant Dates

Site acq.-1910
Const.-1914

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Taylor, James Knox, Supervising Architect/Federal Government

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

The Walla Walla MPO is a well-preserved and exquisitely-crafted combined post office and federal office building. Strongly rooted in Classical architecture, the building has a strong Mediterranean flavor. It is the State's only example of the use of this design style for a post office/federal building. The building is also the first and only federally-constructed post office in the city. Furthermore, it was constructed in an era of significant growth within the city--one in which several of the city's significant public buildings were constructed. Thus, it is an important local symbol of the federal government and the recognition by that government that Walla Walla was an important regional center.

ARCHITECTURE

The Walla Walla post office is well-preserved and, with the exception of the 1965 addition to the rear (east side), the exterior is unaltered. (The addition, while not totally consistent, is sensitive to the original building in both design and use of material.) The round arches of the first floor bays establish a rhythm and a Neo-Classical formality to the building. A molded sandstone belt course demarks the boundary wherein the Mediterranean flavoring begins. Wrought-iron balconets, an arched corbel table, scrolled cornice brackets, broad overhanging eaves, and a hipped roof express a richness of ornamentation. Fine brickwork embellishes both stories in a display of quality craftsmanship.

Although Walla Walla has a rich heritage of turn of the century architectural styles, the post office's design is unique in Walla Walla. It was constructed in an important period of development of the city and represents the federal contribution to the city's other architecturally prominent public buildings. Because it is a unique, exquisitely-

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Walla Walla Evening Bulletin; various articles 1910 - 1914.
2. Evening Statesman (Walla Walla); various articles 1908.
3. Original Building Plans; 1911.
4. Addition Building Plans; 1963.
5. Bennett, R. A. Walla Walla A Town Built To Be A City 1900 - 1919.
Walla Walla: Pioneer, Press, 1982.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

USPS Facilities Service Center
San Bruno, CA 94099-0330

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.46

UTM References

A 11 396460 5102300
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

Quadrangle Name: Walla Walla
Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Part of Lot 4, Lots 5 & 6, Block C, Cains Addition. The site is on the south side of Sumach Street, bounded on the west by Second Avenue (130' frontage), and bounded on the east by Colville Street (166' frontage).

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the property originally purchased by the federal government for the post office site.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title H.J. "Jim" Kolva, Project Manager; Steve Franks, Research Assistant
organization Institute For Urban & Local Studies date March 1989
street & number West 705 First Avenue telephone (509) 458-6219
city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99204

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crafted building from an important era in the city's development, the building is locally-significant under Criterion C.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The Walla Walla MPO/Federal Building is the first and only federally-constructed post office in the city. It was constructed in an important period in the city's growth and was an important signifier of the federal government's recognition of the city's prominence. The grant of the building was an important community event, as evidenced by a half-page article in the Evening Bulletin headlined "Uncle Sam's Christmas Gift to City of Walla Walla" (December 17, 1913):

Uncle Sam in the guise of Santa Claus will leave a package in Miss Walla Walla's stocking this year that, while not altogether unexpected, will bring a great deal of pleasure, for it will fill a long felt want. The present for Miss Walla Walla is to be the new Federal building....

The local boosters had worked hard through their elected representatives in Washington (or, as termed by the Bulletin, "the powers in the city of the 'Great White Father'") to get their building (they also experienced an unpleasant time sorting out the sites on which to place their federal gift). Thus, the building is also a legacy of the successful efforts of citizens to obtain a federal building through their elected representatives. Because of the above, the building is locally significant under Criterion A.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Walla Walla, with an estimated 1987 population of 25,420, is the county seat of Walla Walla County and the commercial center for the surrounding rich agricultural area.

Termed "The Cradle of Northwest History," the Walla Walla area was first settled with the establishment of a supply station (Fort Nez Perce) for fur traders by the Northwest Company in 1818. In 1836 the Whitman Mission was founded at Waiilatpu. Fort Walla Walla was established by Colonel Steptoe in 1856. Settlers were attracted to the area by the fertile soils; by the late 1850s a small settlement

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was established. After initially being called Steptoeville, the name Walla Walla was selected in 1859. In 1861 the town was platted. It survived several disastrous fires and by 1900 reached a population of 10,000. Agricultural and commercial services provided the economic base. The period between 1910 and 1920 was one of continued growth; many of the city's significant buildings were constructed then, including: the Carnegie Library (1906), County Courthouse (1916), City Hall (1908), St. Mary Hospital (1916), Berney School (1904), Green Park School (1905), Jefferson School (1916), and Washington School (1901).

The Walla Walla MPO is on the southeast corner of North Second Avenue and East Sumach Street. The Post Office and its parking area occupy the north half of the block. Uses across the alley to the south include a modern office building (two-story brick and concrete), service station, and used car dealership. North, across Sumach Street, is a parking lot, auto repair shop, and Chamber of Commerce. East, across North Colville Street, is a public parking lot. West, across Second Avenue, is the modern wing of the Marcus Whitman Hotel. The original hotel (the city's tallest building) was built in 1928 and is south of the new wing. The main business district is two blocks south of the MPO. Except for the original Marcus Whitman Hotel, none of the surrounding buildings are of particular historic or architectural merit.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE
WALLA WALLA MAIN POST OFFICE

The era in which the post office was constructed was one of prosperity and growth for Walla Walla. Its population in 1910 had grown to 19,364, almost a doubling of the 1900 population of 10,049. Many fine commercial and public buildings had been constructed since 1900 or were proposed for construction. According to accounts of the Walla Walla Evening Bulletin and Up to the Times, the work to procure a post office in the city had begun prior to 1910. Both papers contained periodic progress reports on the procurement of the post office which seemed to slowly drag along.

A half-page story titled "Uncle Sam's Christmas Gift to the City of Walla Walla" in the December 17, 1913 issue of the Bulletin recounted the efforts to obtain and complete the

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building. The article stated:

The history of the Federal building dates back a number of years ago. For a long, long time people of this city talked of a new post office. Finally, it was decided by the powers in the city of the 'Great White Father' that a post office would be built here. Then followed a more or less unpleasant time devoted to discussion of the location of the new post office.

Finally, in 1910 a lot was selected, at a cost of \$13,000 (of which \$8,000 was contributed by local citizens). After months of waiting, Postmaster E. L. Brunton was instructed to have the site surveyed and soil samples taken. Closely following this event, word came from Washington that the plans were completed and that contractors were bidding for construction. In January of 1912, Dieter-Wenzel Construction Company of Atchison, Kansas received the contract to construct the post office at a cost of \$119,484.

Ground was broken on March 28th and work progressed rapidly except for a delay caused by a change in specifications. Ground water was encountered and waterproofing/drainage had to be completed. The cornerstone was laid on July 26, 1912. Grand Master Frank McCandless of the Masonic Lodge of Washington presided. Music was provided by the Brunton Orchestra (postmaster) and several hundred people attended. Various delays were encountered by the late arrival of structural steel and defective bricks. The article reported that the building would be one of the finest of its kind in the West and was of the latest style of architecture. The article also contained a description of the building (as well as a photo) and listed suppliers of building materials. Local labor and some local suppliers were used and local merchants benefited from the wages expended by the construction workers.

A December 31st article in the Bulletin reported that a post office substation would be established in the Davis-Kaser Store for downtown business customers since the new Federal Building was too far from the center of the city for general use. Finally, on March 2, 1914, the post office was moved into the new building and was open for operation.

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The following information is the same for all the photographs listed:

1. Walla Walla MPO
2. Walla Walla, Washington
3. Jim Kolva
4. July 1984
5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center, San Bruno, CA.

Photo No. 1 (negative #2A)

6. View to east

Photo No. 2 (negative #14A)

6. View to northeast

Photo No. 3 (negative #13A)

6. View to north