

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 04001217

Date Listed: February 10, 2006

Property Name: United States Post Office, Federal Annex

County: Fulton

State: Georgia

none  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*for Daniel J. Viera*  
Signature of the Keeper

February 10, 2006  
Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8. Statement of Significance

The period of significance is hereby changed to 1931-1956, to more accurately reflect the period in which the property possessed significance in the areas of architecture and communications.

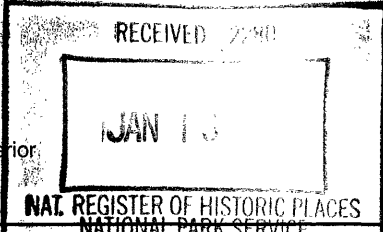
Transportation is hereby removed as an area of significance.

[These changes have been made in consultation with and approved by the Federal Preservation Officer of the General Services Administration.]

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The Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer and the Federal Preservation Officer for the General Services Administration were notified of this amendment.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**



# 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** United States Post Office, Federal Annex

**other names/site number** Federal Annex  
Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Building

## 2. Location

**street & number** 77 Forsyth Street

**city, town** Atlanta **vicinity of** central business district / northwest Atlanta - between Spring St. and Forsyth St. at Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (formerly Hunter St.)

**county** Fulton **code** 121  
**state** Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 30303

not for publication

## 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

buildings	1
sites	
structures	
objects	
total	

**Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:**  N/A

**Name of previous listing:**  N/A

**Name of related multiple property listing:**  N/A

**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 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 the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

*[Signature]* 9.20.04  
Signature of certifying official Date

Federal

State Historic Preservation Officer

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

*Richard Coates* 7.7.04  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION, GA. DEPT. NATURAL RESOURCES  
State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

*Daniel J. Vinton*  
2/10/06

( ) determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) see continuation sheet \_\_\_\_\_

*for*

Keeper of the National Register

Date

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## 6. Function or Use

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**Historic Functions:** GOVERNMENT / post office  
GOVERNMENT / government office

**Current Functions:** GOVERNMENT / government office

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## 7. Description

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**Architectural Classification:** MODERN MOVEMENT / Modern Classic  
MODERN MOVEMENT / Art Deco

### Materials:

**foundation** STONE / granite; CONCRETE  
**walls** STONE / granite; STONE / marble  
**roof** OTHER / terracotta shingle; elastomeric rubber membrane and asphalt roll roofing  
**other** TERRACOTTA; METAL / nickel

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The United States Post Office, Federal Annex was designed by Atlanta Architect Albert Ten Eyck Brown and constructed in Atlanta's central business district between 1931 and 1933. This ten-story 292,000 square foot reinforced concrete structure is a product of the Public Works Administration and was built to serve the growing postal needs of the city in the early 1930s. It was constructed as an annex to the existing postal facility and Federal building and was designed to house the main mail handling and distribution operations of the postal service while also serving the general public with their day-to-day postal needs. Related government offices were also housed in this building.

The building site is located adjacent to Atlanta's former Terminal Station (now the Richard B. Russell Federal Building to the west) and occupies almost two and one half acres of land. It is bound on three sides by Spring Street to the west, Forsyth Street to the east and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (formerly Hunter Street) to the north. To the south are commercial buildings that fill the remaining portion of the block to Mitchell Street. The United States Postal Service occupied the building until 1980. In 1981, the General Services Administration (GSA) acquired the building in order to expand government office space currently housed in the adjacent Richard B. Russell Federal Building. The annex was subsequently renovated and occupied by GSA and other Federal agencies.

The blocky rectilinear form of the building is characteristic of Modern Classic federal architecture of the 1930s. Through a series of progressively stepped setbacks of the exterior walls, the handsome building form is carefully revealed. Walls project and recess, forming volumes of different heights and lengths that contribute to the overall massing and characteristic form. Two symmetrical facades anchor each end of the building to the east and west.

Smooth planar wall surfaces, low-relief detailing and modest decoration further emphasize the austere beauty of the building form in and of itself. This massive marble and granite-clad building and surrounding site features occupy the entire 2.4 acre site on which they sit. The base of the building is set back approximately fifty feet from the street-scape and surrounded by granite terraces and low walls forming planters outside the

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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**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):**  N/A

A    B    C    D    E    F    G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):**

ARCHITECTURE  
COMMUNICATIONS  
TRANSPORTATION

**Period of Significance:** 1931-1933

**Significant Dates:** 1933 - original construction

**Significant Person(s):**  N/A

**Cultural Affiliation:**  N/A

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):** Albert Ten Eyck Brown, Architect  
Alfredo Barili, Jr., Associate  
J. W. Humphreys, Associate  
James A. Westmore, Supervising Architect

**Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)**

The United States Post Office, Federal Annex is significant in American history and architecture, and possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship and association. It qualifies for listing in the National Register for its significance under both Criterion A and Criterion C, as described more specifically below. It is designated locally as an Urban Conservation and Development Area (UCD) by the Atlanta Urban Design Commission.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Atlanta Urban Design Commission. "Atlanta's Lasting Landmarks", p. 37.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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### Bibliography

Architectural and Historical Inventory: U.S. Post Office Federal Annex. Atlanta: June, 1977.

The Atlanta City Builder. Atlanta: Chamber of Commerce, 1916-1931.

Atlanta Urban Design Commission. Atlanta's Lasting Landmarks. Atlanta: Atlanta Urban Design Commission, 1987.

Bayer, Patricia. Art Deco Architecture: Design, Decoration, and Detail from the Twenties and Thirties. New York: Harry Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1992.

Building Preservation Plan – Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Building. General Services Administration, 1991.

Craig, Robert M. Atlanta Architecture: Art Deco to Modern Classic, 1929-1959. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Co., 1995.

Gebhard, David. The National Trust Guide to Art Deco in America. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1996.

Hillier, Bevis. Art Deco of the 20's and 30's. London: Studio Vista, 1968.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Art Deco Style. London: Phaidon, 1997.

Original Architectural Drawings. General Services Administration, 1931-1932.

Striner, Richard. Art Deco. New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1994.

Weber, Eva. Art Deco in America. New York: Exeter Books, 1985.

Zeugner, John. Historic Structures Report - Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Building. General Services Administration, 1984.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property**      2.4732 acres

### UTM References

A)    Zone            16    Easting            074135                    Northing            3737797

### Verbal Boundary Description

All that tract or parcel of land lying and being in part of Land Lot 77 of the 14<sup>th</sup> District, City of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia and being more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at a bronze disk found at the southwesterly intersection of the right of way of Martin Luther King Drive and Forsyth Street. Said disk having co-ordinates of 1,365,079.28' North and 430,996.46' East on the Georgia State Plane Co-ordinate System, West Zone. Thence S 32° 56' 01" W along the westerly line of Forsyth Street, 234.10 feet to a bronze disk; thence N 56° 38' 17" W, along the southwesterly edge of a concrete wall, 264.17 feet to a bronze plaque found under said wall; thence S 32° 54' 05" W, 49.88 feet to a bronze plaque found at the northeast corner of an alley; thence N 56° 53' 19" W, along the northerly line of said alley, 161.35 feet to a bronze plaque found on the easterly line of Spring Street; thence N 33° 35' 27" E along the easterly line of Spring Street 275.04 feet to the point of curvature of a curve to the right; thence a curve to the right having a radius of 12.074 feet, a central angle of 90° 06' 17", along an arch of 18.99 feet to a point on the southerly line of Martin Luther King Drive. (The chord of said curve bears N 78° 38' 35" E for 17.09 feet.) Thence S 56° 18' 16" E along the southerly line of Martin Luther King Drive 410.13 feet to the place of Beginning, and containing 2.4732 acres of land.

This property is illustrated on the accompanying USGS quadrangle map. A copy of the site survey authorized on October 28, 1931 and performed by Freeman & Roberts Civil Engineers in Atlanta, Georgia is also included.

### Boundary Justification

The boundaries described above define the original property on which the United States Post Office, Federal Annex was constructed.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**State Historic Preservation Office****name/title****organization****street & number****city or town state zip code****telephone date****Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable):** ( ) N/A**name/title** Tara L. Johnson**organization** Architectural Conservation Center**street and number** 3318 Highway 5, #318**city or town** Douglasville **state** GA **zip code** 30135**telephone** 770-949-1337 **consultant** **regional development center preservation planner** **other:**

(HPD form version 02-24-97)



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main entries. The primary entries to the building are oriented to the east and west along Forsyth Street and Spring Street. Nickel-alloy ornament in stylized Art Deco designs is utilized to embellish these facades and highlight the pedestrian points of entry. An asphalt drive at the east end of the site ramps down to a parking area designated for service and deliveries along the north side of the building at the ground floor level. This area was originally active in serving the mail distribution functions of the Postal Service including the loading and unloading of mail trucks. A covered loading dock extended the length of ten open bays. Seven of these bays were protected by a narrow metal marquee. These features have since been significantly altered and all but one of the ten original bays remains open and active. A small section of the marquee remains above this opening as well. The other bays have been filled in with granite blocks and modern aluminum doors and windows have been added within these walls. A new entrance was also constructed at the eastern most bay and includes stairs, a ramp and planters as part of the design. A small section of the original marquee also remains at this location. These exterior changes, though significant, are all below grade and do not substantially impact the visual integrity of the main body of the building.

Granite ashlar veneer covers the exterior walls at the lowest three floors of the building and forms a solid base from which the upper floors rise. The walls at the upper levels (first through seventh) are clad with smooth light grey to white marble veneer except on the south elevation where painted yellow brick is used on the walls of the recessed facades of the third through seventh floors. Art Deco inspired detailing in simplified designs subtly enriches the otherwise planar wall surfaces in the form of fluted pilasters, chevrons and other stylized designs in the stringcourses and cornice work. These austere walls rise to form parapets surrounding the flat roof areas formed by the building setbacks. Elastomeric rubber membrane covers all flat roof areas except at the second floor on the south side. Here, asphalt roll roofing with a gravel ballast is utilized. A hip roof of green-glazed terra-cotta shingle tiles, which was replaced in the early 1990s, crowns the building above the seventh floor.

Two penthouses rise above the hip roof line at both the east and west ends of the building, affording a closer view of the gold-plated eagles that adorn the building's two flagpoles. These flagpoles are centered above the Forsyth and Spring Street entrances respectively and rise from the seventh floor roof nearly fifty feet in the air. The two penthouses differ in massing, in that the Forsyth Street penthouse is larger and more prominent, thus distinguishing the otherwise symmetrical facades. Its walls rise directly from the seventh floor and extend the length of the three middle bays on this elevation. In contrast, the penthouse on the Spring Street side of the building extends the length of just one bay. It is also set back from the seventh floor wall plane, making it appear even less prominent. Despite these subtle volumetric variations, a symmetrical balance in the building's overall form is achieved.

The original steel windows remain in most locations, though most of them are in fair to poor condition and need extensive maintenance and repair work. All of the window openings are slightly recessed and aligned vertically within the wall plane. A variety of window types are represented and include double-hung, hopper, and casement sash. Most are arranged in pairs, though single units are utilized at all floor levels - typically marking the end bays of each elevation. Steel double-hung sash in a variety of light configurations is the most common window type utilized. Those at the first floor level also have multi-light transoms. Hopper sash are typically found at the second and ground floor mezzanine levels on the north and south elevations. Some of these have been replaced with fixed windows. Casement sash are the smallest of the window types utilized and are found on the east and west elevations in three different light configurations. Narrow one-light wide

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casements flank the center bay of the east and west elevations at the third, fourth and fifth floors. Two-light wide casements are paired at the second floor level. Original windows are single-glazed with clear glass, though some frosted glazing and glass block have been introduced in various locations - particularly at the fourth and fifth floor levels on the south elevation.

Molded aluminum spandrel panels decorate the wall area below the fourth and fifth floor windows of the middle bays on all elevations. Fifth floor windows on the north and south projecting bays are slightly distinguished in that the recessed spandrel panels below these windows are detailed in stone. The windows at the projecting bays are also flanked by simplified fluted pilasters formed out of the adjacent stonework. Similar fluted detailing of the wall surface accentuates the east and west elevations in the form of pilasters that extend between the third and fifth floors. All other window openings are simply stated and accentuated mainly by the combined effects of the repetitious rhythm of their placement and the subtle voids created by their recess within the wall plane.

The smooth ashlar walls of this building are modestly but handsomely detailed with a combination of stone and terra cotta decoration in the form of pilasters, freizes, stringcourses, cornices and other relief work. Decorative stone friezes in stylized art deco designs articulate the wall surfaces above the first, second and fifth floor windows of the projecting bays on the north and south elevations. A combination of chevrons, inverted and stylized sunburst patterns and bands of vertical lines are utilized for these details. Similar designs also highlight the wall area above the first floor windows of the projecting bays flanking the east and west entries. In addition, the walls of the east penthouse are articulated with fluted pilasters and low-relief stringcourses above the seventh floor windows and along the parapet. Narrow bands of terra cotta ornament form stringcourses above the fifth and sixth floor windows. Each is detailed with different geometric designs - the lower of the two exhibiting an arrow-like pattern and the upper using vertical lines in a repetitious pattern of triplets. A continuous denticulated cornice highlights the roofline above the seventh floor. Other relief ornament includes a decorative eagle on the east elevation of the east penthouse and a stylized disk design above each first floor window at the projecting bays that flank the east and west entries.

The main entrances to the building at the east and west ends of the site are accentuated with highly decorative nickel-alloy ornament. Two sets of double doors are centered on the Forsyth and Spring Street elevations providing access to the building's public lobbies. The nickel-alloy doors themselves are not embellished with ornament or etched designs, but are rather plain with each containing a single panel of glass. The area above the doors, however, is highly decorated with nickel-alloy ornamental panels depicting two stylized eagles grasping a shield of stars and stripes. The detailing at each entry is identical except that the east entrance is further enhanced by an additional ornamental panel between the doors and the eagles, making the east entry roughly three feet higher than the west entry. This additional panel is detailed in a stylized sunburst pattern. A narrow band of trim in a high-relief chevron pattern highlights the edges of both entry ways. Highly ornamental octagonal light fixtures are mounted to the walls and flank each entry. These are also nickel-alloy and are intricately detailed with art deco designs and leaded glass.

*Portions of the building exterior are undergoing repair and rehabilitation work which began in the early 1990s but was abruptly halted due to contractor negligence. Consequently, the work remains in an unfinished state. Marble blocks from the cornices and parapets have been removed and are stacked in areas around the site awaiting repair and reinstallation when work resumes. Large sections of the granite terraces around the*

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building perimeter have also been dismantled and work in these areas remains incomplete. This exterior work is scheduled to resume some time in 2002 in conjunction with other renovation work being undertaken. The steel windows are also scheduled for rehabilitation, and a memorandum of agreement for this work has been established between the GSA and the State Historic Preservation Office.

In addition to the changes mentioned earlier on the north side of the building at the ground floor level, several other modern features have been introduced. A single-story greenhouse was added at the southwest corner of the building at the first floor level to provide additional seating for the building's cafeteria. Brown tinted glazing within an aluminum framing system sits on a two foot painted brick base. Though the materials and design of the greenhouse are out of character with the original building, this addition is relatively small and set back from the west elevation so that it's visual impact is somewhat diminished. Other changes include the addition of concrete pavers along the south side of the building and a series of planting beds at the northwest corner of the site. Low brick masonry walls enclose these beds and benches are scattered throughout for public use. In spite of these changes, the building's architectural integrity remains strongly conveyed through its defining Modern Classic features and Art Deco details described above.

The interior of the building is organized around a long, central hallway that horizontally connects the east and west ends of the building, which are anchored by the main public lobbies at the first floor level. Stairways connect the floors vertically and can be accessed from both the Forsyth Street (east) and Spring Street (west) lobbies. Like the first floor, a central hallway connects the east and west elevator and stair lobbies at each of the upper floors. Office areas are arranged around these horizontal axes. Originally, postal work spaces - two stories in height - occupied most of the floor area between the two lobbies at the first and second levels. Most of the Federal offices were located on the upper levels. The most distinguishing spaces remaining in this building are the public lobbies on the first floor, the east and west stairs, and the elevator lobbies on the second, third and fourth floors at the east end of the building. Most of the character defining features remain in these areas, though some changes have taken place.

The lobby at the east end of the building was the original postal lobby, which served the general public in their day-to-day postal needs. Art Deco ornamentation and nickel-alloy detailing characterized this area, distinguishing it from all other significant spaces in the building. Nickel-alloy materials were utilized for the original postal service windows, post office boxes, office doors, elevator doors, and radiator grilles. Most of the trimwork around these features is decorated with etched Art Deco designs in a combination of chevron and arrow-like patterns. The elevator doors are further distinguished with etched designs that cover the full surface area of the doors. Two framed stylized eagles are depicted above panels of vertical lines and geometric shapes. The original post office boxes have been removed from their original location, and these areas are now filled in and covered with a vinyl wall covering. However, the original framework and transoms above remain intact. The original ornamental writing tables have also been removed from this space.

This long rectangular space is visually divided into seven bays through the use of alternating materials on the wall and ceiling surfaces. The walls and floor of the lobby are covered with McMullen Gray Tennessee marble. The east and west walls of the space are highlighted with sections of fluted green marble (possibly Vermont Verde Antique) that create a color and texture variation across the wall surfaces and produce a distinct visual rhythm of bays. This same green marble also highlights the base of the walls continuously around the perimeter of the space. York Fossil marble (black in color) forms a border around the floor,

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contrasting the light Gray Tennessee marble covering the main floor surface areas. A continuous band of chevrons, carved in the McMullen Gray Tennessee marble, articulates the wall surface just above the height of the green marble sections. A suspended plaster ceiling of shallow recessed panels is divided into a series of alternating narrow and wide bays across the length of the space. A band of mutules borders the ceilings of the wider bays. The ceilings of the narrower bays are bordered with McMullen Gray Tennessee marble and correspond with the placement of the fluted green marble detailing on the walls. These distinctions in the ceiling materials further reinforce the seven-bay rhythm of the space.

Two stair entrances are located on the east wall of the original postal lobby and flank the main entry vestibule. This McMullen Gray Tennessee marble used in the main lobby extends into the two stair entries and covers the walls up to the second floor, where the two separate stairwells join at a shared landing. Here, a widened intermediate landing is created and a shift in materials occurs. At this level, the walls are covered with a lighter Alabama Cream A marble from floor to ceiling with some fluting for accent. These materials and detailing extend throughout the split stair design to a central lobby at the third floor level. At this level and upward, the Alabama Cream A marble is utilized on the walls of the elevator lobbies and the stairwell, which now rises from the third floor level along a single shaft. Beyond the third floor lobby, the marble wall area is reduced to a wainscot with a York Fossil marble base. The plaster ceilings of the elevator lobbies at the third and fourth floors are handsomely detailed with stepped shallow recessed panels. This detailing also highlights the ceilings of the second and third floor stair lobbies. McMullen Gray Tennessee marble is used at the stair treads and landings between floors, but it changes to terrazzo with a York Fossil marble border at the main floor landings and in the original elevator lobbies remaining at the third and fourth floors. York Fossil marble is also used for the stair treads. Nickel-alloy handrails are featured throughout the stairwell. Partitions have been added to enclose the stairs for fire egress.

The west lobby also retains significant original features, though this space has been altered from the original plans. The south wall of the space was moved further south and other modern finishes have been introduced, including a suspended acoustical tile ceiling and composition tile flooring that covers the original terrazzo. Some original features, however, do remain that distinguish this public area. Alabama Cream A marble covers the walls from floor to ceiling, and the walls are accentuated by fluted pilasters. A black marble base - York Fossil - highlights the otherwise light wall surfaces. The stairs ascending from this end of the building are original and similar materials to that in the east stair are utilized. Smooth plaster walls are enhanced with Alabama Cream A marble wainscot and guard rails finished with a black York Fossil marble base. The landings at the floor levels are terrazzo with a York Fossil marble border. The stair treads and landings between floors are McMullen Gray Tennessee marble with York Fossil marble risers and the handrails are wood. Though some modifications have been made to enclose these exit stairs to meet fire code regulations, these original finishes are continuous the full height of the building.

Upon the postal facility vacating the building in the early 1980s, the building was renovated for office use and substantial changes were necessary in the original postal processing areas in order to maximize the occupiable space of the building. Entirely new floors were inserted at the first and second floor mezzanine levels, thus increasing the total number of floors in the building from eight to ten. These former work spaces were generous in height, which afforded the ability to adapt the single-height spaces into two that could then be renovated for office use. Consequently, the original first floor mezzanine became the second floor, the original second floor became the third floor, the original second floor mezzanine became the fourth floor, the

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*original third floor became the fifth, the original fourth floor became the sixth, and the original fifth floor became the seventh.*

By 1991, most of the interior office areas had been completely renovated with new finishes and features. At that time, original features remained only in the hallways on the fifth and sixth floors, the restrooms on the fifth, sixth and seventh floors, several vacant offices on the south side of the fifth floor and other ancillary spaces throughout the building. In the hallways, this included terrazzo floors with a black marble border and base, molded wood trim at original door openings and plaster walls, though much of this was covered with vinyl or paper wall covering. The restrooms on the fifth, sixth and seventh floors, were detailed with hexagonal ceramic tile flooring and high marble wainscot on plaster walls. The original marble toilet partitions also remained, complete with their original wood doors and nickel-alloy hardware. Wood baseboards, molding, cornice and doors remained in the women's lounges. Some original finishes also remained in the basement including brick wainscot along the original corridor at the east and west ends and four original bathrooms.

Nearly all of these original features, noted above and excluding the features in the entry lobbies and stairs, have since been removed in subsequent and ongoing renovations. The upper floors of the building (fifth through seventh) are currently undergoing renovation. The floors have essentially been gutted and new partitions and finishes are being added throughout to accommodate new office layouts. Currently, the terrazzo floor of the original fifth floor hallway is all that remains visible, though this will eventually be covered with carpeting when the renovation work is completed. Even the original elevator lobbies have been altered at the fifth through seventh floors. New terrazzo floors, marble wainscot and light fixtures have been installed. The floors below (ground through fourth) have also been extensively renovated with modern finishes, though this work is less recent. The ground floor is now only partially occupied, and office suites have been left vacant due to organizational changes. Original features remaining in the basement include two small sections of hallway at both the east and west ends of the building. The brick wainscot, wood doors and molding remain in these locations. An original wood block floor also remains in the carpentry room of the basement.

Several private areas of the building have not been updated with newer finishes, and original features do remain visible. However, these spaces are either utilitarian, like the east and west penthouses, or are not used at all, like the former custodian's office. Plaster on the walls and ceilings, marble wainscot along the stairs, wood chair rails, base boards and cornice molding are some of the remaining features. Several original flush wood doors remain as well in the east stairwell to the custodian's office and other janitorial spaces.

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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#### National Register Criteria

The United States Post Office, Federal Annex is significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of transportation and communication, as this building stands as a symbol of the importance of the United States Postal Service in facilitating the exchange of information and materials to the growing postal population in the 1930s. This building served as the central postal facility for the entire southeast region of the United States, south of Washington D.C. and east of the Mississippi. The location of the building, opposite Terminal Station (across Spring Street at that time), was a strategic choice and significant in making the broader handling and distribution of mail possible by way of railroad.<sup>2</sup> Tunnels under the Spring and Mitchell Street viaducts connected the mail handling areas of the Post Office with the mailing platforms of the adjacent Terminal Station (later demolished in 1970.) Mail was transferred back and forth by way of conveyor belts that ran through the tunnels.<sup>3</sup>

The United States Post Office, Federal Annex is also significant under National Register Criterion C in the area of architecture and serves as an excellent example of the Modern Classic style of architecture of the Modern Movement. It is considered one of Atlanta's finest examples of Federal architecture built in the late 1920s and early 1930s - "a landmark of the city's Deco-to-Modern era and one of the region's most significant public works in the Modern Classic style."<sup>4</sup>

A product of the Public Works Administration under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, this building exemplifies the modern bureaucratic Federal architecture of the thirties.<sup>5</sup> This Modern Classic style, as it is sometimes referred to, was a widely popular style for government-sponsored buildings constructed during the thirties. This style is typically characterized by smooth planar wall surfaces, low relief detailing and minimal ornament in simplified classical forms. In conjunction with its austere form and massing, the United States Post Office, Federal Annex exhibits these and other characteristics of the Modern Classic and Art Deco style through the carefully detailed and conservative design of architect Albert Ten Eyck Brown, along with his associates Alfredo Barili, Jr. and J. W. Humphreys. The nation's Supervising Architect at that time was James A. Westmore.

A. Ten Eyck Brown was a prominent architect in Atlanta in the early 1900s. His design work is prevalent in numerous buildings throughout Atlanta and reflects the influence of the Modern Movement on the built environment during this period. The design of the United States Post Office, Federal Annex was his third major project in Atlanta during the early 1930s and Atlanta's largest construction project under way in 1931.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Zeugner, "Historic Structures Report", p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Craig, "Atlanta Architecture: Art Deco to Modern Classic, 1929-1959", p. 101.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 99.

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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Modern Classic and Art Deco buildings of this period attempted to synthesize the ideals and characteristics of both modern and traditional architecture. Architects drew on the forms and details from classical Beaux-Arts tradition for their designs, but manipulated these features to achieve a more simplified representation. The Art Deco expression of a classical portico, for instance, often “alluded to a traditional base, but typical of the style was the absence of a cornice or other device to provide a vertical conclusion.”<sup>7</sup> The expression of verticality was an important characteristic of this style, so details such as a row of fluted pilasters with no cornice were not uncommon in building designs. Similar detailing in the form of fluted pilasters highlights the walls of the main east and west elevations of the this building. These features further enhance the building exterior by flanking window and door openings at selected locations.

The United States Post Office, Federal Annex conveys its Modern Classic and Art Deco influences through the combination of its blocky terraced building form and its use of restrained and simplified architectural detailing. A. Ten Eyck Brown manipulates the building’s massive rectangular form through a series of symmetrical set backs that reduces its bulky appearance and produces a harmony of solid/void proportioning. This kind of sculptured terracing, inspired by ancient ziggurat forms, was a very common characteristic of Modern Classic and Art Deco architecture of the late twenties and early thirties and produced a building in which the form itself was the ornament.<sup>8</sup> Sometimes the use of terracing in building designs during this time was also influenced by local zoning ordinances requiring that “the upper stories of tall buildings be narrowed by terracing to ‘tame’ the visual effect of their bulk and mass.”<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, the classical ideals of solidity and mass remained very influential in the design of buildings, particularly public buildings, during this period.<sup>10</sup> A vertical emphasis was also typical and was often expressed in the arrangement and recessed detailing of the window openings.

“The general tendency, from the mid-1920s on into the early 1940s, was to exhibit exterior walls that expressed little depth or projection.”<sup>11</sup> Ornamentation took the form of simplified profiles in low-relief stylized designs. Art Deco ornament of the period was either designed as an integral part of the surface material on which it decorated, or it was created as a ornamental panel and applied over the surface.<sup>12</sup> Brown utilized both of these types of detailing in his design of the United States Post Office, Federal Annex. The planar wall surfaces of this building are highlighted with decorative geometric designs that are integrated into the stone veneer as friezes, cornices and other low-relief ornament. In contrast, highly ornamental nickel-alloy detailing embellishes the entries. These entries are particularly enriched with decorative panels above the main entry doors that display a combination of geometric sunburst patterns, chevron designs, and two stylized eagles grasping a shield of stars and stripes.

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<sup>7</sup> Gebhard, “The National Trust Guide to Art Deco in America”, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Striner, “Art Deco”, p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Gebhard, “The National Trust Guide to Art Deco in America”, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

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**Criteria Considerations (if applicable):** ( X ) N/A

**Period of significance (justification):** 1931-1933

Construction of the United States Post Office, Federal Annex was completed in 1933. The building was subsequently dedicated by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in December of that year.

**Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary):** ( X ) N/A

#### Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

Located in the central business district of Atlanta, the United States Post Office, Federal Annex was gleamed at the time of its construction for its handsome profile amidst the surrounding city landscape as well as its innovative design of a tunnel connecting the mail handling areas of the building with the mailing tracks of the adjacent Terminal Station. The building was viewed as an impressive first glimpse of the city by new visitors arriving in Atlanta via the railroad.<sup>13</sup>

The entire site on which the building sits is fully utilized. Granite terraces and low stone walls provide broad open areas outside the entries and along the west side of the building for public gathering and circulation. Granite stairs cascade down to the street level and join with the city sidewalks. Parking and service areas are provided along the north side of the site.

The orientation of the main entries to the building was a significant component in the overall design of the building and its planned orientation to the surrounding streets that border the property. The size and scale of the building and its site features, spanning the entire distance between Spring and Forsyth Streets, afforded A. Ten Eyck Brown the opportunity to draw on the existing pedestrian and vehicular patterns of the city to direct the functional arrangement of spaces within and around the building.

The relationship to Terminal Station was a major component in the overall design of the site. The functional requirements for the handling and distribution of mail was critical in the design of vehicular access to loading areas, parking areas and general circulation to and from the site.

Functional relationships within and around the building also influenced a distinction between the primary entries serving the building. The location for the main entry to the building on Forsyth Street was chosen, in part, because accessibility from this end of the property was more conducive for the general public visiting the postal facility. This was a factor of convenience in response to observed pedestrian patterns of the city at that time. This entrance was intended to serve the public's postal needs, as evident by the presence of the postal lobby that remains just inside the doors. The entrance on Spring Street was intended for use by Federal employees working in the building at that time.

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<sup>13</sup> "The Atlanta City Builder".



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The United States Post Office, Federal Annex served as a landmark around which other Federal and commercial construction developed over the years. This includes the Richard B. Russell Federal Building (formerly Terminal Station) and the Omni-International Complex to the west, the Southern Railway complex to the south, and various commercial/retail establishments to the north and east.<sup>14</sup> More recently, the Sam Nunn government complex was constructed opposite the building to the north, along Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

The General Services Administration acquired the building in 1981, after the United States Postal Service vacated the property in 1980.

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<sup>14</sup> Zeugner, "Historic Structures Report", p. 9.

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**Section 9--Major Bibliographic References**

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS): ( X ) N/A**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued  
date issued:
- 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:

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#### Additional Documentation - Maps

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USGS map (7.5 series) indicating the property's location.

Survey of United States Post Office Site - Freeman & Roberts Civil Engineers, Atlanta, Georgia, October, 28, 1931.

#### Additional Documentation - Photographs

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**Name of Property:** United States Post Office, Federal Annex

**City or Vicinity:** Atlanta

**County:** Fulton

**State:** Georgia

**Photographer:** Robert M. Craig (*photos 1, 2, 5, 7, 8 with permissions*); Tara Johnson (*photos 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12*)

**Negative Filed:** Robert M. Craig, College of Architecture, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA 30332  
John H. Myers, Architectural Conservation Center, 3318 Highway 5, #318, Douglasville, GA 30135

**Date Photographed:** January/February, 1993 (*photos 1, 2, 5, 7, 8*); December, 2001 (*photos 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12*)

#### Description of Photograph(s):

**Number 1:** View from Southwest

**Number 2:** West Elevation, Spring Street

**Number 3:** North Elevation

**Number 4:** East Elevation - Penthouse, Forsyth Street

**Number 5:** West Entry

**Number 6:** West Entry Detail

**Number 7:** Ornamental Light Detail at Main Entries

**Number 8:** Ornament Above East Entry Doors

**Number 9:** Wall Ornament at Parapets

**Number 10:** Entry to Stairwell from First Floor Lobby, East

**Number 11:** Door Detail in First Floor Lobby, East

**Number 12:** Second Floor Stair Lobby, East