

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 10 1989  
NATIONAL REGISTER

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# 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 Dickinson Post Office  
other names/site number same

### 2. Location

street & number 15 E. First Street N/A  not for publication  
city, town Dickinson N/A  vicinity  
state North Dakota code ND county Stark code 089 zip code 58601

### 3. Classification

<b>Ownership of Property</b>	<b>Category of Property</b>	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>          </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u> objects
			<u>1</u> Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register none

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Bradford W. Meador 8-22-89  
Signature of certifying official Date  
U.S. Postal Service  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

James E. Sperry September 15, 1989  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota)  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Patrick Andrus 11/1/89  
 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)  
post office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
post office

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance Revival

foundation brick, granite  
walls brick

roof composition

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheets.

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

DICKINSON POST OFFICE, DESCRIPTION:

The Dickinson Post Office faces south on East First Street at the corner off Sims Avenue. It was built to have the main entrance on East First so that the building would face the Northern Pacific Railroad station (The Dickinson Press, 3/3/16, p. 1). The post office building is located in a commercial area, but the residential area of Dickinson lies generally northeast of the facility. The Dickinson Post Office does not impinge on National Register properties in the immediate area, either directly or indirectly. An historical and architectural survey suggested in 1983 that the Dickinson Post Office might be eligible depending on whether it had an outstanding interior or important historic associations. A subsequent Section 106 assessment and resulting E.O. 11593 Determination of Eligibility Notification dated 1/13/88, stated that this building was eligible to the National Register.

The post office is in excellent condition, clean and well-maintained. The building was re-roofed in 1985. The post office has new fluorescent lights, new heating system, and furnace. The original coal/steam system has been converted to gas-fired, and is due for replacement. The brick is in good condition and does not need tuckpointing. The building occupies almost the entire site out to Sims and First. It is set back only 10 feet from the sidewalks, creating a small green belt. The original structure and addition have newer evergreen foundation plantings along the west and south (primary) faces of the building. The rear (north) of the building has a parking area.

According to the blueprints, the building is of fireproof construction with hollow tile walls faced in grey pressed Hebron brick laid in American bond with Ohio sandstone trim (The Dickinson Press, 5/12/17, p. 1). The grade course and front steps are polished granite. The brick on the 1965-66 east addition is not a particularly good match to the original brick, and is laid in a contrasting bond with one header to five stretcher courses. The original wood frame double-hung windows have been replaced with new metal frames and aluminum storms. Light standards on each side of the front entry are painted an unsightly aluminum color.

Interior walls and ceilings are plaster. The lobby originally had a terrazzo floor and quarter-sawn white oak trim. It has been completely altered and has an acoustical tile ceiling with fluorescent lights. New registers have replaced the original radiators. Doors in the lobby to the

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postmaster's office and workroom were replaced in the mid-sixties. They are not consonant with the original "feeling" of the interior lobby. Service windows have been altered and now have formica counters with aluminum roll-up shutters. Ceramic tile has been laid over the original terrazzo lobby floors. Granite window sills and wood trim remain intact on the second floor. The workroom is concrete with asphalt tile floors and plaster walls. No original finishes remain from the original workroom. The old tongue and groove wainscot in the workroom is gone. New wainscot is the same in the old and new workroom space: brick.

The blueprints are too large and brittle for photocopying and are not attached. The original lobby was T-shaped with the top of the T extending along the center portion of the front of the building. To the left (west) was the postmaster's office, and to the right (east) was the money order and registered main work area. The workroom was at the rear of the building, with a small ell for the mail vestibule and mail platform at the rear.

The interior of the building was largely gutted in 1965-66 on the main floor. Existing walls in the interior of the lobby, money order area, and rear workroom were removed. The building was extended to the east some 53 feet along First Street and some 80 feet deep. This one-story addition contains the new workroom extension. A new larger mailing platform was built at the rear of the building. The money order area was ripped out and made into work space. The lobby was altered by demolishing the leg of the T on the inside wall where the service windows had originally been. The interior lobby wall was run straight to form a simple rectangular lobby. New service windows and lock boxes were installed.

Blueprints of the 1917 building and 1965-66 addition are on file with the postmaster in Dickinson.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Politics/ Government  
Architecture  
Economics  
Community Planning

Period of Significance

1916-1939

Significant Dates

1916-17

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

OSA/ James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect

B: Charles Weitz Sons, Des Moines, Iowa

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

See attached continuation sheets.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See attached continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

State Historical Society of N.D., Bismarck

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 13 668860 5193995  
 Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, &20, Block 11, Original Plat, City of Dickinson, ND

N/A  See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

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

N/A  See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Dr. Norene Roberts, President

organization Historical Research, Inc. date July, 1989

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The Dickinson Post Office is significant under Criteria A and C on a state and local level as one of a small group of 20 extant federally-built post offices in North Dakota constructed between 1900-1940. Under Criterion A, this post office is associated with various federal policies in post office funding, design, and method of construction in the early 20th century. Under Criterion C, this facility shares the distinctive characteristics of federally-funded post offices as a property type built in North Dakota before the Second World War. The major areas of significance are Politics/Government, Architecture, Economics, and Community Planning. The Dickinson Post Office is significant on a state level as one of the first post offices whose design and materials reflected the McAdoo system of 1915. It was an unusual design regionally, and was built at a time when very few government buildings were being built. It is the largest post office in the southwest quarter of North Dakota, and one of the oldest federal buildings in the state. It is also one of the earliest multi-purpose federal buildings constructed in North Dakota. Its construction corresponds to the increased postal business associated with the Second Dakota Boom on the Missouri Plateau around World War I.

While the Dickinson Post Office has good integrity on the exterior front facade and retains its general integrity of design and materials, it is the most altered of this group of North Dakota post offices, principally because of a large one story addition on the east side completed in the mid-sixties. It was originally designed in a balanced Classical Revival style with round arched wood transoms and side lights in each of the three first floor center windows. The arches have been infilled with new windows and the center doors below. The one-story east addition is generally harmonious with the original aesthetic. The aluminum window replacements which were installed for energy efficiency are obviously not original. Exterior walls are intact except for the basement windows on the east facade of the addition, which have been blanked off with masonite type material.

The major public lobby space has been most altered of any in this group of post offices in North Dakota. The original woodwork was oak, and there was an oak vestibule inside the front doors. The major change in shape of the lobby and the use of modern materials have altered the character of the original. The dentilled cornice is intact, as is the high brick parapet with limestone coping. The Hebron brick exterior walls are in good condition on the original building, but the brick of the addition is not a perfect match.

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The original shape and style of the building remains intact in general terms and the addition has not effected the shape or design integrity of the original building. This is not a common post office building design in the upper midwest and it is a unique design for a North Dakota post office. It is eligible architecturally because it is at once unique and shares the aesthetic of post offices in this group. At the time of its construction, the Dickinson Post Office was hailed as one of two post offices built as a "new type," that is, an early example of post office design under the McAdoo system of 1915, by the Treasury Department architects. The other building, which is practically identical, was put up in Ishpeming, Michigan. These two buildings were hailed as a marriage of "beauty of outline and serviceability of interior" in 1916 (The Dickinson Press, 3/3/16, p. 1). We do not know the integrity or condition of the Ishpeming Post Office.

Some light was shed on this new type of post office design by the local paper, which stated that "brick construction is a somewhat new innovation on the part of the government (The Dickinson Press, 10/4/16, p. 1). It is possible that this is one of the first brick post offices built in the United States. Previous government buildings tended to use marble or granite face materials.

A good deal of press was given to the hopes of local people that Dickinson brick would be used for facing the new facility (The Dickinson Press, 10/7/16, p. 1; 11/11/16, p. 1). The use of grey pressed Hebron brick may have been a compromise by the government to satisfy local demand for North Dakota brick.

The Dickinson Post Office compares well with other public buildings in town and is locally significant under Community Planning. The 1908 Carnegie Library has been radically altered from its original Classical Revival style with two modern wings. The Stark County Courthouse is a beautiful brick and limestone Art Moderne structure from the late 1930s. The city hall is a modern two-story brick structure with classical overtones. The post is the only public structure dating from the 'teens which retains much of its original appearance.

According to the Real Estate Division records in Chicago, the Dickinson Post Office is the second oldest remaining post office building built specifically for that purpose in North Dakota which is still owned by the U. S. Postal Service. Valley City's is the oldest. In post office construction and style, it is not a common building type of design. It was originally designed to house not only the post office, but also the



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Weather Bureau and the U.S. Land Office. The size and the second story of the facility were meant to accommodate the needs of the federal government (The Dickinson Press, 2/16/28, p. 1). Initial local hopes were that since the North Dakota federal judicial district was likely to be divided further, the building could also house the federal district court (The Dickinson Press, 10/21/14, p. 1). There is, however, no indication that this hope ever materialized.

On March 3, 1913, Congress passed an act authorizing the construction of a federal building in Dickinson not to exceed \$90,000 in cost. The 62nd Congress appropriated money for three buildings in North Dakota: Dickinson, Valley City, and Jamestown. Valley City and Jamestown got \$75,000; a larger appropriation was authorized for Dickinson because the building was to house both the post office and the U. S. Land Office (The Dickinson Press, 10/27/16, p. 1). Of these three buildings, Dickinson's was completed second (The Dickinson Press, 2/16/18, p. 1). Valley City's was completed first. The actual cost of the Dickinson building alone was \$82,750 (The Dickinson Press, 5/18/18, pp. 1, 5). The total cost of construction was \$100,000. Before the new building was completed, the post office was located in the First National Bank building at the corner of First Avenue West and Villard Street in a single room. Based on postal receipts, the Dickinson post office became a second class facility, up from fourth class, on July 1, 1906. By 1918, when it was completed, the facility served 10,000 people (The Dickinson Press, 5/18/18, pp. 1, 5). As a second class post office, Dickinson was one of the largest postal facilities in the state. Its construction in 1916-17 reflects the period of economic and population growth in the state known as the Second Dakota Boom, which lasted from 1898-1917.

Before the new building was completed, the Postmaster General announced that the post office in Dickinson would be the distributing point in Stark County for the distribution of stamps, envelopes, supplies and wrappers, so that the other post offices in the county could requisition supplies from Dickinson instead of directly from Washington, D.C. The new building was to have additional space to handle these supplies. The local paper noted: "When this change is made the Dickinson post office will take its place in the front rank among the postal institutions of the state." Dickinson became the accounting office, auditing, checking and receiving payment for supplies for these Stark County post offices: Antelope, Belfield, Daglum, Gaylord, Gladstone, Lefor, Lehigh, Richardton, Schefield, South Heart, Taylor, and Zenith (The Dickinson Press, 10/13/17, p. 1).

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SECTION 9     DICKINSON, BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Blueprints of the 1917 building and 1965-66 addition.     On file: Dickinson  
Postmaster.

The Dickinson Press, 10/21/14.

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The Dickinson Press, 2/16/28,

Roberts, Norene.     Section 106 Assessment of Dickinson Post Office.  
Historical Research, Inc., August, 1986, for Real Estate Branch, St.  
Paul FREBO, and resulting E.O. 11593 Determination of Eligibility  
Notification dated 1/13/88, stated that this building was eligible to  
the National Register.