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NATIONAL
REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Wahpeton Post Office
other names/site number same

2. Location

street & number 620 Dakota Avenue N/A not for publication
city, town Wahpeton N/A vicinity
state North Dakota code ND county Richland code 077 zip code 58075

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<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 of 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. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Patrick Andrews 11/1/89

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation poured concrete

walls brick

roof composition

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See attached continuation sheets.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

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

WAHPETON POST OFFICE, DESCRIPTION:

The Wahpeton post office is located at the northwest corner of Dakota Avenue and Sixth Street facing south on Dakota Avenue in the central business district. Its location is on the west edge of the downtown commercial area. To the east and south are one and two story brick and frame commercial buildings dating from ca. 1895-1925. To the north is a residential area whose predominant building stock dates from ca. 1890-1925.

Wahpeton was the subject of a National Register survey in 1979, which was administered by the Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the State Historical Society of North Dakota. None of the inventoried sites in Wahpeton have yet been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. One property, a block west of the Wahpeton Post Office, was listed on the National Register in February 1984 as an individual nomination: the old Wahpeton Hospital, 720-722 Dakota Avenue. The Wahpeton Hospital was built in 1911. It is a two story Classical Revival structure with a raised basement and molded stone trim. Its chief design feature is a projecting two story front portico supported by free-standing wooden columns with Roman Ionic capitols. Its style complements the Post Office design, and the two buildings were erected in the same period (National Register nomination for Wahpeton Hospital, 4/15/83, by N.A. Roberts, Historical Research, Inc.).

Downtown Wahpeton has three other Classical Revival style public buildings of excellent design that were built during the same decade as the post office: the Leach Public Library (built in 1923 by Keith and Kurke, Fargo architects); the City Hall (built in 1914 and much altered with new entrance and glass brick infill in the windows); and the Richland County Courthouse (built in 1912 by Beuchner and Orth, St. Paul architects). They are all located within two blocks north and east of the post office, and only the City Hall on 4th St. N. has been substantially altered.

The old Wahpeton Post Office stabilizes an important intersection on Dakota Avenue and is of a piece with the style and period of other public buildings in the city. It also stabilizes the 600 block of Dakota Avenue with a clean, well-kept former federal building.

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

WAHPETON POST OFFICE

The old Wahpeton Post Office is in excellent condition. It is in excellent repair and has been immaculately kept, although replaced by the Postal Service by a new facility built in 1988. It is surrounded by grass with low deciduous shrubs at the front corners and mature trees and evergreens on the west and northeast of the building. The parking lot at the rear of the building is asphalt.

The building's integrity is excellent. The only changes to the exterior are new aluminum framed glass entry doors, aluminum storm windows, and a metal railing at the front steps. The railing and a rear loading dock were added ca. 1950. The dock addition has a concrete floor. It has no windows - only a single overhead garage door.

The interior has had several small changes. A linoleum tile floor has been added to the rear workroom. Suspended fluorescent light fixtures were added to the ceiling ca. 1940. Carrier sorting boxes of recent vintage have also been introduced.

The front lobby is intact except for a new plastic laminate service counter and new panelled indirect lighting. The original fixtures were gas. The original box window was replaced with additional lock boxes. The General Delivery and stamp window is now boarded up. Changes to the lobby are not intrusive and reflect the last functions of the service counter when the building served as a Post Office.

The Wahpeton Post Office is of tile brick construction with a poured concrete foundation and cement first floor exposed to the basement below. Exterior walls are sheathed in a dark beige/light brown pressed brick facing on the foundation and wire-brushed brick above. Stone trim is used at the window sills, spring blocks, and keystones. The cornice and window sills are wood. The front steps are granite. The original roof was tar and gravel composition.

The building's interior walls and ceilings are plaster. The lobby vestibule is v-joint pine panelled. The terrazzo lobby floors are white in a brown grout with a border of pink and rust colored terrazzo. The base of the walls have 6" high black marble below a 3' high panelled wainscot painted white. Decorative moldings of painted pine follow the lobby walls at the spring line of the arched windows and at the ceiling. Carved wooden modillions support the front desk/shelves at the east and west ends of the lobby.

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The postmaster's office at the west end of the building has pine woodwork and carpeted floors with an acoustical tile ceiling.

The workroom has a linoleum tile floor and a v-joint tongue and groove wainscot reaching up about 8' on the walls.

The Wahpeton Post Office faces south on Dakota Avenue. The lobby runs along the front facade, center, with the postmaster's office in the west wing (southwest corner). A vault and toilet room are to the rear of the postmaster's office. Originally, the money order and regulation division office was in the southeast corner behind a service desk in the east wing. As a post office, this space was last used for serving customers at the counter. To the north of the lobby is the large workroom. The loading is on the rear (north) of the building (see attached plan).

The plan of the basement originally included general storage, janitor storage, and fuel storage. In the west wing below the postmaster's office was a civil service examining room, now the carrier swing room. The swing room and toilets were located in the west wing. These are now a locker room for carriers.

A set of original 1913 blueprints was on file in the building in 1985.

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)

Politics/ Government
Architecture
Economics
Community Planning

Period of Significance

1914-1939

Significant Dates

1914

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

OSA/ Oscar Wenderoth, Supervising Architect
builder: Eugene Schuler, Wahpeton

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

See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

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:

State Historical Society of North Dakota,
Bismarck

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	4	6	1	7	5	2	0	5	1	4	3	8	4	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 4-8, Block 36, Original Townsite, City of Wahpeton, 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
organization Historical Research, Inc. date July, 1989
street & number 7800 Tessman Drive telephone (612) 560-4348
city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55445

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

WAHPETON, SIGNIFICANCE:

The Wahpeton 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. It is the first post office building put up exclusively for that purpose in the state of North Dakota during the Second Dakota Boom (Globe-Gazette, 2/10/16, p. 1). It was also the first post office in the state to become a part of the 1911 Postal Savings system. Architecturally, the Wahpeton Post Office shares the Classical Revival style of other major downtown buildings built in the teens in the city.

As a building contributing to the area of significance "Community Planning," the Wahpeton Post Office fits well in a town of predominantly Classical Revival-inspired turn-of-the-century public and commercial buildings. Most of the important Classical Revival structures in Wahpeton were built in the period 1914-1916. These include: the Richland County Courthouse, City Hall, the Stern Building (502 Dakota Avenue), First National Bank (1913, Keith and Kurke), and the post office. The Leach Public Library (1923) is a slightly better local example of the style, but the post office is far superior in design quality to the City Hall. The City Hall has been much altered with interior updating and intrusive exterior changes including glass block windows and a new entry.

Architecturally, the Wahpeton post office is sited at an important intersection in downtown Wahpeton, 6th and Dakota. It sits one block east of the Wahpeton Hospital, 720-722 Dakota Avenue (entered in the National Register in 1984) and a block west of the Stern Building, 502 Dakota. These are the three best-designed buildings on Dakota Avenue.

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Architecturally, the Post Office tends toward Georgian in its main decorative details: the semi-circular lights over the front windows and the entrance. In massing, symmetry, solid-and-void areas, and small-paned windows, it is more reminiscent of the Federal style.

The building was designed under the administration of Oscar Wenderoth, Acting Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department 1913-1915. His administration was sandwiched between those of James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect 1912-1913 and Architect of the Treasury Department 1915-1934. The design of the Wahpeton Post Office occurred at the end of the era of James Knox Taylor's individually-designed Classical Revival facilities, and at the beginning of the change to standardized exterior and interior plans. Except for the service counter being at the east end of the lobby instead of the interior (north) wall where the lock boxes are, the Wahpeton post office resembles the standardized designs of the Louis Simon era, 1934-1941. Architecturally, it is, therefore, a transitional building in North Dakota.

The early history of the Wahpeton post office begins in 1873, when "Chahinkapa" was renamed "Wahpeton" (A History of Richland County, North Dakota, Wahpeton Globe-Gazette, 1938, p. 27). The post office was established in 1871 with Folsom Dow as first postmaster. Mr. E.H. Myhra was the city's tenth postmaster by 1914 when the new post office was constructed.

Between 1871 and 1914, Wahpeton's post office grew gradually and expanded its services. Wahpeton became a money order office in August 1881. Rural Free Delivery was established in 1898, with two tri-weekly routes. A third route was established in 1903. Two carriers began door-to-door city delivery in February 1910. The Wahpeton Post Office is one of nine facilities built during the Second Dakota Boom, a period of extraordinary economic and population growth between 1898-1917. Functionally, the federally-built post offices in North Dakota completed before Wahpeton's were combination post offices and court houses. The Wahpeton Post Office was only the fifth post office erected in the state by the U. S. Government and the first state post office to house only the postal operations. The other two post offices in this multiple property nomination erected during the Second Dakota Boom are located at Valley City and Dickinson.

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The Postal Savings System was inaugurated in the United States on January 3, 1911. In each state, one post office was selected for experimental purposes, the postmasters having been trained in Washington, D.C. In North Dakota, the Wahpeton facility was the first to be designated as a postal savings depository. By 1915, however, nearly every post office in the country was so designated, and nation-wide deposits had reached over 50 million dollars.

When the parcel post system was established in the United States on January 1, 1913, Wahpeton had already received notification of its new federal building. The local Civil Service Examining Board, composed of three Wahpeton postal employees, was to be given a room in the west wing of the building under the postmaster's office (The Globe-Gazette "Greater Wahpeton" Special Edition, 3/11/1915, p. 14).

Soil testing at the new post office site was done during March 1913. Bids for construction were advertised in the fall of that year (The Globe-Gazette, 3/13/13, p.1). Eugene Schuler, a local contractor from Wahpeton, was awarded the construction contract with a low bid of \$41,000 in competition with two firms, one from St. Paul and one from Chicago (The Wahpeton Times, 5/14/14, p.1 and 5/28/14, p. 1). How many local jobs the post office construction may have provided went unrecorded, but the newspaper rejoiced at a local boy winning the construction bid.

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SECTION 9 WAHPETON POST OFFICE BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Blueprints (originals) of the Wahpeton Post Office.

A History of Richland County, North Dakota. The Globe-Gazette Company, 1938.

The Globe-Gazette, February 10, 1916.

The Globe-Gazette, March 13, 1913.

The Globe-Gazette "Greater Wahpeton" Special Edition, March, 11, 1915.

National Register Statewide Inventory of the City of Wahpeton, 1979. On file: Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck.

Roberts, Norene A. Section 106 Assessment of the Wahpeton Post Office. Historical Research, Inc., January, 1985. On file: Real Estate Branch, St. Paul FREBO, U.S. Postal Service, and Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck.

The Wahpeton Times, 1914-15.