

PH0369501

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 23 1976

DATE ENTERED DEC 12 1976



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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Bennington Post Office

AND/OR COMMON
U.S. Federal Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
118 South Street

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Bennington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
District of Vermont

STATE
Vermont

__ VICINITY OF
CODE
50

COUNTY
Bennington

CODE
003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(if applicable)*
General Services Administration

STREET & NUMBER
18th & F Streets, NW

CITY, TOWN
Washington,

__ VICINITY OF
STATE
District of Columbia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Municipal Building - Town Clerks Office

STREET & NUMBER
205 South Street

CITY, TOWN
Bennington

STATE
Vermont

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey

DATE
1974

__ FEDERAL STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN
Montpelier

STATE
Vermont

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Federal Building, originally the United States Post Office, was completed in 1914, from designs by the office of James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department between 1897 and 1912. Located at the northeast corner of South and Union Streets, the building measures 84' 0" by 60' 0". Nine bays wide and six bays deep, the building rises a full story above grade, resting on a full basement which functions as a podium. Although the fenestration implies one story on three elevations, the fenestration of the north elevation reveals a partial mezzanine. A shallow central pavilion occurs on all four elevations. The building is of concrete, tile, and brick bearing wall construction with concrete slab and beam floors. The exterior is clad in white Vermont marble. The low parapeted roof is sheet metal supported by steel trusses.

The principal (South Street) elevation has a Greek Doric hexastyle-in-antis portico which forms the extremely shallow pavilion. Its terminating antae project only slightly from the main mass. A stair of eight risers extends the full width of the portico. Cast metal lamps with torchere bases stand on plinths which flank the stairs and are beneath the piers of the central pavilion. The bottom two risers of the stair extend in front of the plinths. A metal hand railing connects each end pier to the adjacent plinth. A pair of matched railings installed in the recent past also ascend the stair in the central bay.

In a departure from Greek precedent, the fluted Greek Doric columns of the portico rest on bases. This aberration of the classical order perhaps represents Taylor's attempt to employ what Asher Benjamin believed to be a truly American order, that is a free mixture of Greek and Roman elements that typified inventive work of the Greek Revival. Each column is paralleled by a pilaster on the rear wall of the portico. The central bay contains the wood and glass doors of the main entrance. The six other bays each contain a twelve over twelve, double-hung sash window. The door and window architraves consist of simple undecorated piers and lintels contained within the bays defined by the larger pilasters. Surmounting each lintel is a blind window with typical Greek grille work.

The building's entablature incorporates elements from three classical orders: Greek Doric, Roman Doric, and Tuscan. The entablature of the main mass is Tuscan, surmounted by a simple parapet. It is stepped once over the outer antae and again over the outer columns of the portico. The entablature of the pavilion itself is not Tuscan but rather Greek Doric. The metopes of the frieze are enriched with paterae of a Roman elegance. On either side of the pavilion is a wide unfenestrated wall articulated only by the Tuscan entablature and by the simple offset defining the basement story.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 23 1976

DATE ENTERED

DEC 12 1976

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

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The Union Street (south) facade has a heptastyle pavilion. Each bay has a tall twelve over twelve, double-hung sash window. Under each window is an undecorated, slightly projecting sill. Above the lintel and below the entablature are fielded panels. On this side elevation, the basement is evidenced by small windows in each bay as well as by the simple offset. Because the planes of the bays and flanking walls are identical the entire south facade can be read as having either a central pilaster screen or projecting pavilion. The resultant ambiguity creates an unexpected tension.

The north elevation also has six bays, but without pilasters or Doric refinements in the entablature frieze zone. Above the six double-hung sash windows is a row of eighteen narrow, closely spaced windows defining the second floor or mezzanine.

The rear (east) elevation reflects the composition of the principal elevation. However, basement windows exist in each bay. The central seven bay pavilion is astylar with no recessed porch. The central door is surmounted by a four-over-four transom. Within each of the flanking bays is an eight-over-eight double-hung sash window with a slightly projecting sill. Each window is surmounted by a four light transom. Like the north elevation, the entire entablature is Tuscan. A small, low, flat-roofed wooden mailing vestibule has been added at the center door as has a crudely executed shed over the adjacent exterior cellar steps.

The interior of the building is one story high with a mezzanine on the northern wall. The mezzanine extends from the exterior wall to the pier of the portico. Originally, the interior was finished with ornamental plaster and mahogany. In 1967, the Post Office moved to a new and larger building nearby. At that time, the building was converted to a Federal office building and the entire interior gutted. A false ceiling was installed to enclose the office cubicles. Few original interior embellishments survive, except occasional doors, windows, and woodwork.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY
AUG 23 1976
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED DEC 12 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

Notes

¹While it can be argued that a footed Doric column is by definition a Roman Doric column, the general proportions of the shaft, the termination of the fluting at the echinus, and the robustness of the capital are decidedly Greek. See Nikolaus Pevsner, Hugh Honour, John Fleming, The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture, Fig. 64, and Sir Bannister Fletcher, A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method, page 160.

²Benjamin Latrobe had developed a uniquely American order in the form of his corncob and tobacco leaf capitals at the Capitol in Washington. Pierre L'Enfant employed a modified Roman Doric order with unfluted columns and American stars in the metopes at the Federal Building in New York City.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1897-1912

BUILDER/ARCHITECT James Knox Taylor

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Federal Building is among the last of the works produced under James Knox Taylor for the Treasury Department, of which he was Supervising Architect from 1897 to 1912. The building demonstrates both Taylor's flexibility of design and his concern for Bennington's architectural heritage. While the building incorporates classical elements from several orders, the rather inventive combination of these elements as well as the general massing and marked planar quality render the building strikingly modern in appearance. Despite the use of Greek Doric columns on the principal elevation, the restraint, the delicacy, the lack of robust projection are more reminiscent of Roman orders. In fact, the frieze of the side or south elevation terminates at the outermost pier in the Roman Doric manner, that is, with the triglyph centered over the capital. However, the use of classical elements as a traditional symbol of a Federal presence and more particularly the use of Greek elements in deference to a Greek Revival vocabulary in Bennington are subordinate to this peculiarly early feeling of 1930's modernity. The Federal Building is low without a visible pitched roof. The composition is strongly horizontal, emphasized by a main entrance on the long facade. The stepped parapet is a commonly used motif in the Greek Revival period but here emphasizes the horizontality. Despite its early date, this building resembles such modernized classical work of the 1930's exemplified by Paul Cret's Folger Library in Washington of 1929-32.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Bennington Evening Banner, November 30, 1914, "New Post Office Will Be Opened On Tuesday." Bennington, Vermont

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 (phone conversation)
 UTM REFERENCES S. Livergood

A	1,8	6,47	2,3,0	4,7	4,8	3,6,0	B				
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING					
C							D				

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
 Office of Historic Preservation

ORGANIZATION
 General Services Administration

DATE
 August 5, 1976

STREET & NUMBER
 18th & F Streets, NW

TELEPHONE
 202-566-1370

CITY OR TOWN
 Washington,

STATE
 District of Columbia

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES NO NONE

William B. Trimmer
 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

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

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE *Michael Stubby*

TITLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER DATE 8.17.76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. B. Trimmer DATE 12/12/76
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *Michael Stubby* DATE 12/6/76
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER