

Waterville PH#365394

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 27 1976
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

1 NAME

**** HISTORIC
Waterville Post Office
AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Corner Main and Elm Street
CITY, TOWN
Waterville
STATE
Maine
VICINITY OF
CODE
23
COUNTY
Kennebec
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
1st Hon. David Emery
CODE
011

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
U. S. Postal Service
STREET & NUMBER
New England Field Office, P.O. Box 324
CITY, TOWN
Lexington
STATE
Mass.

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Kennebec County Registry of Deeds
STREET & NUMBER
State Street
CITY, TOWN
Augusta
STATE
Maine

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
DATE
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

Using the Greek Revival's inherent rational geometry and grace the Waterville Post Office was conceived as a basic combination of a large, jointed rectangular block, fronted by a circular curve. The walls of the primary curve are screened behind a raised circular Corinthian colonnade of refined proportions and handsome detail. Similarly designed pilasters appear at the front corners of the block structure, symbolically unifying the block to the curve. Major access to the building is gained through two large double-leaf doors, surmounted by elaborate entablatures. These two doors puncture the building through its primary curve. The centrality of the colonnade is emphasized by the placement on either side of a single window. Four similarly dimensioned windows appear on the structure's side facades, creating a horizontal motion, while keeping the wall surfaces simple. Below this first tier of windows is another tier of smaller windows placed in the foundation. Daylight is thereby supplied to a half story below ground. Executed entirely in cut stone, the building is capped by a setback and monumental, flat roof. Above the roof towers a tall Corinthian cylindrical lantern, based in shape and character on the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates in Athens.

Taylor has taken liberties with the proportion, scale and details of his Corinthian capitals, but this was not unusual even in the precedent work of Strickland's Philadelphia Exchange. Such modifications were needed to incorporate an otherwise obtrusive structure on the site of a major urban intersection. The building clearly makes the most of its location with avenues which open up at the corner on which it stands.

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"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1911 BUILDER/ARCHITECT James Knox Taylor

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The "Greek Revival" period of 1820 to 1860 has mistakenly been thought to be an era of derivative architecture. Contrarily, while domestic architecture of this type did represent an idealization of the classic world of Greece and Rome, it also represented the colonial attitude of independence and freedom. During this era the country became architecturally free and architecturally classic. There was a conscious separation from Europe and a fierce desire to be American. It is in the aftermath of this tradition that the Main Post Office in Waterville, Maine was designed.

Designed in 1911 by the turn-of-the-century U.S. Treasury Department Architect James Knox Taylor, the building is based largely on William Strickland's Philadelphia Exchange built between 1832 and 1834. Like Strickland, Taylor shared an enthusiasm for the Grecian style. Perhaps less idealistic in his designs, Taylor was nonetheless sensitive to the refinements of this type of architecture. Where others used bold planes, Taylor utilized this style's swelling curves and rich decoration, especially as found in the Corinthian order.

The Greek Revival was the first pervasive and self-conscious nationalistic movement in American architecture. Its initial impetus came at the professional level where it was used for government buildings. The Post Office in Waterville represents Greek Revival architecture at this level in its latter day phase and survives as perhaps the best of only a few such examples in Maine.

