

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

102
AUG 24 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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, Scottsbluff, Nebraska
other names/site number NEHBS #SF 11-151

2. Location

street & number 120 East 16th Street na not for publication
city, town Scottsbluff na vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Scotts Bluff code 157 zip code 69361

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<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>1</u>	<u> </u> objects
			<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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.

Breadford W. Meador 8-11-89
Signature of certifying official Date

UNITED STATES 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 A. Hansen August 3, 1989
Signature of commenting or other official Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Nebraska State Historical Society.
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:) _____

Beth Boland 10/5/89
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

terra cotta

roof

other terra cotta details

brick window arches

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Post Office building stands today as a major landmark in Scottsbluff, a testament to the refinement of federal architecture during the period. This landmark status is enhanced in the context of Scottsbluff architecture in general, where the few extant examples of the academic genre mark this building with exceptional significance. It is anticipated that the building, originally constructed between May 1930 and June 1931, will undergo rehabilitation under the Tax Reform Act with a future use as office space.

The old Post Office building in Scottsbluff, Nebraska is a two-story masonry building with its imposing terra cotta front facade. The building is designed in the Renaissance Revival style which was popular from the 1890's through World War II. The high quality of materials used in this building, constructed with fine craftsmanship in an outstanding architectural design, makes this facility an unusually rare and irreplaceable part of Scottsbluff's built environment. There have been no major alterations from the original design and the building is in good condition.

The building is located in the central business district at the southwest corner of 16th Street and Second Avenue, one and one-half blocks east of Broadway, the main downtown thoroughfare. The immediate area is primarily offices and general commercial use and all nearby properties appear to be well maintained. The Post Office is a single building on a site that is a generally level, rectangular shaped lot with north and south property lines of 140 feet and east and west property lines of 150 feet. Although the building is not located in a designated historic district, the location is desirable and highly conducive for a successful adaptive reuse project.

The overall shape of the building is rectangular with the north facing front facade being 96 feet wide and the depth of the building being 67 feet. There is a full basement of the same size. The second floor is "U" shaped which "opens" toward the rear of the building. Thus much of the center and rear of the building is one story. The small, original mailing platform still exists at the center of the rear facade.

Structurally, the building rests on reinforced concrete footings. First and second floor exterior walls are solid brick 1'-9" thick not including areas of exterior terra cotta or interior finishes which typically are 2" of terra cotta plus metal lath and plaster. Interior columns are steel "H" beams encased in terra cotta and covered in plaster. The basement floor is a 12" thick concrete slab which consists of a base slab, a layer of 5-ply waterproofing, a layer of mortar, another layer of concrete and finally a finish slab of concrete. First and second floors are a reinforced concrete pan joist and beam system. Typically, the joists are 6" thick and the coffer spaces are 20" wide. The built up roof rests on a slightly pitched wood deck supported by wood joists, the largest of which are 3" x 12"'s spaced 12" on center. See continuation sheet

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The front facade is comprised of seven bays of which the center five have wall surfaces entirely of light buff colored terra cotta. These five bays are divided by six monumental pilasters consisting of a heavily molded base; a simple shaft of smooth terra cotta blocks with alternating courses of one full block and two half blocks; and topped by an ornate capital. The capitals feature a molded base and a floral, acanthus leaf-inspired relief which is framed by a border on the bottom which rises on either side and terminates in a volute. The volute on each side appears to support a cornice molding across the top of the capital.

The pilasters support the entablature which is comprised of three parts: a molded architrave immediately above the pilaster capitals; then a frieze decorated with four circular relief ornaments in a floral, bud and stem motif; and finally a very prominent and ornate cornice with various bands of moldings including a row of dentils and "egg and dart" molding. The words "United States Post Office" show prominently at the center of the frieze.

The windows of the center five bays are divided lite and double hung. The first floor windows are especially tall with fixed transoms. The first floor windows have decorative, molded window hoods while the second floor windows have square arches. The spandrel area between the first and second floor windows has ornamental relief panels, one in each of the five bays. The center panel above the main entrance doors has a large eagle with outstretched wings as its design. The remaining four panels have identical intricate floral designs.

The front entrance doors are surrounded with ornamental moldings and has a large floral acanthus leaf-inspired relief panel above. On top of the panel is a prominent cornice again featuring a row of dentils and egg and dart molding. This cornice is visually supported on either side by two large vertically orientated consoles with an acanthus leaf base. Flanking the front entrance are the original cast iron ornamental lamp standards.

The remaining exterior walls are light red and dark red brick laid in a light buff mortar in the "American" bond with recessed joints. Every sixth row of brick is thus laid as a header course. A visual transition is made between the basement walls and first floor with the use of a large terra cotta string course. Most of the remaining first floor windows feature half round roman arches of brick with an over-sized terra cotta keystone and smaller terra cotta "impost stones" at each arch base. Like other windows of the building, they are divided lite, double hung and have terra cotta sills. The brick immediately below the sills of these windows is laid in a stacked header bond. The remaining windows of the building have square brick arches and those on the first floor of the rear facade also have the oversized terra cotta keystones. A large wood cornice caps the remaining exterior walls. The cornerstone reads: "A. W. Mellon; Secretary Of The Treasury; James A. Wetmore; Acting Supervising Architect; 1930."

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Upon opening the front door, the beautiful original oak entrance vestibule is first noticed. The richly paneled walls feature a marble base; fluted wood pilasters with molded base and capitals; and is topped by a molded cornice. The vestibule ceiling is divided into five coffers by beams and is trimmed with molding.

The lobby is the primary interior space to note. Like the entrance vestibule, the beautiful lobby floor is terrazzo divided into sections by brass strips and each bay of the floor is bordered in marble. All walls have a marble base and have oak paneled wainscots. The lobby bays are divided by pilasters which, like the walls, have an oak wainscot with plaster above. The ornate, molded pilaster capitals visually support shallow beams which divide the plaster ceiling into bays. Each ceiling bay is surrounded by molded cornice. The interior lobby walls have the original divided lite oak transom windows which allow light and air into the workroom. Each bay has a large fixed center window flanked by two narrow windows which pivot open.

At the far west end of the lobby is the grand staircase. The stairway to the second floor is divided into four separate flights, has a large open area and is quite impressive. The stair treads are marble and the risers cast iron. The oak handrails are supported by wrought iron balusters and cast iron newel posts. Polished brass pipe rails protect the adjacent large windows. The exposed steel stair stringers have decorative cast iron moldings.

The terrazzo and marble floors of the lobby extend to the second floor lobby and hallways and also are in the restrooms of the building. The restrooms also feature marble toilet partitions and backs. According to the original drawings, all marble in the building is either Appalachian Grey Tennessee, Vermont Metawe or Vermont Brocadillo. The toilet fixtures and most accessories are original and many of the offices also have their original sinks.

Typical offices in the building have high oak baseboards, oak doors and trim. Doors to the hallways have obscure glass and obscure glass transoms above. The original oak floors have been covered with linoleum tile. The second floor hallway still has the original light fixtures while most of the others have been replaced with fluorescent fixtures.

Most of the remainder of the first floor, including the workroom, has the original oak floors, oak base and a very high (almost seven foot) oak wainscot. The mailing vestibule off the workroom is intact, however, the westernmost bay has been divided off into more workroom space. The two large vaults on the main floor are still intact. On one of the massive doors reads: "The Mosler Safe Co, 1931." The Postmaster and Assistant Postmaster offices on the first floor have had carpet laid over the wood floors and suspended acoustic tile ceilings installed.

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As previously mentioned, there have been no major alterations done to this building. Considering its use as a Post Office, the fact that not even the tiny mailing platform was altered is quite unusual. Most Post Office facilities of this size are very likely to have had major irreversible alterations done to them such as complete lobby remodelings or large enclosed dock additions constructed. The only notable minor changes to the exterior of this building since the day it opened have been the relocation of the roof top flagpole to grade level in front of the building, the expansion of paved areas at the rear of the property which formerly had been lawn areas and the replacement of the original front doors.

Major interior alteration include the removal of lockboxes and a reversible lobby remodeling. The easternmost lobby bay was converted into workroom space when the east lobby wall was moved westward by one bay in the late 1960's. The original terrazzo and marble floor is still intact under a layer of carpeting. The new partitions in this area can easily be removed and the original work put back to original locations. One bay of the original screenline is still intact while the remainder, including all lockboxes, have been removed. The lockboxes were sold at auction in the Spring of 1988.

The Postal Service vacated the building on September 13, 1987, and unfortunately it has gone through two Winter seasons unheated. As a result, there is a moderate amount of surface plaster and paint damage. Also, a small portion of the oak workroom floor has been severely damaged presumably as a result of a valve remaining open. Overall, however, the building and grounds are in quite good condition.

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)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1930-1931

Significant Dates
1930-1931

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Architect/Builder
Acting Supervising Architect: Wetmore,
James A, Treasury Department. Contractor:
Desjardins, Bernard R., Denver, Colorado

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

Under Criterion "C" the U. S. Post Office in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, is architecturally significant as a locally important example of the Late Renaissance Revival Style, a style which enjoyed considerable popularity in monumental buildings throughout Nebraska from the late 1890's to about World War II, as typified by Classicism executed low relief terra cotta ornamentation instead of stone. The Post Office is significant as a good example of monumental architecture in the Scottsbluff community and perfectly exemplifies this last phase in the rather shallow relief of the detailing as seen in the front facade. The period of significance is derived from the original construction date of the building of 1930-1931.

The former Scottsbluff, Nebraska, Post Office building is a unique and vitally important link to the community's past and hope for the future. As previously described, this outstanding example of the Renaissance Revival style is a monumental building that is architecturally significant. Especially considering the relatively small size of the community, this building stands out as one of the most notable ever built. Its magnificent architectural design features what surely is the grandest display of terra cotta as a building material the city has ever known. The building has survived amazingly intact thus making its architectural integrity undiminished. The historic use of the structure as a federal building and Post Office greatly adds to its importance and uniqueness.

The building was planned in the optimistic Roaring Twenties and represented the ambitions of a thriving community. The original drawings reveal the possible results of the stock market crash and ensuing Depression. The building was originally planned to be much larger. The large closets on each floor next to the grand staircase is actually the shaft for an elevator which was never installed. It was to take passengers to every floor including a planned third floor. The grand stairway apparently would have been extended to the third floor. The large open space that the second floor wraps around to form its "U" shape was intended to be a court room. An additional restroom, two vaults and several office partitions are also shown as intended to be built on the second floor. When the cornerstone for the building was laid in 1930 the Depression was underway and any plans for a larger building were deferred for the "future". Perhaps the fact that this building ever got underway at such a critical and tumultuous time may have been a symbol of progress and hope for the future of the community.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles. Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1969.
Gloag, John. Guide to Western Architecture. New York: MacMillan Co., 1958.
Hamlin, A. D. F. A History of Ornament. New York: The Century Co., 1923.
Scottsbluff Republican. Friday, July 3, 1931; p. 1, col. 4.
Scottsbluff Republican. May 2, 1930; p. 1, col. 6.
Scottsbluff Republican. Friday, February 6, 1931; p. 1, col. 1, 2.
Scottsbluff Republican. Friday, June 26, 1931; p. 1, col. 1 continued to p. 5, col. 4.
Mr. John Schmidt, Architect/Engineer, U. S. Postal Service, Omaha Division
Construction Files, Post Office, Scottsbluff, Nebraska
Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska
Documentation from building files and original drawings of the building which are in the possession of the United States Postal Service.

See 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.5 acre

UTM References U.S.G.S. Scottsbluff, Nebr., 1:24,000

A	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>3</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies all of Lots 1, 2, and 3 of Block 9, Original Town of Scottsbluff.

Legal Description: All of that land lying and being in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, fronting one hundred and fifty feet (150') on the west side of Second Avenue and extending westwardly of that width one hundred and forty feet (140') along the south side of Sixteenth Street to the twenty foot public alley bounding See continuation sheet

said site on the west; being Lots One, Two and Three, Block Nine, Original Town of
Boundary Justification Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

The boundary includes the entire original piece of property that has historically been associated with the building.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title DIANA K. ADAMS, Real Estate Specialist, Associate
organization U.S. Postal Service, Facilities Service Office date July 14, 1989
street & number 6800 W. 64th Street, Suite 100 telephone 913-831-5460
city or town Overland Park, Kansas state Kansas zip code 66202

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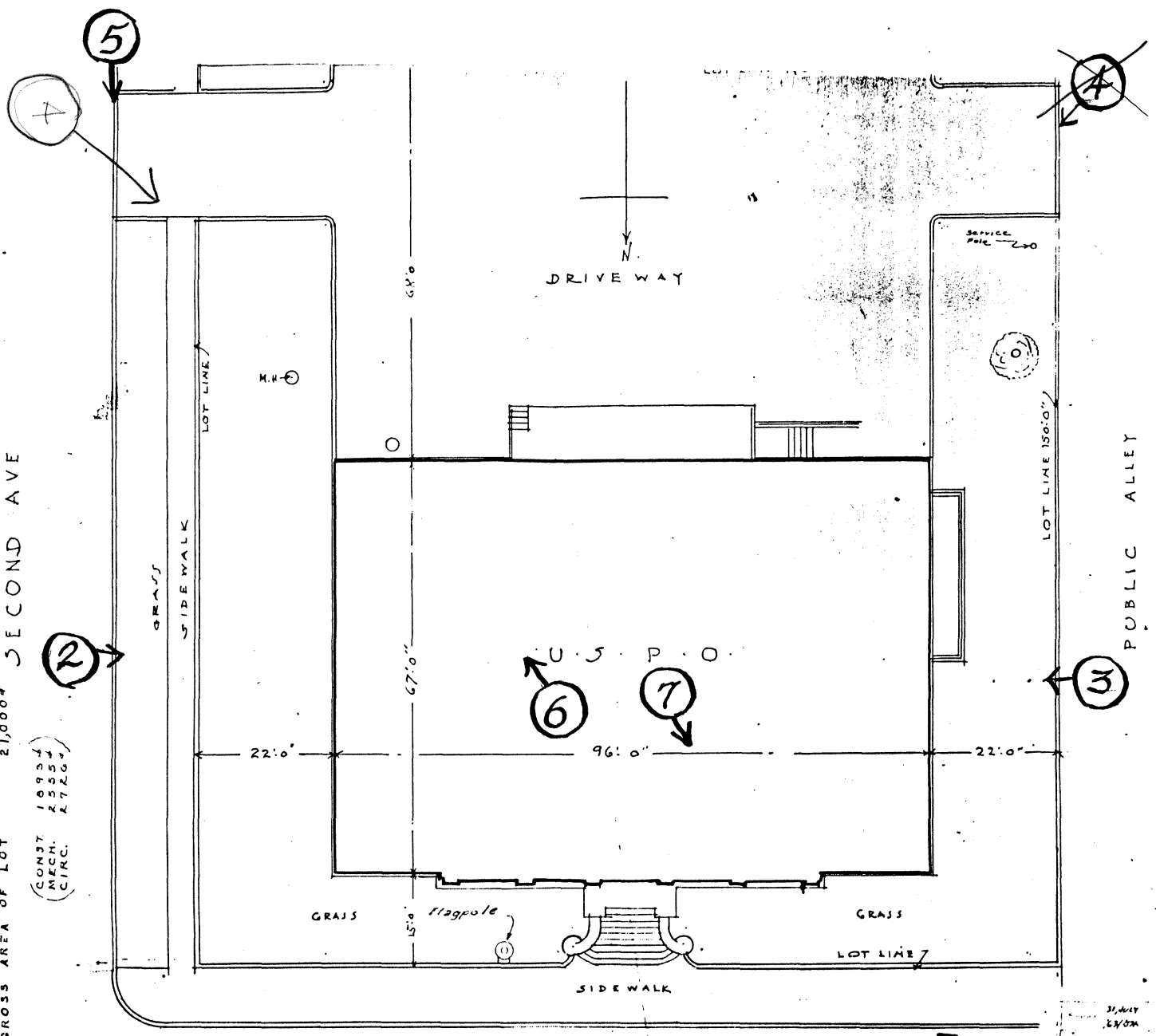
Continued life for this building through adaptive reuse would keep the tradition going of this building being an architectural landmark and an important part of history. Like the original construction of the building during difficult times, the reuse of it would be an important symbol of continued growth and prosperity for the community in the future.

GRAND TOTAL FOR BLDG. 23,454
 NET AGENCY AREA (NON PO) 7,986
 NET AGENCY AREA (PO) 10,514
 NET ASSIGNABLE AREA 7,174
 CONST. MECH. & CIRC. AREA 17,505
 GROSS FLOOR AREA 6,847
 GROUND AREA OF BLDG. 14,153
 NET AREA OF LOT 21,000
 GROSS AREA OF LOT

(CONST. 16,924
 MECH. 2,552
 CIRC. 2,726)

ASSIGNMENT
 APPROACH PLAN
 Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"

SECOND AVE



SIXTEENTH ST.

31, JULY
 1958
 U.S. POST OFFICE
 SCOTT'S BLUFF, NEB.
 160 ST. & SECOND AVE.
 HANSON
 SITE PLAN
 14 - 1 OF 4