

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	APR 17 1987
DATE ENTERED	MAY 19 1987

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Torrington Main Post Office

AND/OR COMMON

Torrington Main Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2145 Main Street

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Torrington

NA VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Wyoming 82240

CODE

056

COUNTY

Goshen

CODE

015

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

United States Postal Service, Western Regional Headquarters

STREET & NUMBER

850 Cherry Avenue

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

CA 94099

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Goshen County Assessor's Office

STREET & NUMBER

PO Box 37

CITY, TOWN

Torrington

STATE

Wyoming 82240

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Torrington Main Post Office is a one story buff-colored brick building on a raised basement. A second, attic story, rises from behind the parapet of the main story. Five bays divide the symmetrically arranged front facade. Five granite steps and a granite landing, flanked by square sandstone buttresses, provide access to the centered entry bay. Framed by a slightly projecting architrave of cut and polished marble, the entry consists of double, aluminum-framed glass doors over which rests a single-light transom window. Two flat-arched window bays flank each side of the entry. Framed in brick with a flat limestone sill, the windows are fixed steel sash. Facade embellishment is provided by a bas relief terra cotta frieze (belt course), a bas relief terra cotta eagle above the entry bay, green marble panels above the windows bays, and bas relief terra cotta panels aligned over the window bays and inset in the solid brick parapet. A red tile-clad hipped roof with dormers (aligned over main floor bays) completes the building. A major addition was attached to the rear of the building in 1966, but does not compromise its design integrity.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Torrington Post Office is one story in height on a raised basement. The footings and basement are constructed of reinforced concrete. The main floor is framed with structural steel and faced with buff-colored brick. Marble, sandstone, and terra cotta are used as trim materials. The roof of the original building is hipped and clad with red clay tiles (flat). The roof of the addition is flat, built-up tar composition.

The front facade (west) is flat and symmetrical in elevation. Sandstone faces the exposed basement wall. Buff-colored brick in variegated shades faces the main facade. Single, vertically-aligned brick courses define the water table and also extend along the facade at the top of the window bays. An ornamental band in bas relief (consisting of a series of stylized honeysuckle ornaments, separated by alternating shields and rosettes) adorns the creme

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

SPECIFIC DATES	Site Acquisition 1931	1931	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Federal Government/James A. Wetmore, OSA
	Building Completed	1933		

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Torrington Post Office is an outstanding and unique example of a small combined post office and federal office building. Its execution of design and, particularly, its exquisite facade detailing in marble and terra cotta manifest a quality that is unmatched in the city's business district. Essentially a Neo-Classical design in its scale, proportion and symmetry, the building has been richly embellished with detailing that is Art Deco in flavor. The cut and polished green marble entry architrave, bas relief frieze, bas relief decorative panels and bas relief eagle (all in terra cotta) exemplify the fine craftsmanship which distinguishes the building. As the city's first federal building, and having been constructed during the Depression era, the building carries the symbolism of the federal government's assistance to small communities through its public buildings programs. Locally, the construction of the post office was a major civic event and was viewed as a major accomplishment in the young town's development.

ARCHITECTURE

The Torrington Post Office is a well-preserved example of Neo-Classical public architecture and post office construction. Although the design and floor plan are based on standardized plans developed by the Office of Supervising Architect, the execution of the detailing and use of materials distinguish this building from equivalently scaled examples in Wyoming and the West. It is not only locally significant, but is also significant on a statewide basis under Criterion C. The characteristics that contribute to significance include the marble entry architrave, and bas relief terra cotta frieze, decorative panels and eagle relief panel above the main entry. Further, the Art Deco flavor of the embellishment is the only such example in a Wyoming post office. Architecturally, the building also represents the transition in federal design from the strong Beaux-Arts tradition of the first two decades of the century to the "Stripped" or "Starved Classical" buildings of the mid- to late-1930s. The Torrington Post Office retains not only the classic symmetry, but also the richness of detail-

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Williams, Ruth, "Torrington", WPA MS#1298 (Cheyenne, Wyoming: State Archives, Museums and Historical Department).
2. "Agricultural Section," Torrington Telegram, October 7, 1935 pp 1-16.
3. "History of Torrington, Wyoming Post Office," from records of Curtiss Pott (Cheyenne, Wyoming: State Archives, Museums and Historical Department).
4. Torrington Post Office- various floor plans 1932 and 1966.
5. Torrington Telegram, various articles 1929-1933.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.64

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 3	5 6 7 5 5 0	46 5 7 2 0 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18, Block 6 - 2nd addition to the town of Torrington, Goshen County, Wyoming.

The site is rectangular with 200 feet of frontage along Main Street (western boundary) and a depth of 140 feet with frontage along 22nd avenue (northern boundary).

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

H. J. "Jim" Kolva, Senior Associate

ORGANIZATION

Institute for Urban & Local Studies

DATE

June 1986

STREET & NUMBER

W. 705 1st Avenue

TELEPHONE

(509) 458-6219

CITY OR TOWN

Spokane

STATE

WA 99204

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES NO NONE

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

John S. Benson

DATE

2-4-87

TITLE
Realty Acquisition Specialist, Principal

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

DATE

MAY 19 1987

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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colored terra cotta frieze. "United States Post Office" in raised bronze letters is centered in the frieze over the main entry.

Set above the frieze over the entry bay is a finely crafted terra cotta bas relief eagle with wings outstretched. The top of the panel extends slightly above the solid brick parapet. Also adorning the parapet (aligned over the window bays) are bas relief terra cotta panels in a stylized palmette motif. The palmette is flanked by stylized volutes with a zig-zag molding framing the top and reed molding framing the bottom (Art Deco influence). A sandstone coping course tops the parapet. Visible behind the parapet are five flat-roofed dormers aligned over the window bays.

The front facade is divided into five bays: a centered entry bay and flanking window bays. Four granite steps and landing flanked by square sandstone buttresses approach the ornate entry. Double, aluminum-framed (anodized bronze) glass doors topped by a large single-light transom window (original doors and transom window replaced) provide access to the building. Notable in its quality and uniqueness is the green marble (cut and polished) architrave en-framing the main entry. Flat, fluted pilasters frame the sides and support an entablature consisting of a plain frieze, projecting molded cornice, and stepped frontispiece with round head. A rosette with a small center rosette, radiating ribs, and outer edges of the petals crafted in bronze, occupies the center of the frontispiece. Octagonal bronze lanterns, which flare at the top and are adorned in the lower portions with a volute patterned grille, flank each side of the entryway.

The window bays which flank the entry are flat-arched and framed in brick. Flat sandstone sills define the bottoms and a belt course of vertically-aligned bricks across the entire facade defines the top. Square terra cotta insets in a four-leafed flower motif mark the upper corners of the windows. Flat polished green marble panels are inset above

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the window bays between the belt course and frieze. The sash is metal with fixed 5-light sidelight flanking a hinged 10-light center section. A transom window is located above and consists of 2-light sidelights flanking a hinged 4-light section.

The north facade consists of the original building and an addition to the rear (1967). The materials and detailing of the original building are similar to those of the front facade. This detailing is carried almost exactly to the rear addition, except that concrete is substituted for the sandstone of the original construction. With the exception of a slight difference in brick coloration and the joint line, the difference in brick coloration and the joint line, the difference between the original building and addition is barely discernible.

The original portion of the north facade is divided into equally spaced window bays. The four forward bays are identical to those of the front facade. The rear bay is shortened and consists of a metal sash window with six lights in the center section flanked by 3-light sidelights. The top is aligned with the tops of the full-sized bays. A narrow, vertically-aligned 4-light window is located between this window and the adjacent bay. The brick belt course topping the window bays, inset marble panels, terra cotta frieze, and inset terra cotta panels of the parapet is identical to the front facade. Three roof dormers are visible above the parapet.

The addition is divided into three equally spaced bays. The window in the bay adjacent to the original building is small with six lights in fixed metal sash. The windows of the two rearward bays are identical to the full-sized windows of the original building. The wall detailing is identical to the original. A flat, built-up tar composition roof tops the addition.

The south facade consists of the original building and rear addition. The facade of the original building is identical to that of the north except for the following details: the five window bays contain full-sized windows; and five dormers are located in the roof.

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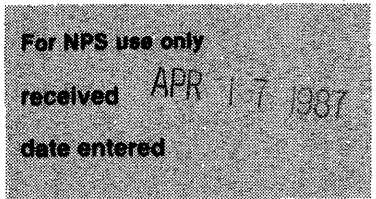
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The addition projects southward from the facade line of the original building and is dominated by the loading platform. A full-storied wing projects approximately 10 feet (detailing identical to original facade) then steps down to the flat metal roof of the platform. The platform wall terminates at the extension of the belt course which defines the top of the window bays. The west wall of the extended wing is solid brick. The south wall of the loading platform is recessed, brick-faced, and contains three doors--one pedestrian and two loading.

The rear facade of the addition (facade of original building removed) is detailed identically to the front and side facades. Five window bays, also identical to the front and side facades, are aligned correspondingly to the bays of the front facade. The portion of the facade which comprises the southward extension is windowless, but is marked by an inset marble panel between the brick belt course and frieze. The stepped-down wall of the loading platform contains a single metal overhead loading door.

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ing (although reduced in projection) that is lacking in the later examples in Wyoming and across the nation. Although the building received an addition to the rear in 1967, it is consistent with the original design detailing and does not affect the integrity of the original design.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT/COMMUNITY PLANNING

Several years of local effort on the part of local citizens was invested in lobbying efforts to finally gain an appropriation for a post office in Torrington. A committee was established by the Lion's Club for the expressed purpose of gaining a federal building. The progress of various public building acts was given close attention in the community in the hopes that Torrington would be included. The local significance of the building is demonstrated in an article of June 8, 1933 (as building was nearing completion) by the following statement: "It is the greatest single accomplishment of the little town which sprang to life in 1889 in a dreary waste of sagebrush, cactus, and marks the turning point to even greater development in the years to come." The building was considered as a "Monument to Spirit and Vision of the Men Who Always Believed in Torrington". It represented Torrington's bright future and economic growth. The building also symbolized the successful efforts on the part of the local citizens through its representatives in Washington to gain its first federal building and its manifestation of the federal presence.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Torrington, with a 1980 population of 5,441, is the county seat of Goshen County in southeastern Wyoming. Torrington serves as the trade center for the surrounding agricultural region. Government and public service comprise the largest sector of the city's employment base. The local economy is based on agriculture (sugar beets, grain crops, and cattle) and the largest individual private sector employer is the Holly Sugar Corporation.

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Torrington was named in 1889 by William G. Curtis, a local rancher, who needed a name for the post office that he was establishing (July 20th). The area developed slowly with cattle ranching as the primary industry. With the construction of the railroad in 1900 and the development of the North Platte Irrigation project in the late 1910s, the town of Torrington began to grow. In 1900 the post office moved from the John Cameron homestead west of the city to the new townsite with Mrs. G.W. Powell as postmaster.

Farming (potatoes and sugar beets) on the newly irrigated lands began to replace cattle ranching as the dominant industry. From a population of 155 in 1910, Torrington reached 1,301 in 1920 and 1,811 in 1930. It was during this era that the city experienced the growth of its downtown and civic core. Torrington seemed to weather the Depression without the economic setback experienced by the rest of the nation and continued its growth and development. In 1940 the population reached 2,344 and since that time has shown moderate but steady growth.

The post office is located at the northern fringe of the central business district. The building is located at the southeast corner of Main Street, the city's primary commercial street, and 22nd Avenue. A modern bank is located to the north at the northeast corner of the intersection. A frame office building is located diagonally from the post office at the northwest corner of the intersection. Single family residences are located north along Main Street. Single-story commercial buildings (primarily brick) are located south of the post office along Main Street.

LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TORRINGTON
POST OFFICE

As Christmas 1929 approached, the Torrington Telegram reported (December 12th) a gift from Representative Carter of Wyoming. He had recently introduced a bill for Torrington's first federal building. Also included in the appropriations bill were the Wyoming cities of Greybull,

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Thermopolis, Green River, and Kemmerer. Carter's bill had been the result of several years of effort on the part of local citizens to secure a federal building for the city. Ward Hildreth had been appointed as chairman of the Lion's Club committee to complete that task two years before. According to the article, he had been working quietly, but steadily, and had much correspondence with the late Senator F.E. Warren, who had virtually promised the building in 1930. An article of December 26th announced that the city would receive an appropriation of \$75,000 for a post office.

The year 1930 was one of building in Torrington--"a big year for Goshen County" (as recapped in the January 15, 1931 issue of the Torrington Telegram). The American Legion had finished their new meeting hall, the sheriff's administration building was completed, and the St. Joseph's Orphanage was dedicated in early September with a large crowd attending. Citizens were looking forward to 1931 with the promise of more construction. Part of the hopes centered on a new post office.

1930 had begun with the announcement in the Torrington Telegram that Torrington would be receiving a new federal building (January 30th). The funding would come from the regular appropriation bill from which Wyoming would receive \$180,000 to be divided among three towns in accordance with their post office receipts. Green River and Thermopolis were the towns named. The Torrington Telegram noted that the additional appropriation bill contained a "joker" in that postal receipts had to be in excess of \$20,000 before a town would be authorized for a post office. "This, of course, would eliminate Wyoming other than being allowed the three buildings under the regular appropriation as all towns in Wyoming not having federal buildings do have annual receipts less than \$20,000."

On April 10th, the Torrington Telegram reported that Torrington had been appropriated \$60,000 for a new post office and that construction would begin in the spring of 1931. Two articles in February of 1931 (5th and 26th)

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reported the progress of Torrington's hoped for federal building. Newcastle, Wheatland, and Kemmerer were also slated to receive buildings.) But it wasn't until March 5th that the Senate's passage was announced. Torrington was to receive \$90,000 for purchase of a site and construction of the post office.

On June 18, 1931, the Torrington Telegram reported that the postal site inspector from Washington, D.C. was in the city to receive bids for possible post office locations. An article of August 6th announced the site selection. Eight lots offered by the Lincoln Land Company located on Main just north of the Eaton Garage were selected. Nine other offers had been received.

The year 1932 opened with the news (January 7th) that the plans for the federal building were almost completed. This fact had been announced by Senator Robert D. Casey. On March 24th bids for the building's construction were advertised. An article of April 21st reported that the blueprints were available for inspection. According to Postmaster L.E. Eaton, the plans portrayed a "very imposing structure". It would be a handsome addition to the assets of Torrington.

Finally, construction was to begin. An article of July 7th reported that excavation, under the guidance of N.F. Vaughan of Building Reconstruction, Inc. of Chicago, would begin the next day. The firm had been the winning bidder in a competition that had involved 17 other firms. Apparently, work had been delayed while a decision was being made in Washington as to what building materials would be used. The use of Wyoming sandstone was decided. An article of July 28th reported that local labor would be used to the extent possible.

As construction progressed, the Torrington Telegram announced that Dos Shoemaker, a "Democratic wheel-horse", was named as the new postmaster (May 18, 1933). On May 25th, it was reported that a fire in the adjacent shoe store had threatened the post office. A June 8th article, with the

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sub-caption "Imposing Structure Outstanding Monument to Spirit and Vision of Men Who Always Believed in Torrington--Heralds Brilliant Future", reported that finishing touches were being made on the beautiful new post office. According to the article, the building was the "greatest single accomplishment of the little town which sprang to life in 1889 in a dreary waste of sagebrush, cactus, and marks the turning point to even greater development in the years to come."

In the following week (June 15th), the Torrington Telegram discussed the upcoming public opening of the post office on the next Saturday. On June 22nd, 1933, the post office opened for business.

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Torrington MPO

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