

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 99001648

Date Listed: 01/21/00

**Property Name: United States Post Office and Courthouse
State: GA**

County: Richmond

Multiple Name: N/A

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

1/21/00
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

In Section 8, the level of significance is given as national. The documentation, however, supports a local level of significance. An amendment is made to the nomination to change the level of significance to local.

In Section 8, the Period of Significance is given as 1916 and the Significant Dates are given as 1915-1916 and 1992-1996. An amendment is made to the nomination to delete the Significant Dates 1992-1996 since they do not fall within the Period of Significance.

This information was confirmed with Constance Ramirez, GSA FPO

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

DEC - 6 1999

1648

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 United States Post Office and Courthouse

other names/site number United States Courthouse

2. Location

street & number 500 East Ford Street
city, town Augusta vicinity of 245
county Richmond code GA
state Georgia code GA zip code 30309

not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property:

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property:	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	1	
sites		
structures		
objects		
total	1	

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of previous listing: n/a

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

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 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 the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Constance W. Ramirez
Signature of certifying official

November 1, 1999
Date

Constance W. Ramirez
GSA Federal Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

R. Dean Cloves
Signature of commenting or other official

10-20-99
Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

() determined eligible for the National Register

() determined not eligible for the National Register

() removed from the National Register

() other, explain:

() see continuation sheet

B. D. Savage *11/21/00*

for

Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

GOVERNMENT/post office = Post Office
GOVERNMENT/courthouse = Federal Courthouse
GOVERNMENT/government office = Federal offices

Current Functions:

GOVERNMENT/courthouse = Federal Courthouse
GOVERNMENT/government office = Federal offices

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Renaissance Revival

Materials:

foundation granite
walls marble
roof clay tile
other marble: interior - staircase, floors, wainscoting
wood: interior - paneling in courtroom

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The United States Courthouse in Augusta, Georgia was completed in 1916. It was designed and built under the auspices of the U.S. Treasury Department, Oscar Wenderoth, Supervising Architect. The building was extended to the east (rear) in 1936 to enlarge the postal work area. In 1960, the building was modernized with a new passenger elevator, central air and aluminum front doors. In 1971, a fire escape and manual fire alarm system were installed; and acoustical ceilings and contemporary lighting were installed in the second and third floor corridors. Between 1992 and 1996, the building was vacated for a rehabilitation project which included restoration of the original courtroom ceiling, as well as the second and third floor corridors; new security screen in the lobby; new roof; asbestos removal; and the addition of new heating and air conditioning system and electrical wiring.

The United States Courthouse occupies a city block two blocks north of Main Street. The building is bounded by Ford Street on the west (main) elevation, Telfair Street on the north, 8th Street on the east, and Walker Street on the south. It is located across the street to the east from Barrett Park, and to the northeast from the new (1973) U. S. Post Office building which occupies the site of the original train station, Union Station.

The U-shaped building is an imposing Federal building built in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. It is a concrete and masonry structure with steel and wood framing. The exterior walls are cream statuary marble, provided by the Blue Ridge Marble Company of Nelson, Georgia. East elevation walls are faced with brick at the basement level. The building has three stories, a full basement and a mezzanine over the rear mailing platform.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7--Description

The original red mission tile roof remains, with minor replacements made in kind. The main facade is divided into nine bays by fluted marble Corinthian pilasters which support a denticulated marble cornice above the second floor level. The third floor is divided into nine bays by paneled pilasters which support dentil and egg and dart motifs along the frieze. Scrolled brackets support modillions beneath the soffit. The modillions are separated by terra cotta panels. The front (Ford Street) approach to the building is via broad granite steps which traverse the elevation and lead to a red quarry tile landing at the entrance. Originally seven entry doors opened into the lobby from the landing. At the present time the three central openings are used as doorways with the four flanking openings having been reduced to house windows. The ornate bracketed marble openings are capped by a denticulated cornice featuring egg and dart, and rosette carvings. Fanlights, ornamented by detailed wrought iron grilles appear above each of the seven openings. An unornamented cartouche decorates the wall above each fan light. A large window is located at either end of the principal facade. Each window rests on a marble console and is set within a marble surround featuring a cornice ornamented by egg and dart and acanthus carving. An arched panel above the windows features a pink marble roundel inset. An elaborately carved cartouche with an eagle design appears above each arched window. Original bronze Gothic style wall lanterns flank the entry doors.

On the second floor, nine double casement windows are located directly above the first floor windows and doors, and open onto cast iron balusters. The end windows feature a marble console supporting the cast iron balustrade. The windows feature a four-light transom. Simple double-hung windows appear at the third floor level.

The north and south facades are divided into seven bays and are treated in the same manner as the main (west) facade. Instead of door openings on the first floor, there is a row of Venetian windows with paneled spandrels. The end windows are consoled and ornamented with pink marble roundels, as are the end windows of the main elevation.

The east elevation is the secondary elevation of the building. The original postal work area projects from the U-shape of the building into a loading dock. The 1992-1996 renovation included the addition of a drive through and gated parking area at the east. Projections to the north and south are finished in a similar manner to the other elevations. Each projection is two bays wide. First floor windows replicate the end windows of the other elevations and are richly ornamented. Second floor windows are balustraded.

The interior of the building retains many significant original features and finishes. The first floor retains the original lobby configuration with its elaborate marble staircase. The second floor contains the Federal courtroom and offices. The third floor has offices.

The original lobby ran north to south along the west (main) elevation and turned to the east at both ends. The north end contains the ornate monumental main stair of cream statuary marble with an elaborately carved marble newel post. Light grey marble floors feature dark grey borders and bands, and have verde antique marble baseboards. All walls have 3' high royal antique marble wainscoting with molded cap. The ceiling of the main north-south lobby is a vaulted arcade with eight elliptical arches with paneled undersides. Doorways and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7--Description

windows are enriched with royal antique marble picture frame surrounds with ornamental architraves. Former postal teller cages and boxes have been removed and replaced with plain painted plaster or wallboard, set back from the wall plane to articulate the arches. One notable feature of the lobby is the presence of several original marble postal tables (also acting as radiator housings). The elaborately carved tables have a bracketed glass writing shelf projected out from the front and bronze grillwork in the lower face to allow air circulation.

The District Courtroom is on the second floor. The original ceiling of the courtroom was restored in the 1992-1996 rehabilitation, thereby restoring the courtroom to near-original appearance. The room features full height wood paneling with engaged wood Doric pilasters supporting a carved frieze of triglyphs. The wall behind the judge's bench is curved with a coffered colonnaded half dome above. The bench itself rests between free-standing wood Doric columns, and is flanked by free-standing brass lamps. Fifteen inch baseboards are verde antique marble. The trabeated ceiling features oak ceiling beams and a deep plaster frieze with ornamental grille insets.

Second and third floor corridors were also restored in 1992-1996. The corridors feature the original marble floors with marble baseboards. Walls are plaster; and the plaster ceilings feature wood crown mold. A significant number of original oak doors remain throughout the second and third floors.

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): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture, Politics, Government

Period of Significance:

1916

Significant Dates:

1915-1916 - construction

1992 - 1996 - restoration of original courtroom

Significant Person(s):

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Oscar Wenderoth - U.S. Treasury

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The United States Courthouse in Augusta, Georgia is a significant building because it is an excellent representation of the Italian Renaissance Revival style, a popular style of the early 1900s; and because it is a continuing symbol of the Federal presence in Augusta.

The Italian Renaissance Revival style became popular in the late 19th Century due to a revival of interest in classical architecture which came about as a result of the 1893 Columbian Exposition. It was a style that catered to the growing taste for richness in public buildings. Indeed, in the early 1900s, the Federal government promoted the concept that government buildings should be monumental and beautiful. Characteristics of this style which are evident in the U.S. Courthouse include: symmetrical elevations with bold cornices; arched windows; different window designs at each floor; use of brackets, either as functional or decorative elements; use of arches; a veranda extending along an entire facade; use of sculptural ornamentation. Bryan Halterman, in his book *From City to Countryside: A Guidebook to the Landmarks of Augusta, Georgia*, remarks that the courthouse is "one of the most sophisticated examples of public architecture in the city."

The history of the city of Augusta is punctuated by significant architecture. The city served as the state capital during the ten year period while the town of Louisville was being laid out as the seat of the state government. By the time the state government moved, Augusta was a commercial and cultural center. Many architecturally significant residences were built during the late 18th and early 19th Centuries. During the mid-1800s important public buildings, such as the Old Medical College building, the Academy of Richmond County, and the first Presbyterian Church were constructed. Shortly before the turn of the 20th Century, Augusta became a popular summer resort (for vacationing Southerners) and winter resort (for vacationing Northerners). During this period commercial buildings, theaters and resort hotels were built and Augusta's importance as a golfing center was established. The cosmopolitan atmosphere attracted talented, prominent architects to the city and it was during this period that the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse was planned and constructed. The building, originally designed as a United States Post Office and Courthouse was sited on the edge of the commercial district. The Post Office was part of a plan to beautify the area near Union Station. In 1911, the building site was conveyed by the city of Augusta to the Federal government in exchange for the property adjacent to the site (to the west). This property became Barrett Plaza, a central park named for the mayor of Augusta at the time. In keeping with the beautification plan, the Post Office/ Courthouse and the Plaza Hotel were built on either side of the park, with Union Station remaining to the south of the plaza.

The U.S. Treasury Department with Oscar Wenderoth as Supervising Architect constructed the building between 1915-1916 for a total cost of \$250,000. Wenderoth, appointed Supervising Architect by President Taft in 1912, was an architect who had trained with Carrere and Hastings in New York. The Carrere and Hastings firm was recognized nationally for their expertise in executing designs in the Classical Revival styles. The building was opened as a Post Office and Courthouse in 1916. In 1936 the postal work floor was extended within the U-shape of the original building. The 1960s saw a general modernization of the building with the addition of elevators,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

central air conditioning and aluminum front doors. A fire escape and manual fire alarm system were installed in 1971 and acoustical ceilings were installed in the courtroom and second and third floor corridors. In October of 1973 the Postal Service relocated to a new building across the street on the site of the old Union Station. During a four year period between 1992 and 1996 the building was renovated and the courtroom and corridors restored to near original appearance. The building serves today as the headquarters for all U.S. District Court offices for the Augusta Division of the Southern District of Georgia. The impressive original courtroom is still used for the District Court. Though its function has changed from Post Office/ Courthouse to United States Courthouse, seat of the District Court; the building remains a beautiful and lasting symbol of the Federal presence in Augusta.

National Register Criteria

The United States Post Office and Courthouse in Augusta, Georgia meets National Register criteria 'A' because, as a Federal courthouse, it played an important role in the development of the city. The activities which took place within the building convey significant events which shaped the political development of Augusta, as well as of Georgia.

The United States Post Office and Courthouse in Augusta, Georgia meets National Register Criteria 'C' because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Italian Renaissance Revival style of architecture. Characteristics include: symmetrical elevations with bold cornices, arched, windows, different window designs on each floor, use of brackets as functional and/or decorative elements, use of arches, a veranda which extends along the main (west) facade, and use of sculptural ornamentation.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance (1916) is the date the construction was completed and the building occupied.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

See statement of significance.

9. Major Bibliographic References

- Cosain, Edward J. "The Story of Augusta". Augusta: Richmond County Board of Education, 1980.
- Gowans, Alan. Styles and Types of North American Architecture. New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992
- Halterman, Bryan. From City to Countryside: The Landmarks of Augusta. Augusta: Lamar Press, 1996.
- Lee, Joseph M., III. Augusta: A Postcard History. Great Britain: Arcadia Publishing, 1997.
- Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780. A Guide To Styles. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1969.
- Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc., 1970

Previous documentation on file (NPS): () N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued**
date issued:
- 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:**

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1 acre

UTM References

A) Zone 17 Easting 410100 Northing 3703860

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the property are Telfair Street on the north, Eighth Street on the east, Walker Street on the south and East Ford Street on the west.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the United States Post Office and Courthouse in Augusta, Georgia.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John H. Myers
organization Architectural Conservation Center
street & number 1100 Circle 75 Parkway, Suite 800
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30339
telephone (404) 894-3864 **date** May 18, 1999

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) () not applicable

name/title
organization
street and number
city or town state zip code
telephone

() consultant
() regional development center preservation planner
() other:

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: United States Courthouse
City or Vicinity: Augusta
County: Richmond
State: Georgia
Photographer: John H. Myers
Negative Filed: General Services Administration
Date Photographed: September, 1998

Description of Photograph(s):

United States Post Office and Courthouse
500 East Fort Street, Augusta, Richmond County, Georgia

Photo No. 1: West facade

Photo No. 2: South facade

Photo No. 3: West and South facades at southwest corner, view towards northeast

Photo No. 4: East facade

Photo No. 5: West facade, window detail

Photo No. 6: Marble staircase in original postal lobby

Photo No. 7: Original marble postal desk in original postal lobby

Photo No. 8: Court lobby, second floor

Photo No. 9: Main courtroom, view to north

Photo No. 10: Main courtroom, ceiling detail