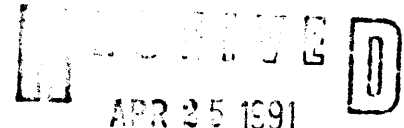


6041

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 Chehalis Main Post Office

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1031 NW Cascade N/A not for publication

city, town Chehalis N/A vicinity

state Washington code WA county Lewis code 041 zip code 98532

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic U.S. Post Offices In Washington, 1893 - 1941

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.

[Signature] 1-11-90
Signature of certifying official Date

U.S. Postal Service
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

[Signature] 12/15/89
Signature of commenting or other official Date

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:)

[Signature] 5/30/91

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

fn

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

U.S. Post Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Georgian Revival

foundation Concrete
walls Brick
Terra cotta
roof Copper
other Tar composition

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Chehalis MPO is a two-story red brick building on a raised basement platform. Georgian Revival in style, the symmetrically-arranged building is divided into five bays--a centered entry bay and flanking window bays. An ornate terra-cotta entry architrave with immediately-flanking Palladian windows embellish the flat facade. Rectangular terra-cotta panels with bas-relief garlands are aligned over the flat-ached corner window bays. A molded terra-cotta entablature with a fretwork frieze and projecting cornice terminate the vertically-emphasized first floor. A low brick parapet rests on the cornice, behind which are three triangular-pedimented dormers which project from a copper-clad hipped roof.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Footings, basement walls, and floor slabs are reinforced concrete. Structural support is provided by steel beams with terra-cotta block interior walls and brick exterior walls. The roof is hipped and clad with copper. Sandstone is used to face the raised basement walls, for sills, and for coping. Terra cotta is used for ornamental detailing and granite is used for the exterior stairs and landings.

Two stories in height, the building is faced with red brick in English bond. The elevations emphasize the first story with the second-story window dormers visible above and behind the solid brick parapet. The front facade (east) is symmetrical with two window bays flanking each side of the centered entry bay. The entry and immediately flanking windows are framed by semi-circular brick arches while the smaller end windows are flat-arched.

The three semi-circular arches are defined by single header courses which rest upon square terra-cotta springers--those of the entry bay adorned with a rosette pattern. Prominent terra-cotta keystones also embellish the arches--that of the entry bay in a scroll motif. The entry consists of double aluminum-framed glass doors over which is set a transom window with leaded glass in a curvilinear diamond pat-

See continuation sheet

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tern. Embellishing the entry is an ornate architrave of terra cotta. Dominating the architrave is a broken pediment supported by ancons. Within the pediment gap is a decorative urn. A leaded glass fanlight (web motif) fills the arch above the pediment. Cast-iron lanterns, affixed to the wall, flank the entry. Five granite steps and approach landing, flanked by wrought-iron balusters, provide access to entry.

Palladian windows immediately flank the entry. The arched portion consists of a six-light fan-light framed by a fan-pattern arch inset. Pilaster-framed side-lights (three-over-three-light) support the arched section. The main section is double-hung wood with sixteen-over-twelve-lights. The end bays contain twelve-over-twelve-light, double-hung wood sash. Flat, voussoired-brick arches with simple terra-cotta keystones frame the bays. Bas-relief terra-cotta panels (garland pattern) are set above the end windows.

The facade is terminated by a terra-cotta entablature with a slightly projecting cornice. "United States Post Office" is inscribed in the frieze. Flanking the inscription is a fretwork pattern which extends to the corners. Paterae, aligned over the end windows, provide additional frieze ornamentation. Three triangular-pedimented dormers extending from the copper roof are behind the parapet.

Identical to each other, the north and south facades are detailed with the same components and materials as the front. Divided into three sections--slightly projecting single-bay corners and a five-bay central section--the sides are symmetrically-arranged. The corner and central windows bays are identical to the corresponding bays of the front. The entablature is also identical to that previously described. Five pedimented dormers, aligned over the Palladian windows, extend from the hipped roof.

The rear facade is dominated by the mailing platform which extends its entire width. It is concrete with brick exterior walls and is covered by a flat built-up tar composition roof with projecting marquee. The entablature and parapet (identical to front and sides) adorn the rear wall of the main building. Three pedimented dormers extend from the roof behind the parapet.

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
Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1934-1941

Significant Dates

Site acq.-1931
Const.-1934

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wetmore, James A., Acting Supervising
Architect/General Government

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

The Chehalis MPO is an unaltered and well-preserved example of a small town combined post office and federal office building. In the Georgian Revival style, the building is one of two in the state that exhibit this design (Colfax is the other). Although designed from standardized plans, the building is rich in historical architectural detail and is the only example of its design-style in the city. Stately in character, the building symbolizes the federal presence. It is the city's first and only federally-constructed post office and represents the success of local citizens in lobbying their elected officials in Washington. Finally, it is a legacy of the federal response to a national economic emergency and its programs of the Depression.

ARCHITECTURE

The building is a good example of the federal government's use of classically-inspired design for small town post offices/federal office buildings. Characteristic of the post office designs of the early-1930s, the design is one of the final representations of the Beaux-Arts tradition before the transition to the modern design movement. The facades are flat with only slight projections made by the cornice line and the broken pediment over the main entry. Facade detailing is provided by Palladian windows, garland-embellished terra-cotta panels, and fretwork of the terra-cotta frieze. The grouping of the arched windows and the arched, pedimented entry lend prominence to the front facade. The pedimented dormers above the parapet and projecting from the hipped copper roof also contribute to the stateliness of the building. The building also marks the end of a specific era in post office design and construction (1930 to World War II) after which the design emphasis moved toward efficient

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Bee-Nugget (Chehalis); various articles 1930 - 1934.
2. Original Building Plans; 1933.
3. Construction Progress Photographs; March 1933 - December 1933.
4. Ramsey, Guy R. Postmarked Washington: Lewis and Cowlitz Counties. Lewis County Historical Society, 1978.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

USPS Facilities Service Center
San Bruno, CA 94099-0330

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 0.45

UTM References

A 10 502580 5167510
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

Quadrangle Name: Centralia
Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8, Block 3, Sunnyside Addition. The site is on the Northwest corner of Cascade Avenue and Center Street. Beginning at the southwest corner, thence W200', N98', E200', S98' to point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the property originally purchased by the federal government for the post office site.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title H.J. "Jim" Kolva, Project Manager; Steve Franks, Research Assistant

organization Institute For Urban & Local Studies date March 1989

street & number West 705 First Avenue telephone (509) 458-6219

city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99204

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automated buildings. This is one of the last buildings to carry the strong Beaux-Arts elements; those that followed were reduced and simplified. The design is unique among the major buildings of Chehalis and the building is an important element in the overall architectural legacy of the city. For this reason, the building is locally-significant under Criterion C.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The building is a symbol of the federal government, one of three levels of government that are manifested in brick and stone in the community. It also represents the federal government's response to the national economic emergency of the Depression, in which the federally-sponsored building projects were intended to provide relief to the local unemployed. More importantly, getting a federal post office meant that the community had been recognized by Uncle Sam; the community had proven its stability. Finally, the erection of the federal edifice is the result of several years of effort by the Chamber of Commerce through Congressman Albert Johnson and is symbolic of that effort and era in the city's development. Therefore, the building is locally significant under Criterion A.

It is notable that the post office received by Chehalis is much larger than that received by its "twin city" of Centralia in 1937. In 1930, the population of Chehalis (4,907) was little more than half of Centralia (8,058). Furthermore, Chehalis received its federal building/post office prior to Centralia. This may be attributable to the fact that Chehalis was the county seat and, therefore, had a higher priority; or that Congressman Johnson favored Chehalis over Centralia. Allocations for the Centralia and Chehalis facilities were requested in 1931 (\$110,000 for Centralia), but it was not until late 1935 that a site in Centralia was actually selected.

LOCAL CONTEXT

The City of Chehalis is approximately four miles south of Centralia in Lewis County, midway between Seattle and Portland on Interstate 5. It is the second largest city in the county, with an estimated 1983 population of 6,300. It

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shares a market and employment base with its twin city of Centralia, keying on the industries on timber, agriculture, and, to a lesser extent, manufacturing. In addition, Chehalis is the county seat of Lewis County.

Chehalis was founded on the site of a 640-acre Donation Land Claim, taken by Schuyler Saunders in 1882. Prior to 1859, his place was called Saunders Bottom and was dreaded by travelers from Cowlitz Landing to the Puget Sound because of the low land that was the southern part of the claim. In 1872 legislative action was sought to change the county seat from Claquato to Chehalis; the name was also changed to Chehalis at that time (an Indian name meaning "shifting sands"). In January of 1884, the name of the post office was changed from Saunders Prairie to Chehalis. The Northern Pacific railroad reached Chehalis in 1873 and the city grew as an agricultural and lumbering center. By 1890 Chehalis had a population of 1,309. In the 1890s fire razed most of the downtown commercial buildings, which were replaced by new buildings of brick. Between 1900 and 1910 Chehalis' population more than doubled, growing from 1,775 to 4,507. Chehalis' population since then has been relatively stable, featuring slow growth except for slight setbacks in the 1930s, when the Depression affected the city's agricultural and lumber base, and the 1950s. In 1980 it had a population of 6,100.

On the northwest corner of Cascade Avenue and Center Street (fronting on Cascade), the Post Office is south of the downtown commercial center and two blocks from the city hall and library. It is one block northwest of the County Court-house. The land uses immediately surrounding the property are mixed, including single family homes to the immediate south, the rear of a funeral chapel to the east, two churches and commercial buildings to the north, and commercial and vacant land to the west.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE
CHEHALIS MAIN POST OFFICE

The evolution of the Chehalis Main Post Office was reported in the Chehalis Bee-Nugget. The February 6, 1931 issue announced that "150,000 For Post Office Building in

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Chehalis is Asked." The paper reported that the campaign that had begun two years previously by the Chehalis Chamber of Commerce to secure a post office was given a boost when A. W. Mellon of the Treasury Department submitted to President Hoover a recommendation for a \$150,000 post office. It was expected that it would be included in the \$49,515,000 appropriation for public projects. On February 20th it was reported that "Federal Building in Chehalis Advanced in Bill." The House was reviewing a second deficiency bill for \$50,108,000 to care for exigencies and allocating \$69,940,000 for public government departments this year. The bill included Chehalis, Colfax (\$80,000), and Pasco post office and courthouse (\$220,000).

A March 6th article reported that the Chehalis post office bill was now a law. The selection of a post office site was announced on July 3rd. The post office would be constructed at Cascade and Center on property tendered by E. J. Waldorf and John Garbe for \$9,200 (15 sites were submitted for consideration). On September 4th, the Bee-Nugget reported a meeting between Congressman Albert Johnson of Hoquiam and the Chamber of Commerce Building Committee. The building plan was making headway. Other local news of importance included the White Pass road construction, which would employ area unemployed, and the jump in prices of eggs and butter-fat. The reality of a new post office came nearer with the December 25th announcement that the two dwellings on the selected site would have to be removed in 60 days.

On March 18, 1932, an article reported that construction of the new post office would begin in the summer and that the plans were underway. An article of July 29th reported that a rush in Washington, D.C. had held up the post office building and that the drawings were nearing completion. Two other buildings were under construction in the city: Masonic Temple (\$15,000) and the Christian Science Church. The letting of a highway contract to relieve unemployment and the community's big event, the Southwestern Washington Fair, were reported in August.

On September 30th, the call for post office construction bids was announced. An article of October 28th discussed the plans of the new post office which would be of "Colonial Design." Other articles of the month reported the remodeling

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of the Sears and Roebuck store and that lumber workers would support President Hoover. The national elections were reported in November: "Next Tuesday's election would be one of the most important in our history" (November 4th); "Democratic Cyclone Struck Republicans" (November 11th).

The news that the Murch Brothers Construction Company of St. Louis had won the post office construction contract with a low bid of \$99,999 for sandstone or \$97,500 for terra cotta was reported on January 20, 1933. A February 3rd article announced that the post office contractor would be in town next week and that he would attempt to use local labor. On February 17th, it was reported that work had begun on the post office. Brick would be supplied by the Chehalis Brick and Tile Company and terra cotta by the Washington Brick, Lime, and Sewer Pipe Co. of Spokane. An article of February 24th reported that Boise Stone Co. would supply the cut stone and that the Vermont Marble Co. would supply marble.

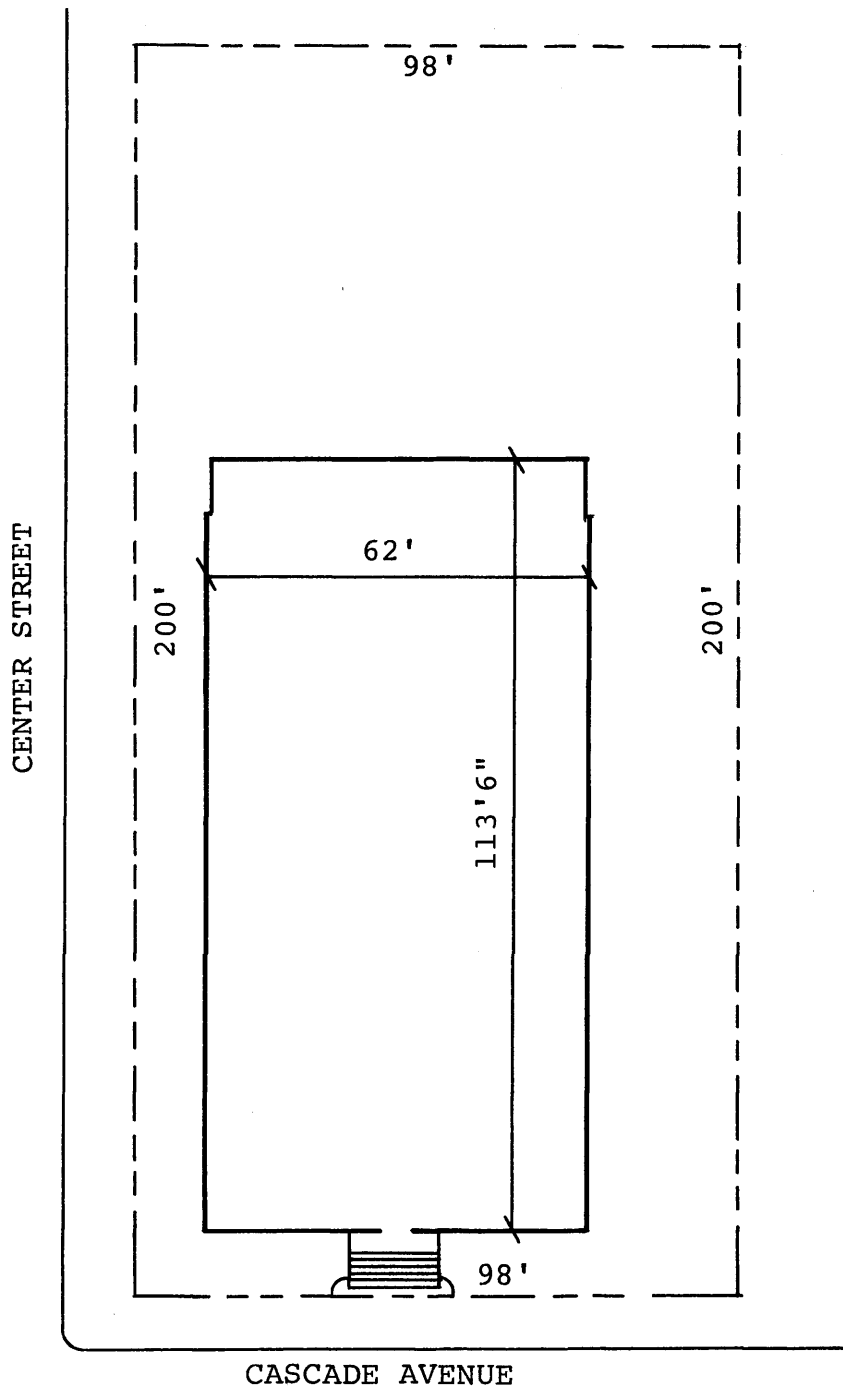
The banking crisis was reported in March: "Confidence and Calmness While the Banking Situation Clears"; "Local Banks are Solvent" (March 10); and "The Banking Holiday is Ended..." (March 17). An article of March 24th announced that a local welfare board had been established under the Emergency Relief Commission.

The new post office was finally ready to open in January of 1934. An article of the 12th reported the opening of the Federal Building on Wednesday. The high school orchestra entertained the "large crowd" of several hundred. The postmaster, J. R. Imus, provided an address and attributed the size of the "edifice" to former Congressman Albert Johnson, one of "our post office inspector friends of this community." Johnson was responsible for increasing the original appropriation from \$90,000 to \$150,000. In his address, Imus praised the native Douglas Fir instead of the usual oak or California Redwood; Washington coal instead of California oil; and other considerable materials, supplies, and services of local origin. An extensive article was carried on the 19th which showed a photo of the "beautiful and commodious new federal building and post office in Chehalis" and recounted the history of the post office in the community.

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CASCADE AVENUE

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The following information is the same for all the
photographs listed:

1. Chehalis MPO
2. Chehalis, Washington
3. Jim Kolva
4. January 1984
5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center,
San Bruno, CA.

Photo No. 1 (negative #16A)

6. View to northwest

Photo No. 2 (negative #17A)

6. View to west

Photo No. 3 (negative #20A)

6. View to southwest