

1996

OCT 16 1989

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# 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 Nephi Main Post Office  
other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 10 North Main N/A not for publication  
city, town Nephi N/A vicinity  
state Utah code UT county Juab code 023 zip code 84648

### 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>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Historic U.S. Post Offices in Utah 1900-1941

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] 12-19-88  
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.

[Signature] NOV 11, 88  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
Utah 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:)

Patrick Andrews 11/28/89

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
U.S. Post Office

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
U.S. Post Office

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

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Italian Renaissance

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Brick

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roof Tar composition  
other Sandstone

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Nephi Post Office is one-story cream-colored brick building resting on a raised basement platform. Reinforced concrete is used for footings, basement walls and floor slabs, and steel framing provides structural support. Divided into three sections, each with a single bay, the front facade is symmetrical, relatively flat, and Classically-proportioned. The slightly projecting central section contains the main entry which is distinguished by a richly detailed compound arch of sandstone. Rich sandstone detailing also adorns the round-arched window bays in which are set coupled round-arched windows. Sandstone is also used for facing on the basement walls, water table, belt course, bracketed cornice, coping, and delineation of the building's corners. Granite is used for the entry stairs and landing. A flat built-up tar composition roof covers the building.

**PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The front facade (west) is relatively flat, symmetrical and Classically-proportioned. The facade is divided into three equal segments with the central portion projecting slightly. Each segment contains a single bay--the main entry in the center, and window bays in each of the flanking wings. The basement wall is raised three feet and faced with dressed sandstone blocks above which is a molded sandstone water table. Light cream-colored brick faces the main floor. Rusticated sandstone quoins mark the corners of the facade segments. In addition, the corners of the central section are embellished by quarter round pilasters in a cable motif. The top of the main floor is defined by a molded sandstone cornice flanked above and below by sandstone belt courses.

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A low parapet, capped by molded sandstone coping, completes the facade.

The central entry section is dominated by a decorative semi-circular arched entry bay: a compound arch supported by flat molded pilasters coupled with quarter round pilasters on the arch's interior edge. The quarter round pilasters are decorated with a diamond guilloche with four-petaled flowers in the openings. Corinthian capitals (Renaissance influence) top the pilasters. The outer portion of the arch is adorned with a echinus and astragal molding, and the interior portion is adorned by a diamond guilloche molding (same as pilaster). A simple cable molding divides the plain sandstone field between the above described moldings. Within the arch are double aluminum-framed (bronze anodized) glass storm doors, topped by an aluminum-framed transom window. Above the transom window is a an eleven-light wood sash fan window. Behind the storm doors and transom are the original doors--ten-light glass panels, framed with wood.

Narrow two-over-two double-hung wooden sash windows, each covered with an ornate iron grille, flank each side of the entry bay (one each side). Circular sandstone bas relief medallions are aligned over each of the windows. One medallion depicts an eagle and the other, the head of Mercury. Centered in the frieze over the entry is "United States Post Office" in gilded incised letters. The cornice is supported by acanthus leaf brackets. Other adornment of the entablature includes egg and dart molding between the architrave and frieze and a cable molding on the cornice.

The window bays of the flanking wings are defined by decorative semi-circular arches framed by dressed sandstone (quoined). Quarter-round cable molding is set within the interior edge of the quoined framing. Extending from the sills, the moldings rise in the form of pilasters to Corinthian capitals and then complete the arch intrados. Coupled semi-circular-arched windows are within the niches formed by the bay arches. (The window detailing is reminiscent of Italian Renaissance--Palazaaao Bartolomei.) Dressed sandstone voussoirs lie within the tympanums of the major arches, and flat molded sandstone pilasters divide the coupled windows. The sash is wood and consists of fixed eighteen-light and four-light fan sections. Plain sandstone panels lie below

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the sash, between the sills and water table.

The side (north and south) facades are essentially identical to each other. They are treated in the same manner as the front facade with respect to materials and detailing. The facades are modulated in three sections with each section recessed from the adjoining from front to rear. The front section is defined by sandstone quoins. A semi-circular arched bay with coupled arched windows, identical to the front facade, is centered in the front section. The middle section contains two equally-spaced, semi-circular-arched window bays. The bays are framed in brick with double gauged header courses forming the arches. Square plain sandstone springers support the arches. The windows are fixed metal sash with twenty-light rectangular sections topped by seven-light fan sections.

The rear section of the north facade contains a fixed nine-light metal sash window framed with a flat brick arch and sandstone sill at the main floor level and a fixed ten-light metal sash window aligned above on the mezzanine level. The rear section of the south facade contains a single-door entry accessed by concrete steps. A window, identical to that of the north facade, is aligned above the door.

The rear facade is symmetrical in elevation and treated in essentially the same manner as the front and side facades. The facade provides the appearance of a central salient flanked by two wings on each side. The central portion consists of two loading doors above a concrete platform (originally a metal marquee supported by chains projected over the loading doors). Aligned over each of the loading doors is a single flat-arched window bay. One is filled with brick (original construction) and the other contains fixed ten-light metal sash. The immediately flanking wings each contain a single semi-circular-arched window identical to those of the center section of the side facades. The outer wings differ slightly in window treatment and chimney location. The wing to the south contains a square brick chimney at the wall juncture and a single fixed six-light steel sash window. The top of the chimney is detailed with brick corbeling beneath a sandstone cap. The wing to the north contains a single four-light metal sash window (fixed).

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the 1930s and Depression era.

The design is transitional in that it retains the rich detailing of the early-1900s designs which were based on the Beaux Arts tradition, yet immediately precedes the simplified modern designs of the mid- to late-Depression era. The design is based on standardized "cabinet sketches" developed by the Supervising Architect's Office to increase the efficiency of building design and construction, however, the treatment of the facade is unique. The square, centrally-located public lobby, around which are arranged the offices and post office boxes, is a rare example of this particular floor plan (a similar example exists in the 1919 Basin, Wyoming Post Office). The overall design of the building and its exquisite detailing contribute to the building's statewide significance under Criterion C.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The post office is the first federally-constructed building in the city and is a manifestation of the federal presence during a time of national economic emergency. The construction of the post office represents over two decades of effort on the part of local citizens, through their elected representatives in Washington, D.C., to secure a federal building. As early as 1913, Congress had authorized a post office site for Nephi. A site was purchased in 1918, but federal economies did not allow a building appropriation. Even after the 1926 Public Buildings Act, Nephi was not granted a federal building--postal receipts were too low. Finally, with strong lobbying by Senator William H. King, and rumored manipulation of postal receipts by local citizens, the building was granted. The building was constructed in the early years of the Depression and thus predates the massive federal buildings programs which followed soon thereafter. It is also notable that the post office occupies a site that represents a continuum of public buildings in the city, dating back to 1852 when a meeting house was first constructed on the site (later followed by a tithing office). Through these factors the building is locally significant under Criterion A.

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## LOCAL CONTEXT

Nephi, with an estimated 1984 population of 3,500, is the county seat of Juab County. Nephi is approximately 85 miles south of Salt Lake City, the state capital. The population of the city has been relatively stable since the early 1900s with the economic base focused on agriculture, mineral extraction/processing, and light manufacturing. Agricultural and mineral extraction/processing are the traditional sectors of the economy.

The present site of Nephi was settled in September of 1851 by Timothy B. Foote and his family at the recommendation of Brigham Young. Timothy Foote established the first post office in his log cabin in December of 1851 under the name of Salt Creek. The name remained Salt Creek until it was changed to Nephi on May 22, 1882. Other families soon followed the Footes. On the site of the existing post office an adobe (log cabin in one account) meeting house was constructed in 1852. (This building was replaced in 1858 by a larger adobe structure which was used as a tithing office.) This was Nephi's first public building. Indian uprisings in 1853 resulted in the erection of a small fort in what is now the downtown core. Farming was the primary occupation and a grist mill and salt mill were established.

In 1886 Nephi was named the county seat of the newly formed Juab County and was later incorporated in 1889. The railroad reached Nephi in 1879 and opened a new era. Shipping became an important segment of the economy. By 1890 the population of Nephi was 2,034. Nephi grew slowly through 1910, with a census population in that year of 2,759. Population began to decline and the 1920 census showed 2,603 inhabitants, further declining to 2,573 in 1930. The declining population trend was reversed in 1940 with a slight increase to 2,835. Since that time, population has remained relatively stable with slight growth.

The post office fronts along Main Street (east side) with the southern boundary formed by Center Street. Surrounding land uses include commercial to the north (modern frame office adjacent, two-story brick structure (circa 1890), former city hall (1923), and gas station), and commercial across Main Street to the west and Center Street

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to the south. The former Juab County Courthouse (1884) diagonally across the intersection from the post office reportedly will be razed.

The structures to the south of the post office across Center Street (from the corner to the east) are single-story nondescript concrete block construction. A small single-story brick commercial building is located east and to the rear of the post office (predates the post office). Single family structures lie beyond.

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

The construction of the Nephi Post Office was reported in The Time-News between 1931 and 1933. Before the construction of the post office, more than a decade had passed since the site had been acquired by the federal government in 1918. Nephi had been slowly growing up to 1920 then its population began to decline slightly. Apparently post office receipts were not sufficient to warrant the construction of the building, even though the site had been acquired. Correspondence, dated April 5, 1930, from Senator William H. King (D) to J. Earl Reid, president of the Business Men's Association of Nephi, indicated that in spite of a number of years effort to secure appropriation for the federal building, the Post Office Department had refused to give sanction for construction. The business generated by the Nephi Post Office was below the minimum requirement for building authorization. An effort was made by James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect, to see if the requirement for \$7,500 in postal receipts could be made in the fiscal year rather than the calendar year so that the building could be authorized (1929 receipts totaled \$6,674.81). It is reported by local Nephi historians that the town's citizens purposely increased the post office business so that the \$7,500 threshold could be reached.

On February 26, 1931, The Times-News reported that Arthur A. Miller of Eureka was in Nephi to survey the site for the new post office. This was the first step in ensuring the site was acceptable for the new \$55,000 federal building. Even though the bill authorizing the construction had not yet

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been passed, it was expected that it would be approved before Congress adjourned. On March 19th it was reported that the federal building plans were being rushed. John T. Lewis, construction engineer from the Supervising Architect's office, was in Salt Lake to take charge of work in that city. He would soon visit Nephi to inspect the survey information. An article of March 26th reported that Lewis had visited Monday and that work was likely to begin in a couple of months.

Several months passed and on September 3rd it was announced that "one of Nephi's oldest and most historic landmarks" was being torn down. The old LDS tithing office, one of Nephi's principal corners for more than 40 years, was to be removed for the construction of the new federal building. The article related that the site had been purchased 14 years ago and Nephi's aggressive citizens had been assured and reassured that a federal building would be erected to house a post office and other agencies. On October 8th, according to information received by J. E. Reid, president of the Kiwanis Club, from Senator Reed Smoot, the plans were on the market for construction bids. The appropriation had been made at the last session of Congress and work was expected to begin on January 1st. It was also noted that the project would provide work for local labor at a time when work was very scarce. An article of November 26th announced that Bernstone Brothers of Salt Lake had received the contract for post office construction with a bid of \$51,850. On December 3rd it was announced that the Nephi National Bank had closed because of heavy withdrawals.

On June 2, 1932, the paper reported that the cornerstone for the new post office would be laid on July 4th. Mayor Peter B. Cowan was organizing the event and it was expected that Congressman Don B. Colton (R) would be the main speaker. "The laying of the cornerstone of the new post office will be one of the most outstanding events in the history of Nephi...." An article of June 23rd discussed plans for observance of the 4th. The laying of the cornerstone was to be the main event.

On June 30th the carefully made plans for the cornerstone ceremony were quashed as a result of the late arrival of the cornerstone. "When the stone is not here, there seems to be no way of laying said stone." On July 14th the plans

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for the rescheduled ceremony were reported. The program would be set for 10:30 a.m. on Pioneer Day. Congressman Colton would not be in attendance since Congress had been delayed. An article of July 28th reported the laying of the cornerstone. Chauncey P. Overfield of Salt Lake City was the principal speaker. Dennis Wood, Nephi Councilman, laid the stone. Postmaster John E. Lunt recounted the history of the Nephi Post Office.

On January 12, 1933, The Times-News included a photo of the nearly completed post office on the front page. It reported that the building would be completed in two weeks and would also house offices of the U.S. Forest Service. On January 19th (Thursday) it was announced that the post office would be open for public inspection on the following Saturday. According to the article: "Nephi people should be proud of this new building, for it is one of the finest federal buildings in the State of Utah regardless of size."

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Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

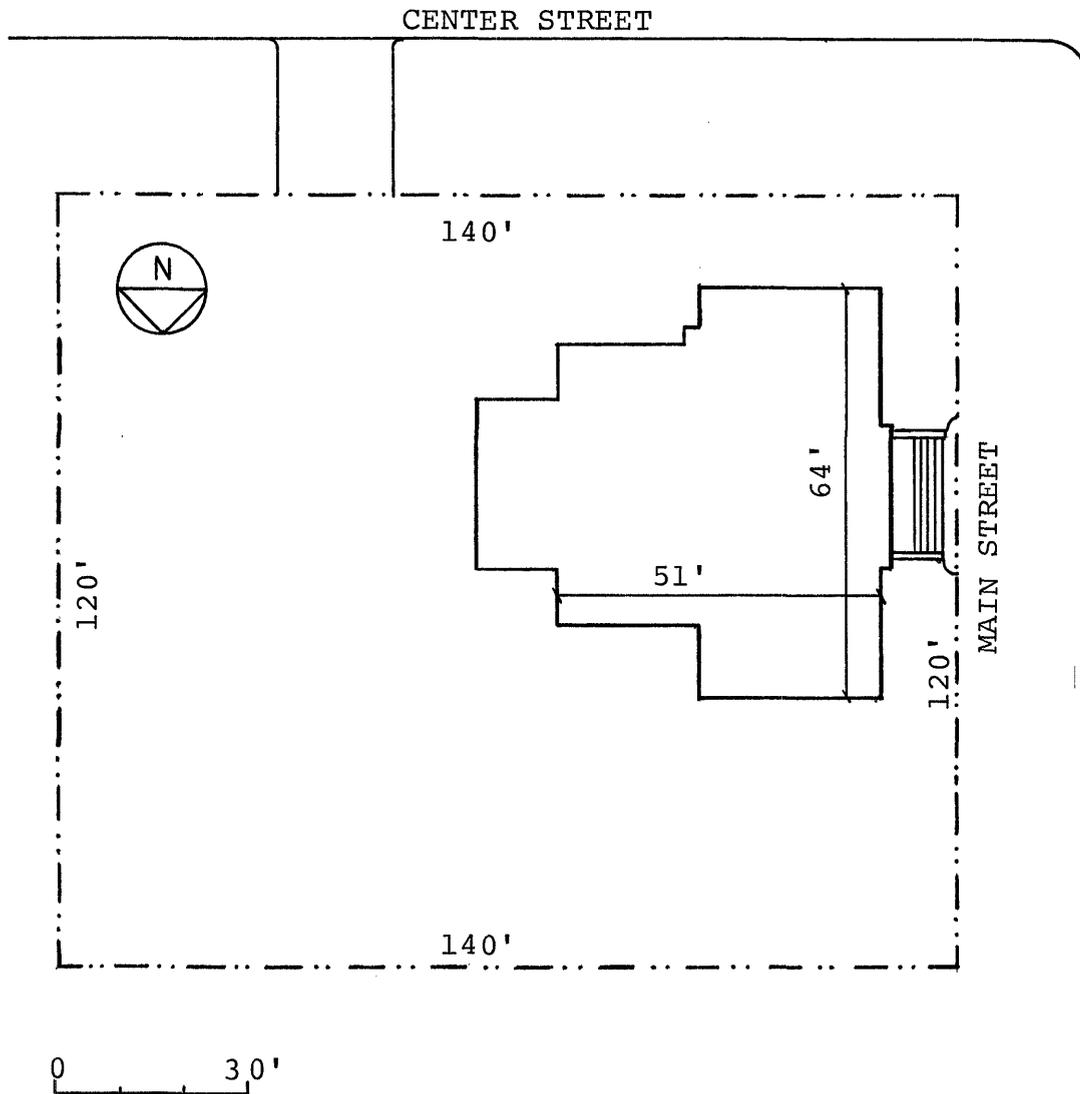
date entered

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

1. Nephi MPO
2. Nephi, Utah
3. Jim Kolva
4. December 1984
5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center, San Bruno, CA.

Photo No. 1 (negative #10A)

6. View to southeast

Photo No. 2 (negative #9A)

6. View to east

Photo No. 3 (negative #8A)

6. View to northeast

**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

1900-1941

Significant Dates

Site Acq.-1918

Const.-1933

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising

Architect/Federal Government

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

The Nephi Post Office is a well-preserved and finely crafted example of a small town single-purpose post office. The building is reminiscent of the Renaissance Revival design style and distinguished by its decorative entry and coupled window bay arches. The use of this facade treatment, accentuated by the elaborate stone detailing, is not only rare, but is also creates one of the finest small town post offices in the region. The building is also transitional in that it bridges the Beaux-Arts tradition of the pre-1920 federal post offices and the modern movement of the mid-to late-1930s. The site upon which the post office is constructed is also significant in the history of the city since it once included the city's first public building. The first and only federally-constructed post office in the city, the building symbolizes the link between the community and Washington as well as the long years of effort by local citizens and their elected officials to gain their federal gift.

ARCHITECTURAL

The building is well-preserved and remains virtually unaltered since its original construction (most visible are the added storm doors of the entry). The post office exhibits the use of the quality materials and craftsmanship which characterize federal post office construction of the early 1930s. The design is reminiscent of the Renaissance Revival style and is the only post office to use this design motif in Utah. The front facade is distinguished by the decorative arches of the entry and flanking window bays. Richness in detailing is projected by the fine craftsmanship of the arched bays and bracketed cornice. This level of detail, particularly in such a small town, is rarely encountered in post offices of the region constructed during

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

1. The Times-News (Nephi), various articles 1931-1933.
2. King, Senator William H. April 5, 1930, Personal Correspondence.
3. Smoot, Senator Reed April 2, 1930, Personal Correspondence.
4. Original Floor Plans, 1931.

1111 0019

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**

Acreage of property 0.39 acres

UTM References

A 

1	2	4	2	8	4	2	0	4	3	9	5	5	7	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Quadrangle name: Nephi  
Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the Southwest corner of Lot 2, Block 36, Plat "A" Nephi Town Site, thence North 120 feet, thence East 140 feet, thence South 120 feet, thence West 140 feet to beginning. The site is on the North-east corner of Main Street and Center Street.

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 August 1988  
street & number W. 705 1st Avenue telephone (509) 458-6219  
city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99204