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NATIONAL REGISTER

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 Rugby Post Office
other names/site number same

2. Location

street & number 205 S.E. Second Street N/A not for publication
city, town Rugby N/A vicinity
state North Dakota code ND county Pierce code 069 zip code 58368

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	1	
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		
			1 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
U. S. Post Offices in North Dakota, 1900-1940

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register none

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.

Stanford W. Meador
Signature of certifying official Date 8-22-89

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.

James E. Sperry
Signature of commenting or other official Date September 15, 1989

James E. Sperry
State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota)

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

11/1/89

for Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

post office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

post office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

other: Starved Classicism

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation poured concrete

walls brick

roof copper

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See attached continuation sheets.

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Continuation Sheet**

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Multiple Property: U.S. Post Offices in North Dakota, 1900-1940

RUGBY, DESCRIPTION:

The Rugby Post Office is located at 205 Southeast Second Street, at the northeast corner of the junction of Second Avenue Southeast and Second Street Southeast. The facility faces south. It is located one block east of Main Street, the main business thoroughfare of the town. To the west of the building toward Main, there are businesses along both sides of Second Street. To the east of the building is the beginning of a residential neighborhood. To the north is the Burlington Northern tracks. Second Avenue Southeast does not have a crossing. To the south is a supermarket.

The Rugby Post Office is in excellent condition. It is clean and well-kept. Except for new entry doors and some tuckpointing, the exterior appears as built in 1940. The workroom skylight has been filled, and the flat roof over the workroom was replaced with a membrane in the 1980s. The boilers were upgraded in 1987, and the lobby partitioned in 1980. The service window area of the lobby was changed in 1982. The front doors were changed in 1979. The mural was refurbished in 1988 at a cost of \$8,000.00 by Ellen Kennedy of Houston, TX, phone number 713/520-1808. The new boiler is of pulse type and requires no flue of the traditional type. It was, however, vented into the existing chimney, and the moisture being vented has begun to damage the chimney. The postmaster plans to have the vent re-routed soon. The landscaping around the facility is well-groomed, and the shrubs and trees are well-tended.

The foundation is poured concrete. Large poured concrete window wells with metal railings extend out from the basement to admit light. The exterior walls are light tan matte finish brick laid in American bond. The windows are triple-hung wood, each sash of which is three lights wide times two lights high. They are covered with matching wood storm windows. One window in the west wall is bricked up to protect the back of the vault. The window sills are limestone in the shape of a molding. Below each sill a panel of tan limestone extends down to grade. At the lintel line a band of gray limestone approximately 30" in height extends up to the coping line. The top of the walls have a limestone coping in the shape of a molding which projects slightly. The roof has two shapes: a copper hip roof over the lobby and service window areas and a flat composition roof over the workroom. Atop the hip roof is a metal cupola in a faintly Moderne style. The cupola is too large to be in scale for the building. The copper roof is in excellent condition but has weathered to a dull gray. The front steps are granite. They are original. The

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light standards and railings around the front entry are also original. The entry doors are replacements, glass and metal. Above the front entry is an eagle motif in a circular background executed in aluminum bar stock, which is the same as New Rockford's except that this one is backed by a clear light rather than the glass brick that has been used at New Rockford.

The lobby has a gray terrazzo floor in 18" square panels with brass dividing strips. At the edges of the floor, an 8" border in darker gray terrozzo leads to an 8" high gray marble mopboard. Above the mopboard is a 4' gray marble wainscot. The lobby has been partitioned, so that there is a box area on the east that is open around the clock and a secured service window area on the west. The mural is in the secured area. The east side of the lobby has had boxes and a stamp kiosk added. The mural is about the theme of Rugby being the geographical center of North America (the town's main claim to fame). It features a collage of activities from the area: agriculture, aviation, outdoor recreation, etc. It was painted by Kenneth Callahan in ca. 1941-43 and refurbished in 1988 (see above).

The building is foursquare in plan with an L-shaped lobby running along the south (front) and east walls. The east leg of the L runs about halfway along the east wall. The south leg runs about two-thirds of the way along the front wall. The postmaster's office occupies the southwest corner. The mural is above the door to the postmaster's office. North of the postmaster's office along the west wall are the vault, restrooms, and swing rooms. The workroom occupies the rest of the main floor. The dock extends from the north wall. It is rectangular, with the long axis running north-south. Access to the dock is from the west. The basement has a boiler room, former coal room, storage, and former rented space.

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 N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Politics/ Government
Architecture
Economics
Community Planning
Art

Period of Significance

1940

Significant Dates

1940

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

OSA/ Louis A. Simon, Acting Supervising Architect
B: Minecke-Johnson Company, Fargo, ND

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

See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

State Historical Society of N.D., Bismarck

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	4
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4	2	6	4	0	0
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5	3	5	7	6	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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N/A See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 9, 10, 11, 12, & 13, Block 8, Original Townsite, Rugby, ND.

N/A See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all city lots which have been historically associated with the property.

N/A See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Norene Roberts, President
organization Historical Research, Inc. date July, 1989
street & number 7800 Tessman Drive telephone (612) 560-4348
city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55445

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RUGBY, SIGNIFICANCE:

The Rugby Post Office is significant under Criteria A and C on a state and local level as one of a small group of 20 extant federally-built post offices in North Dakota constructed between 1900-1940. Under Criterion A, this post office is associated with various federal policies in post office funding, design, and method of construction in the early 20th century. Under Criterion C, this facility shares the distinctive characteristics of federally-funded post offices as a property type built in North Dakota before the Second World War. The major areas of significance are Politics/Government, Architecture, Economics, Community Planning and Art. The Rugby Post Office is the last of the nine post offices in the state built between 1932-1940. It meets criteria for exceptional significance as one of only three post offices in the state with a New Deal mural in the lobby. Architecturally, it is also one of only six North Dakota facilities built in the "Starved Classicism" style before World War II from standard designs by the Treasury Department.

By July 1939, these designs were emanating from the Public Buildings Administration in cookie-cutter fashion. The Rugby Post Office was one of these late-built facilities. Rugby and Lisbon were the last two pre-WW II facilities built in North Dakota under funding by the 1938 Federal Buildings Appropriations Act. Rugby is also one of only three North Dakota post offices with a New Deal mural, along with New Rockford and Langdon. The mural in the Rugby lobby was painted by Kenneth Callahan and completed in 1943 under financing from the Fine Arts Section.

The history of the new post office at Rugby followed the standard procedures in effect during the 1930s when most postal facilities in the United States were constructed. However, an unusual situation developed with title to the site chosen and this delayed construction for some 15 months, causing the Rugby Post Office to be the last facility completed before WW II.

The Pierce County Tribune (hereafter PCT) noted that local businessmen had been requesting a new post office for some time with the help of Senators Nye and Frazier when postmistress Leah Huffman wrote to the Post Office Department in Washington in behalf of a new facility in February, 1937 (November, 21, 1940, p. 1). Normally, requests for a new post office depended on a rise in postal receipts, growth in the city, unemployment in the area, or lack of space in an existing facility. It is not clear why Rugby was granted a new facility, but once built, this building served an

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area of approximately half of Pierce County and the western portion of Benson County with two rural routes, two star routes, and 530 lock boxes. After 1947, the city of Rugby started daily home delivery of mail (A Century of Area History: Pierce County and Rugby, North Dakota, 1886-1986, p. 333).

The first mention of the new post office appeared in the local paper in July, 1938 when it was announced that Rugby and Lisbon were two of 280 federal projects (including courthouses, annexes, and remodellings) funded under a \$60 million appropriation to the Treasury and post Office departments. Rugby and Lisbon were allotted \$85,000 each for the new facilities (PCT, July 7, 1938, p. 1). Bids for a site were advertised in the paper a week later with four bids received by August 3, 1938 (PCT, July 21, 1938, p. 1; Aug. 4, 1938, p. 1). The four parcels were rejected as not meeting the needs of the Post Office Department and a search was conducted to find a better location. On December 21, 1938, the postmistress was informed that the present site on the northeast corner of Second Street and Foster Avenue was approved by Washington. Two property owners were involved and one did not have clear title. The Post Office department set about to clear the title and, according to local reports, "It took from January, 1939 until well into 1940 before the government was satisfied with the title (PCT, Nov. 21, 1940, p. 1)." The beginning of construction was delayed until May, 1940. The dedication was November 28 and the building, although not completely finished was occupied in early December, 1940 (Ibid.)

The Rugby Post Office was designed in the "Starved Classicism" style along with five others in North Dakota, all built after 1932 when plans were standardized: Oakes, Langdon, Hettinger, New Rockford, and Lisbon. In the case of Rugby, contemporary accounts described the building as "a contemporary expression of the Colonial (PCT, Nov. 21, 1940, p. 1)." It has a concrete base, brick walls, symmetrical front facade with central entrance, long low multi-paned windows, and a metal and glass cupola atop the hipped metal roof. In massing and form, the structure is basically Colonial/ Classical, but details are largely limited to entrance, windows, and cupola. Wall surfaces are flat and there is no cornice. The building contractor was Minecke-Johnson Company of Fargo, who came in considerably below the allotted \$85,000 cost with a low bid of \$55,377 (PCT, May 9, 1940, p. 1).

Rugby is also one of only three North Dakota Post Offices with a mural done under the Fine Arts Section. The mural in Rugby's post office is

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located over the postmaster's door in the lobby. The artist was Kenneth Callahan, whose \$850 commission was completed in 1943. It measures 12' 1 1/2" by 4' 2" and is entitled "Rugby, the Geographical Center of North America." It depicts a sketchy map with Rugby at the center and is flanked on the left with a tall figure holding a shock of wheat and on the right by another man standing next to a cow. A check of a partial list of New Deal art and artists compiled by the General Services Administration does not yield other post office murals done by the artist, Kenneth Callahan (Roberts, "A Phase I Study of Post Offices in North Dakota," Historical Research, Inc., 1989, p. 65). The completion of this mural in 1943 escaped the notice of the local newspaper as well. However, Callahan was one of a handful of artists who predicted a renaissance in mural painting in the United States in 1932 when he was art critic for The Seattle Town Crier (Kara Ann Marling, Wall to Wall America, University of Minnesota Press, 1982, p. 73, note 12.)

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RUGBY, BIBLIOGRAPHY:

A Century of Area History: Pierce County and Rugby, North Dakota, 1886-1986.

Karal Ann Marling, Wall to Wall America, University of Minnesota Press, 1982, p. 73, note 12.

The Pierce County Tribune, July 7, 1938

The Pierce County Tribune, July 21, 1938.

The Pierce County Tribune, August 4, 1938.

The Pierce County Tribune, May 9, 1940.

The Pierce County Tribune, November, 21, 1940.

Norene Roberts, "A Phase I Study of Post Offices in North Dakota," Historical Research, Inc., 1989, p. 65. On file: Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck.