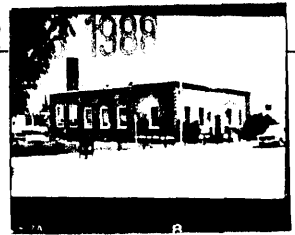


MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

DEC 21 1987



Site # 9

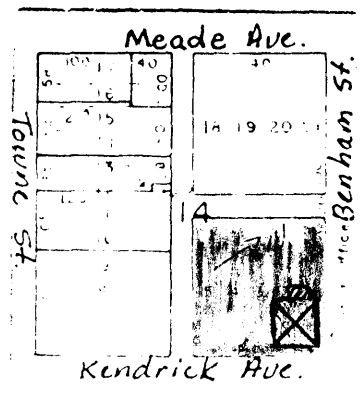
Legal Description: Original Townsite Blk 14 Lot 1-2-3-4-5

Address: 221 N Kendrick

Ownership: Name: U. S. Government

private address: N/A
public

Roll # 7 Frame # 6-17



Location map or building plan with arrow north.

Historic Name: U. S. Post Office
 Common Name: U. S. Post Office
 Date of Construction: 1935 estimated documented
 Architect: Louis A. Simon, Suprvsr Architect
 Builder: Louis A. Mellick Supervisor
 Contractor: John Sternan Engineer
 Original Owner: U. S. Government

Original Use: Post Office
 Present Use: Post Office

RESEARCH SOURCES: Note all records consulted to determine dates of construction, original owners, builders, uses, etc.

Title Search: X Tax Records: N/A
 Bldg. Permit: N/A Census Records: _____
 Sewer/Water: N/A Sanborn Maps: 1929-41
 Directories: _____ Newspapers: X

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Plaque on side of building.
2. Dawson County Review, 11/28/1935.

Note: Statement of Significance prepared by Jim Kolva, Institute for Urban and Local Studies, W. 705 1st Ave., Spokane, WA, under contract with the U.S. Postal Service, 1982-1983.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Describe present appearance of structure/site, then contrast and compare that with its original appearance, noting additions, alterations, and changes in materials. Discuss significant architectural features.

A rectangular, one-story, brick post office building with front hip roof and rear flat roof, Colonial style front facade and concrete foundation. Brick is American bond. Front of building is divided into five bays, side of building into six bays. Front door has thick wood frame with entablature consisting of crown molding, frieze with "United States Post Office, Glendive, Montana 59330-098," spelled out and architrave with molding & broken pediment. Windows are wood frame double hung 12/12, with flat arches with concrete keystones and concrete sills. Decoration under eaves consists of fascia and dentils consisting of angled brick. Corners of building have brick quoins. Vertical and horizontal stretcher belt course runs across front of building above windows. Concrete water table runs near base of building. Front concrete stoop has iron railing. Metal downspouts with box ornamentation are located at each side of front. Front basement windows are located in concrete boxes with steel railings. Side basement windows are located below ground level in concrete walled box with steel railings.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION: Describe the persons, important events, and/or historical patterns associated with the structure/site and surrounding area.

The post office was constructed in 1935, at which time the Glendive post office, was moved from 113 W. Towne. Louis A. Simon was the supervising architect, and Louis A. Mellick was the supervising engineer. The building was constructed by John Sterhan, Glendive contractor. (1)

Footnote Sources:

1. Concrete plaque on side of building; Dawson County Review, 11/28/1935.

INTEGRITY: Assess the degree to which the structure/site, and surrounding area accurately convey the historical associations of the property.

The building displays excellent integrity of setting, design and materials. The steel post chain fence is a recent addition but does not detract from the basic integrity of setting. Sanborn map show that rear part of building and loading door are original parts of building.

HISTORICAL and/or ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: Justify how the persons, important events, or historical patterns associated with structure/site lend the property significance and/or describe the ways in which the structure embodies the distinctive

The U.S. Post Office in Glendive is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C. The design of the building is typical of a number of small town post offices constructed in Montana, the northwest, and the nation during the Depression Era. It represents the first federally constructed post office in Glendive, and is patterned after standardized plans developed by the Department of the Treasury. The post office in Glendive, for example, is almost a duplicate of the one in Sidney, Montana except for a slight alteration of exterior embellishing details. The facades and spatial arrangements were generally varied slightly from the standard to provide an individual character for the community. The Glendive Post Office, as most of the post offices constructed during this era, utilized classical symmetry and design proportions (with Colonial Revival motif as a relatively common style). The facade is flat and essentially stripped of architectural detail and, in a sense, can be termed "half-modern". The building is well preserved (construction photos show the main portion of the building to be unchanged). It represents the use of quality materials and craftsmanship characteristic of federal construction during the Depression Era and symbolizes the solidity of a federal institution in a small city.

(continued)

Name: <u>Bill Babcock</u>	Acreage: <u>Less than one acre</u>
Address: <u>Missoula, Montana</u>	USGS Quad: <u>Glendive, MT 1967 7.5'</u>
Date: <u>August 1987</u>	UTM's: <u>13/521775/5216830</u>

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

The Glendive MPO is a legacy of the Depression Era of the federal building program. The construction of public buildings during the Depression Era represents the use of public building programs to aid local economies through a period of national economic emergency. Public building during this period represented a shift in federal spending policy. Construction of public buildings had tapered off with the onset of WWI and came to a halt during the war. After the war ended, construction of previously authorized buildings resumed slowly. No new construction laws were enacted until the Public Buildings Act of 1926. This Act contrasted with previous omnibus acts which had authorized appropriations for specific

buildings. Two public building commissions--one for the District of Columbia and the other for the rest of the country--recommended a new building program which would base building location and size on a business approach rather than Congressional logrolling. The 1926 Act ordered the Treasury Department to implement a "business considerations" policy in response to protests over unneeded projects that were merely a means for a Congressman to win local favor. The standardization of plans for small post offices was also carried forth from the policies of the Public Buildings Commission's report of 1914. A survey report completed under the direction of the 1926 Act identified over 2,300 towns and cities (with postal receipts over \$10,000) that were without federal buildings. The estimated cost of constructing these buildings was \$170,420,000.

The crash of 1929 and subsequent depression delayed the full implementation of the building program outlined in the 1926 Act. In 1930, Congress authorized increased funding for public building by amending the 1926 Act. This legislation established a trend in public works projects that came in direct response to the depression. It served as a precedent for subsequent policies and acts that would attempt to reduce unemployment and stabilize the economy.

Standardization of buildings continued as a priority. The Treasury Department produced a set of "cabinet sketches" which provided standard floor plans for various sized offices. Where practicable, individual treatment was given to exterior details. The impetus, however, was to reduce the number of individual drawings in order to achieve rapid construction.

In 1933 the Treasury Department was reorganized and the supervising architect's office placed within the Procurement Branch in the Division of Public Works. The National Industrial Recovery Act (1933) created the Public Works Administration which was authorized to disburse funds to both federal and non-federal agencies for construction projects that would benefit the public. The intent of this and subsequent programs was to aid economic recovery. Efficiency, speedy construction, stimulation of the economy, and alleviation of unemployment were the goals rather than to create architectural monuments to patriotic idealism. The buildings constructed under these programs represented the shift of government from "neutral arbiter" to "social welfare activist". During this era of public building, which essentially ended in 1942 with the shift of emphasis to WWII, over 1,800 post offices were constructed (with 11 in the State of Montana). Three times as many post offices were constructed between 1930 and 1939, for example, as in the previous 50 years.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

In the local context, the procurement and construction of the Glendive Post Office was reported in the Dawson County Review between 1932 and 1936. On November 10, 1932, the Review announced that Roosevelt had won the 1932 presidential election and that a new post office was a possibility. The government was advertising for a site, but the article (commentary rather than reportage) admonished the city that ". . . nobody get unduly excited as we have heard reports about a post office many times in the past and apparently we are not nearer than usual to a federal building." The commentary went on to state:

Furthermore, we wish to say quite emphatically that we do not believe that we need any new federal building now. . . . The present post office is very satisfactory and will serve community needs for several years at least to come. . . . One of the principal reasons why the federal government is costing us so much is because thousands of Glendives all over this land have received unnecessary and unduly large federal buildings and other pork. . . . Some congressman with an eye out for his share of pork had procured each one and along with it doubtless assurance of many votes for re-election. . . . Of course, we shall all be proud of a federal building here and it is only natural that we shall accept one if they are being handed out but let us remember that if the crushing cost of government is to come down, pork must be cut out.

An article of March 16, 1933 reported that 13 sites had been offered for the new post office and that rapid action was expected. On October 19th, it was announced that the \$65 million Fort Peck Dam project had been approved (located between Glendive and Glasgow). Apparently the first round of sites offered for the post office site did not produce an acceptable site for the post office since a July 26, 1934 article reported that 10 sites had been offered for a new post office. J.B. Dods, federal site engineer, was in Glendive to inspect post office sites as reported on August 23rd. On September 20th, it was reported that a site on the corner of Benham and Kendrick was accepted by the federal government for a price of \$10,000. It was anticipated that construction would begin in the fall.

An article of March 14, 1935 announced that the work on the new post office would begin on April 1st. John Sterhan, whose bid had been accepted quite some time ago, was ready to commence work. On April 4th it was reported that work was underway. An article of April 25th reported that excavation was nearly complete for the \$50,000 post office building and that the slated completion date was November 16th. The article also described the building plans and listed the subcontractors.

The funding appropriation for the Buffalo Rapids irrigation project, costing \$1 million and including 65,000 acres, was reported in the July 11th issue. In the same issue a progress report on the post office was given. The reinforced concrete basement, floors, and walls were complete and the structural steel was being erected. On September 12th, it was reported that a CCC camp would be constructed south of the city. The completion of the post office was announced on December 5th. The post office moved Saturday night into its commodious new quarters.

HISOTRICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

With the new facility barely occupied, disaster struck. On February 13, 1936 the Review reported that a terrific blast rocked the new \$70,000 post office at 8:05 a.m. Wednesday morning. Several people were injured in a natural gas explosion ignited by the match of a postal employee while lighting his pipe. The lengthy article stated that the post office was "wrecked almost beyond repair". On February 20th it was reported that a wire from Senator Murray indicated that funds would be available for immediate reconstruction of the post office. John Sterhan was given the contract to complete the repair work which involved removing the southeast corner of the building and reconstructing both exterior and interior portions of the building. The project was completed in October of 1936 and the post office was ready for reoccupancy.