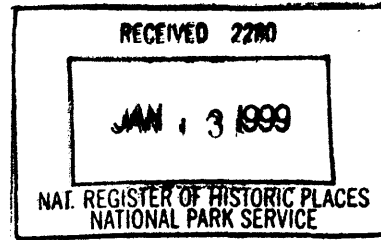


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 526 Main Street not for publication \_\_\_  
city or town Spearfish vicinity \_\_\_  
state South Dakota Code SD county Lawrence code 081 zip code 57783

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide  locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jay D. Vogt SHPO 01-05-99  
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Name of Property

Lawrence County, South Dakota  
County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

- I hereby certify that the 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 of the Keeper: Edson H. Beall  
 Date of Action: 2-12-99

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property** (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0  
 Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941

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**6. Function or Use**

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**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:

GOVERNMENT  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sub:

POST OFFICE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:

Work in Progress  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sub:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals/Neo-Classical (Simplified)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Concrete  
Roof Asphalt  
Walls Brick  
  
Other Sandstone  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

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### 8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant Contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a Significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1940-1941

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Name of Property

Lawrence County, South Dakota  
County and State

**Significant Dates**    1940  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**    N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**    N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**    Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect / Dean  
Witcher, Contractor

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 #

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_



Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Name of Property

Lawrence County, South Dakota  
County and State

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state SD zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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### **SUMMARY PARAGRAPH**

The single-story Spearfish Post Office (Old) building was constructed in 1940 as the new federal postal facility for the town of Spearfish. In 1941, a number of offices were added on the ground floor (basement) to house various federal programs.

The basic organization and ornamentation is typical of the Class C variety of post office designed for small towns. It is an excellent example of the simplified Classical style of architecture employed on many small post offices during the Depression.

The building has not been moved. Initial alterations include the construction of the ground floor offices. Subsequent alterations include modifications in the window bay area to allow for the installation of additional postal boxes, the modification to the interior entrance vestibule for weatherproofing, and the installation of a wheelchair-accessible ramp.

The Spearfish Post Office (Old) was vacated as a postal facility in late 1997.

### **SETTING**

The Spearfish Post Office (Old) is located 526 Main Street (previously known as Sixth Street) between Grant and Hudson Streets in Spearfish, South Dakota. It is situated near the center of the downtown commercial district. Most of historic downtown Spearfish is located just north of this building along Main Street. The area comprises approximately six blocks.

This portion of the city is built on the valley floor between the hillsides rising to the east, west and south. Spearfish Creek is located west of the downtown commercial district. Main Street is the primary commercial street in the downtown area.



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### **GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS & FEATURES**

#### **Basic Shape and Dimensions, Number of Stories**

The shape of the one-story building is nearly square, with a small projecting ell at the rear (east) of the building that houses the original loading dock. Without the loading dock, the first floor of the building measures just over 54 feet by 56 feet. The measurements of the ground floor are the same. The loading dock measures 10 feet by 24 feet, 8 inches. The roof is basically flat (very slight pitch for drainage).

The ground floor is slightly elevated, allowing for small windows on the west and south sides. These windows, which are located in window wells, provide natural light and ventilation to the offices on the ground level. There are also doors to the outside from the ground level on the south and east sides via exterior stairwells. This slightly raised base placed the entrances to the first floor of the building (west) and the loading dock (east) approximately 40 inches above the ground and sidewalk.

The ceiling height on the first floor is approximately 16 feet. A rectangular shaped, monitor type skylight is located over the front (west) portion of the large workroom. Its projection through the roofline is not visible from the street level, being hidden behind the parapet. The interior stairway between the first floor and ground floor, which is located along the back (east) wall near the northeast corner of the building, measures 3 feet 8 inches wide. A chimney stack, which rises above the roofline, is located at the back (east) of the building on the south side of the loading dock, in the corner where the loading dock and main building meet.

#### **Basic Structural Details**

The foundation of the building is reinforced concrete 12½ to 17½ inches in thickness. Plans for the building indicate that footings are 12 inches deep projecting 6 inches from the wall. The ground floor slab is reinforced concrete 5 to 7½ inches thick. Support columns are 14 inches by 14 inches with 12 to 14 inch footings. Framing that supports the first floor consists of concrete beams which range in size from 10 inches by 12 inches to 16 inches by 20 inches. Most of these beams are either 14 inches by 16 inches or 14 inches by 18 inches. They support the 6-inch reinforced concrete slab of the first floor. The original partition walls on the ground floor are

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poured-in-place reinforced concrete. The partition walls on the ground floor that were added in 1941 are concrete block.

The structural framing of the first floor is steel. The perimeter walls of the first floor are brick laid in common bond. The partition walls on the first floor are hollow clay tile, except for the vault walls, which are concrete. The roofing structure is a combination of steel framing with wood joists. The loading dock sits on a concrete slab on grade.

### **EXTERIOR FEATURES**

The front façade (west side) of the building is organized into five bays equally spaced. The central bay is the main entrance. It is flanked by two symmetrically placed windows on each side. The north and south sides of the building are organized into four equally spaced bays. The south side bays each have a window. Three of the north side bays have windows; the fourth bay is a blind window that serves as the back wall of the interior vault. The rear (east) side of the building is also organized into five bays, but due to the placement of the loading dock at the center of the rear wall, the central bay is wider. Two window bays flank each side of the loading dock bay, but the windows are more closely spaced than the other three facades.

Three small double hung windows provide ventilation for the restrooms. Two of these small windows are located on the north side of the building, one is located on the east side. The fifteen primary windows are tall, triple hung wood sash windows with six lights in each sash. Each sits atop a sandstone panel the width of the window opening. The tops of the windows abut the sandstone parapet that tops the building. The combination of window and lower stone panel fills the entire vertical opening between the concrete foundation wall, which rises a couple feet above the ground, and the parapet. This gives the brick wall between the windows the appearance of wide pilasters.

The brick walls are matt-faced red brick with a slight range of color variation. It is laid in common bond. The mortar is a light colored Portland cement mortar detailed in a concave joint finish. The sandstone window panels and parapet is buff colored with a machine dressed smooth surface. It is laid with a buff colored Portland cement mortar. The upper edge of the window panels has a slight lip with a rounded edge with creates a slightly wider sill surface. The upper

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edge of the parapet has a decorative detail which create a modest, but finished, cornice effect. The words "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE" and "SPEARFISH SOUTH DAKOTA" are engraved in the sandstone and centered over the main entrance.

The walls of the loading dock are of matching brick construction, as is the chimney stack which is topped with a concrete edge. The loading dock has a projecting concrete dock floor that is approximately three feet above the ground surface. A set of concrete steps to the dock level is located near the building wall; the large open loading bay extends from the steps easterly to the end of the loading dock wall. The entire loading dock is covered by a flat roof that projects out over the loading bay, providing some protection for workers on the dock.

The foundation walls and window wells for the ground level windows are a light colored smooth concrete. The window wells and exterior stairwells are poured concrete. Contemporary metal railings top the stairwell on the south side of the building and the window wells on the front (west) side of the building; the original metal railing remains on the rear (east) exterior stairwell to the ground floor.

All exterior window and door wood trim is white pine. It is currently painted white. The ornamental grille over the main entrance is cast aluminum in a satin finish. The original entrance has been slightly altered with the addition of a concrete wheelchair ramp that extends from the southwest corner of the building to the entrance landing. The original double-leaf front doors have been replaced with a single metal and glass door flanked by one sidelight. The original granite steps, ornamental railing and bronze light fixtures were replaced with concrete steps, standard metal railings and modern light fixtures. The corner stone, which is embedded into the concrete foundation wall on the west side of the building near the northwest corner, is also sandstone.

### **INTERIOR CHARACTERISTICS & FEATURES**

#### **Spatial Organization and Subsequent Changes**

The organization of the first floor clearly reflects its original use as a post office. The bulk of the space is an open workroom; the public lobby and mailbox space, the postmaster's office, the vault, the swing room and the restrooms occupy the remaining space.

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The workroom is nearly square in shape, with the exceptions of a small area in the southwest corner of the space where the public lobby and mailbox area extends into it and a small area in the northeast corner where the interior stairway and landing is located. The dimensions of the space are 46 feet 11 inches by 42 feet 5 inches in the largest area. The workroom extends an addition 4 feet 10 inches in the northwest corner where the stairwell and landing are located. The stairwell is 3 feet 8 inches wide. The area where the lobby and mailboxes juts into the workroom measures 10 feet 11 inches by 12 feet 6 inches. The loading dock is accessed from the workroom via a double door in the east wall. The skylight, which is located over the front (west) portion of the workroom has been covered over with a drop ceiling. Originally, there was a metal cage area in the northwest corner of the workroom. It provided additional security for the money order and registry divisions, as well as the vault. The cage was removed a number of years ago.

The public lobby and mailbox space is L-shaped and wraps around the southwest corner of the building. Originally the main portion of the lobby contained three window bays for business transactions and the mailboxes were located around the corner in the secondary portion of the lobby. The windows included (from north to south) "Bay A" for money orders and C.O.D. registries, "Bay B" for parcel post transactions, and "Bay C" for stamps. The mail drops were located on the wall just south of Bay C. An increased need for boxes resulted in a remodeling of the window area in the 1980s. Two of the windows (Bays B and C) were filled with new mailboxes and all transactions were moved to a newly renovated window area in the location of the original Bay A. The original grilles were removed and the window and counter space enlarged; a new metal roll screen was installed for security. At that time, the original mailboxes in the secondary lobby were also replaced with modern boxes. The main portion of the lobby is 11 feet 9 inches wide; the secondary portion is 9 feet 7 inches wide. The main portion extends 43 feet 5 inches from the Postmaster's Office on the north to the exterior wall of the building on the south. The secondary portion of the lobby is 24 feet 2 inches in length, extending from the original mailbox wall on the east to the exterior wall of the building on the west.

An entrance vestibule surrounds the doorway in the main portion of the lobby. An aluminum and glass vestibule replaced the original wood and glass vestibule in the 1970s. The configuration of the original vestibule was rectangular with canted corners and doors in both the north and south walls. The current vestibule is rectangular (no canted corners) with doors in both the north and south walls.

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The Postmaster's Office is located in the northwest corner of the first floor. It measures 13 feet 1 inch by 11 feet 9 inches. There are two windows: one each in the west and north walls. There are three doorways: one to the main lobby, one to the workroom, and one to a private toilet which measures 3 feet 6 inches by 9 feet 5 inches. A small one-over-one double hung window, in the north wall, provides some light and ventilation in the toilet area.

Adjacent to the private toilet, to the east, is the vault. The interior dimensions are 7 feet 9 inches by 9 feet 5 inches. It is enclosed by a standard vault door that opens into the workroom. There are no windows in the vault area.

Adjacent to the vault, to the east, is the swing room toilet (used as the men's toilet). It measures 5 feet by 9 feet 5 inches. A small one-over-one double hung window (north wall) provides some light and ventilation for the room. It is accessed by a doorway from the swing room (east wall), which is immediately adjacent to the east. The swing room measures 9 feet 5 inches by 12 feet 8 inches. In addition to one of the large, triple hung windows (north wall), the swing room also has a bank of three windows, located at a clerestory level, in the wall between the swing room and workroom (south wall). Each of these windows has six lights and is mounted to pivot centrally at the top and bottom. The door to the workroom is located on the east wall. Two new vents were installed in these rooms in the 1980s.

Adjacent to the swing room, to the east, is the women's toilet. It measures 6 feet 4 inches by 5 feet 8 inches. The door to the workroom is located on the south wall. One of the large, triple hung windows is located on the north wall. Adjacent to the women's toilet, in the northeast corner of the building, is the small janitor's room and toilet. It is 5 feet 8 inches by 4 feet 2 inches. A small one-over-one double hung window is located in the east wall. The door to the workroom is located on the south wall.

The loading dock is comprised of two areas: the entrance vestibule and the mailing platform. The vestibule is located between the workroom and platform and measures 7 feet 8 inches by 8 feet. A small exterior stairway from the ground to the dock level is located on the north side of the vestibule. Double doors provide entrance to both the workroom and the platform. Both sets of original doors have been replaced with contemporary metal doors. The platform is a concrete pad that extends 10 feet from the back (south) wall to the dock edge (projecting 2 feet beyond the edge of the brick walls). The platform is 16 feet 8 inches long (east to west). The flat roof of the loading dock extends approximately 4 feet beyond the north edge of the dock, creating a small

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canopy for protection from the weather. The height of the platform is approximately 4 feet above the ground.

The organization of the east half of the ground floor reflects the original use and the west half of the ground floor reflects its early (1941) alteration. The stairs from the first floor enter the boiler room at approximately the mid-point along the east wall. The doorway (double doors) to the exterior stairwell near the loading dock is to the east of the landing of the interior stairwell. The boiler room measures 18 feet 10 inches by 28 feet. The original gas boiler was replaced with a new system in the 1980s.

Adjacent to the boiler room to the north is a storage room and the fuel room (which was also used for storage since it was not necessary to store coal or wood for the boiler). The storage room measures 10 feet 6 inches by 16 feet 8 inches. The fuel room, which is irregularly shaped and wraps around behind the storage room and the stairwell, measures 28 feet at its widest and 29 feet at its longest and 10 feet at its narrowest and 12 feet 4 inches at its shortest. Both rooms are accessed by double doors which open into the boiler room.

Adjacent to the boiler room to the south is another storage room that has been divided into two rooms. The room in the southeast corner of the building measures 11 feet 6 inches by 13 feet 8 inches. The room to its west measures 11 feet 6 inches by 14 feet. A concrete block wall separating the space was constructed as part of the 1941 alteration. Each of these rooms has a clerestory window, which provides some light and ventilation. A single door from the boiler room accesses the east room; the west room is accessed through double doors from the boiler room.

The west half of the ground floor is accessed through a single door from the boiler room. Originally one large, open storage area with four columns supporting the first floor, the space was divided into office spaces in 1941 when a number of federal offices were temporarily located here. A hallway runs north and south with offices, storage rooms, and restrooms to the west and north. The 5-foot wide hallway widens to 9 feet 6 inches at the south end where the exterior entrance is located. When the offices were constructed, a window in the south wall was converted to an exterior entrance and an exterior stairwell was built to allow access to the office so that the public would not need to go through private post office space. The widened hallway may have served as a lobby for the offices.

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All of the partition walls in this area are concrete block. Four clerestory windows were added for light and ventilation. Windows are located along the west wall, one per office.

The office in the southwest corner is 13 feet 8 inches by 17 feet 6 inches. It has two doors, one to the hallway/lobby area and one to the adjoining office to the north. The office in the northwest corner is smaller, measuring only 9 feet 10 inches by 13 feet 10 inches. It is accessed only through the adjoining office to the south.

The two middle offices are irregularly shaped. The smaller of these (northern one of the two) is basically L-shaped. It is 14 feet wide at its widest and 11 feet 3 inches at its narrowest. It is 21 feet 10 inches at its longest (which is also its narrowest portion) and 13 feet 10 inches long at its shortest (which is also its widest portion). The larger of these two offices (southern one of the two) is also L-shaped. It is 18 feet 8 inches at its widest and 6 feet 8 inches at its narrowest. It is 21 feet 10 inches at its longest (which is also its narrowest portion) and 12 feet 6 inches at its shortest (which is also its widest portion). The northern office is accessed through a door to the hallway on its east wall. The southern office is accessed through a doorway to the hallway/lobby on its south wall. There is also a doorway adjoining these offices to each other.

Two restrooms (men's and women's) are located at the north end of the hallway. The men's room, which is adjacent to the two offices in the northwest corner of the building is 7 feet 4 inches by 12 feet 7 inches. The door on the east wall opens to the hallway. The women's room is smaller, measuring 5 feet 8 inches by 8 feet 10 inches. It is accessed by a door to the hallway on the south wall.

A T-shaped storage room, a small janitor's closet, and a small alcove are sandwiched into the space between the two middle offices. Together they measure 9 feet 4 inches by 12 feet. All three open onto the hallway. The janitor's closet and the alcove are situated in the southeast and northeast corners, respectively, of storage room's T-shape.

### **Principle Finishes and Subsequent Changes**

Many of the original finishes have been retained on the first floor. In the lobby, the original terrazzo floor is intact and much of the original marble wainscot and wood trim (except where removed when new mailboxes were installed) is intact. The terrazzo floor is an alternating light

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and dark pattern with a black border. According to the plan specifications for the building, the light squares contain a combination of "Middlebury White" and "Texas Yellow" marble granules. The dark squares contain a combination of "Colorado Yellow," "Dark Pink Tennessee" and "Light Pink Tennessee" marble granules. The dark border is a combination of "Texas Black" and "Texas Blue Dark Gray" marble granules. The binding material is Portland cement mortar, colored light or dark to match the hues in the marble granules. The marble wainscot is a polished, rose colored Montana Travertine from Gardiner, Montana. The wood trim is birch that has been stained and varnished. The walls above the wainscot and mailboxes is plastered and painted.

Also in the lobby is a three-piece wood relief sculpture known as "Fish Story" by Marion Overby. The figures are carved from California walnut. The two larger pieces measure 3 feet by 1 foot by 7 inches; the smaller piece measures 9 inches by 11 inches by 7 inches. The sculpture is attached to the wall over the door to the Postmaster's Office. In addition to this original sculpture, two of the original wooden desks remain in the lobby, as does the original glass-enclosed bulletin board. The bulletin is stained and varnished red birch. The desks appear to be stained and varnished oak. The original bronze lighting fixtures have been replaced with contemporary florescent fixtures.

The walls and the ceiling in the workroom are plastered and painted. The skylight has been enclosed by a drop ceiling of large acoustic tiles. The lower 4 feet 6 inches of the walls are covered with a tongue-and-groove pine wainscot, which has been finished with a dark stain and varnish. The original flooring, which lies beneath the current vinyl flooring, is maple. The baseboards are pine, also stained dark and finished with varnish. Located high in the wall between the workroom and lobby (also visible from the lobby side) are "ventilating screens" which consist of openings screened with wrought iron bars. The original bronze light fixtures have been replaced with hanging industrial florescent lights. Three large paddle fans also hang from the ceiling. Located near the doorway to the loading dock is the original first aid box.

The walls and ceiling of the Postmaster's Office are plastered and painted. A birch chair rail and baseboard encircle the office. The floor is white oak. The walls and ceiling in the private toilet off the Postmaster's Office are also plastered and painted. The flooring is ceramic tile with a 6 inch, coved tile baseboard. The wood trim in the office is birch; the wood trim in the toilet is pine.



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The vault has a concrete floor, walls, and ceiling. All have been painted. The vault door is a standard metal vault door. The swing room also has plastered and painted walls and ceiling. The original maple floor has been covered with vinyl. The baseboard and chair rail are pine. The adjacent swing room toilet (men's room) and the women's restroom have plastered and painted walls and ceilings and ceramic tile floors with 6 inch coved tile baseboards. The swing room toilet (men's room) also has a 4 foot 6 inch ceramic tile wainscot. The janitor's toilet, which also has plastered and painted walls and ceiling, has a painted, smooth-finish concrete floor. The wood trim in all of these rooms is pine.

The finishes on the ground floor are simple. All walls and ceiling are either smooth-finish concrete or concrete block. All walls and ceilings have been painted. The floors in the boiler room, fuel room, and storage room in the southeast corner of the building are painted, smooth-finish concrete, as are the restrooms. The remaining floors have been carpeted. All wood trim on the ground floor is pine. The doors on the fuel room are an interesting diagonally laid board and batten.

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## **National Register of Historic Places**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Spearfish Post Office (Old), located on the east side of Main Street between Grant and Hudson Streets in Spearfish, South Dakota, was constructed in 1940. It served as the postal facility for the community until late 1997.

The nominated building meets the National Register Criterion A for its association with the Depression-era federal relief programs that resulted in the construction of numerous public buildings between 1929 and 1942. It is also eligible under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of a standardized Class C post office building in the simplified Classical style.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

The history of twentieth century post office construction prior to World War II can be divided into three distinct phases. During the first phase, from 1900 to 1915, James Knox Taylor served as the Supervising Architect of the Treasury from 1897 to 1912 and was succeeded by Oscar Wenderoth, who served from 1913 to 1914. Construction and maintenance of all federal buildings were the responsibilities of their office. Stylistically, government buildings constructed during this period were “designed to express Classical and democratic ideals and to symbolize power, organization and institutionalization.”<sup>1</sup> Although designs for federal buildings could be provided by private architects under the provisions of the Tarsney Act, most smaller buildings, including post offices, were designed by the Supervising Architect’s Office.

The establishment of a classification system for federal buildings marked the second phase, from 1915 to 1930. In an effort to provide a system of uniformity and economical design, Secretary of the Treasury William McAdoo established the following four classes<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> United States Postal Service, History of Post Office Construction 1900-1940 (Washington, DC: US Postal Service, Office of Real Estate, 1982), 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

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*Class A*

Definition: Buildings that include a post office of the first class with annual receipts of \$800,000 or over; the site forming part of a city development plan or situated on an important thoroughfare of a great city; improvements on adjoining property reaching the higher valuation of metropolitan real estate.

Character of Building: Marble or granite facing; fireproof throughout; metal frames, sashes, and doors; interior finish to include the finer grades of marble, ornamental bronze work, mahogany, etc. Public spaces to have monumental treatment, mural decorations; special interior lighting fixtures.

*Class B*

Definition: Buildings that include a post office of the first class with receipts from \$60,000 to \$800,000; valuation of adjoining property somewhat below the higher valuation of metropolitan real estate.

Character of Building: Limestone or sandstone facing; fireproof throughout; exterior frames and sash metal; interior frames, sash and doors wood; interior finish to exclude the more expensive woods and marbles; ornamental metal to be used only where iron is suitable. Restricted ornament in public spaces.

*Class C*

Definition: Buildings that include a post office of the second class with receipts of \$15,000 or over, and of the first class to \$60,000 receipts; valuation of surrounding property that of a second-class city.

Character of Building: Brick facing with stone or terra cotta trimmings; fireproof floors, nonfireproof roof; frames, sashes, and doors wood; interior finish to exclude the more expensive woods and marbles; the latter used only where sanitary conditions demand; public spaces restricted to very simple forms of ornamentation.

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*Class D*

**Definition:** Buildings that include a post office having annual receipts of less than \$15,000; real estate values satisfying only a limited investment for improvements.

**Character of Building:** Brick facing, little stone or terra cotta used; only first floor fireproof; stock sash, frames and doors, etc., where advisable; ordinary class of building, such as any businessman would consider a reasonable investment in a small town.

Stylistically, the majority of the post offices constructed between 1915 and 1930 retained the basic massing and plans of the earlier phase, regardless of classification. Classical detailing, however, was kept to a minimum on smaller buildings due to cost limitations.

Construction of public buildings came to a stop when the United States entered World War I in 1917 and slowly resumed during the early 1920s. In 1926, the Keyes-Elliott Act authorized the expenditure of \$100,000,000 for federal buildings outside of Washington, DC. The act also authorized the hire of outside architects in "special cases" and directed the Secretary of the Treasury and the Postmaster General to conduct a nationwide survey on the need for postal facilities. This survey identified 799 towns and cities with postal receipts exceeding \$20,000 and another 1512 towns with postal receipts between \$10,000 and \$20,000 that were without federal buildings. The full implementation of the building program authorized by the Act of 1926 was delayed, however, by the stock market crash in 1929 and the subsequent depression.

The third phase of post office construction, from 1930 to 1942, included greatly expanded public buildings programs. In May 1930, Congress amended the Public Buildings Act and increased funding for public building construction marking the beginning of the trend in public works projects during the 1930s. On June 16, 1933 Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). Title II of this act created the Public Works Administration (PWA).<sup>3</sup> Following the creation of the PWA, which disbursed funds for federal construction projects, the number of post

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<sup>3</sup> A full description of the PWA can be found in the *Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941* Multiple Property Documentation Form.

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offices constructed during the 1930s was more than three times the number constructed during the previous fifty years. In its final report, the PWA characterized the local post office as the most typical and widely used of its building projects. The PWA financed construction of 406 post office buildings nationwide. The work of the PWA, including the construction of post office buildings, was overseen by the Public Buildings Administration, a division of the Federal Works Agency, after the PWA ended in 1939. The new administration continued with similar policies for construction and design.

The classification system continued to provide guidance for the type of post office buildings constructed during the 1930s. Because the goal, in the interest of economic recovery, was to build as many post office buildings as quickly as possible, standardization in design continued to be a priority. The Treasury Department developed a set of sketches that provided standard floor plans of post offices of different sizes, but individual treatment of exterior details was allowed where practical. Although a number of private architects were hired to develop designs for new buildings (authorized by the 1930 Public Buildings Act), most of the post offices from this time period were stylistically a simplified classical style or in the Colonial Revival style. In keeping with a long-standing premise of the Depression-era federal works projects, local materials and labor were used whenever possible.

As part of the national recovery effort, programs to employ artists were established and art work was introduced into federal buildings, including post offices, in 1933. Murals, paintings, and sculpture were created for federal buildings first under the Public Works of Art Program (PWAP). This program was replaced by the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture (later called the Section of Fine Arts) program, known as the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP).<sup>4</sup> In the nine years of its existence, the Section of Fine Arts gave out almost 1400 commissions and its work extended across the country. The program officially ended in 1943, but the Public Building Service continued a mural painting program on a limited scale as late as 1949.

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<sup>4</sup> A full description of the Federal arts programs can be found in the *Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941* Multiple Property Documentation Form.

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All post office construction was suspended in 1942 when the United States entered World War II. After the war, the federal buildings program was reconstituted under the General Services Administration.

In South Dakota, a number of post offices were constructed prior to World War II. Among those built during the first two phases mentioned above were the Yankton Post Office (1905), the Deadwood Post Office (1905-1906), the Watertown Post Office (1909), the Lead Post Office (1911), the Huron Post Office (1912-1913), the Brookings Post Office (1913-1915), the Bruce Post Office (1920), and the Northville Post Office (1920).<sup>5</sup>

A number of additional post office buildings and post office additions were built between 1930 and 1942. Most were of the Class C variety and were constructed under either the PWA or its successor, the Public Buildings Administration of the Federal Works Agency. These single story buildings were designed in either a simplified Classical or Colonial Revival style. Class C post offices and post office additions were constructed in Gregory, Lemmon, Sturgis, Mobridge, Webster, Winner, Flandreau, Beresford, Custer, and Spearfish. One Class B variety, a five-story building designed to house several federal offices, was constructed in Aberdeen in 1937.<sup>6</sup>

A number of South Dakota post offices were embellished with art produced through the Treasury Department's art programs. Murals were painted in the Beresford, Flandreau, Mobridge, Sturgis, and Webster post office buildings. Sculptures were installed in the Aberdeen and Spearfish post offices.<sup>7</sup>

Spearfish was placed on the list of communities recommended to receive new post office buildings in 1937. A total of \$75,000 was allotted for the purchase of property, construction of the building, and administrative expenses. Proposals for a site were solicited on January 17, 1938. Three bids were received and included sites on the corner of Main and Market Street (John Doe, owner; \$10,000 bid), on the north side of Market Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets

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<sup>5</sup> South Dakota State Historical Preservation Office survey records.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

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(J. Smith, agent; \$9,000), and an "L"-shaped lot on Market Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets (P. Jones and E. Brown, owners; \$10,580 bid). Finding none of these acceptable, a fourth site was selected on April 29, 1938. The site of the new post office included Lots 9, 10, 11 and portions of 12 in Block 41 on Sixth (now Main) Street. The government paid a total of \$5,900 for the site with \$3,000 to Harold B. and Margie Everhart, \$2,200 to John Sturgeon, and \$700 to the estate of John Wolzmath. The acquisition included a donation of property from Elmore Wolzmath. The site had a frontage of 159 feet on Sixth Street and was 140 feet deep for a total area of 22,260 square feet.<sup>8</sup>

On May 11, 1938, the project was assigned to Treasury Department Construction Engineer Joseph D. Boyer. Boyer surveyed the site on June 1, 1938, at which time he noted three business buildings, one residence and garage, one privy, one warehouse, and one shed occupying the site.<sup>9</sup> Blueprints from the building indicate that the plans for the building were designed in August 1938. Drawing No. 401 by H.D.W is dated 8.10.38 and was checked by E.A.D. on 8.23.38. The plans were officially approved and signed in September by N.S. Thompson, Superintendent of Mechanical Engineering, T.C. Brooks, Chief of Structural Engineering, and W.G. Noll, Chief of Architecture.<sup>10</sup>

The original bid specifications were not issued until November 10, 1939 and construction bids were opened December 13, 1939. It is not known why there was a delay of over a year between the approval of the plans and the issuance of the bid specifications. Dean L. Witcher, a contractor from Minneapolis, submitted the low bid of \$50,844 and was granted the contract on January 3, 1940. The notice of proceed with construction was issued on February 1, 1940 and the time limit set in the contract was 300 calendar days. Work started on March 8 and was completed on October 28, 1940. The total amount for the contract was \$50,897.79, reflecting an

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<sup>8</sup> Public Building Service Records Group 121 (Washington, DC: National Archives).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Original blueprints for the building's construction are in possession of the Postmaster in Spearfish, SD.

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additional \$53.79 to cover the cost of necessary changes in two minor items.<sup>11</sup> The Supervising Architect for the project was Louis A. Simon.

The Historical Record, prepared by Robert L. Bevan, a Construction Engineer with the Public Buildings Branch of the Treasury Department, lists several subcontractors and sources of materials used for the construction of the Spearfish Post Office.<sup>12</sup> These include the following:

<u>Company &amp; Location</u>	<u>Material Provided</u>
Remschel Lumber Company, Spearfish, SD	Lumber
Fish & Hunter, Deadwood, SD	Cement and sand
Black Hills Clay Products, Belle Fourche, SD	Brick, tile, etc.
Baumgartner's Electric Shop, Rapid City, SD	Electrical
Hot Springs Stone Co., Hot Springs, SD	Sandstone
Aberdeen Sheet Metal Works, Aberdeen, SD	Roof and sheet metal
Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co., Sioux Falls, SD	Glazing
Ray G. Syverson, Sioux Falls, SD	Tilework
Fred Halde, Sioux Falls, SD	Plastering
Sioux City Mosaic Co., Sioux City, IA	Terrazzo
The McClelland Co., Davenport, IA	Millwork
Douglas Iron Works, Omaha, NE	Structural/ornamental metal
Houstad Company, Minneapolis, MN	Reinforced steel
Twin City Tile & Marble Co., Minneapolis, MN	Marble
Cold Spring Granite Co., Cold Spring, MN	Granite
Elmer R. Johnson, St. Paul, MN	Plumbing and heating
York Safe & Lock Co., Chicago, IL	Vault door
Coleman Fireproof Door Co., Chicago, IL	Hollow metal
Fist Metal Mfg. Co., Chicago, IL	Plumbing enclosures
Ceco Steel Products, Chicago, IL	Insect screens/weatherstrips
P & F Corbin, New Britain, CT	Hardware

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<sup>11</sup> R.L. Bevan, *Final Report to the Supervising Engineer*, Public Works Administration, Federal Works Agency, December 3, 1940.

<sup>12</sup> R.L. Bevan, *Historical Record of the Spearfish Post Office Construction* (Washington, DC: Public Buildings Branch, Treasury Department, October 29, 1940).



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In addition, the B.F. Nelson Company is mentioned as providing the felt and asphalt for the roofing, the Michaels Art Bronze Company is noted as providing the exterior lighting fixtures, the Baxter Steel Equipment Company furnished the metal cash drawers, the Benn Metal Corporation provided the service hour signs, and the Danish Seed Company is credited with furnishing the lawn seed and fertilizer. Lombard & Ludwig, Inc., architectural sculptors from Washington, DC, designed and sculptured the eagle crest located over the entrance.

Final inspection of mechanical equipment was made by Inspection Engineer H.Q. Valentine on September 24, 1940. Final inspection of the building proper was made by Construction Engineer Henry C. Smith, of the District Engineer's Office on October 20, 1940. The post office opened for business on October 26, 1940.<sup>13</sup>

On January 17, 1941 construction bids were opened for the construction of the ground floor offices. No information pertaining to this early alteration was found. The work reportedly was completed within that year.

On February 12 1942, Ms. Marion Overby of Los Angeles was commissioned by the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts to create a sculpture for installation in the Spearfish Post Office. Unfamiliar with Spearfish and its vicinity, Ms. Overby requested information describing the community's history and important features. A letter from the mayor of Spearfish described the town's the setting in the Black Hills and noted the importance of local features such as the fish hatchery and the Black Hills Passion Play (at that time a newly founded pageant).

Acknowledging the community's connection to trout fishing, Ms. Overby designed a sculpture entitled *Fish Story* for the post office. In a letter to Inslee Hopper of the Section of Fine Arts, dated April 16, 1942, Ms. Overby points out that "Spearfish seems to have obtained its name form the Indians who did spear fish in the river" and that Spearfish is noted for "trout fishing which is famous...and the location of the fish hatcheries there."<sup>14</sup> Photos of scale models were submitted for review on June 27, 1942.

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<sup>13</sup> Bevans, Final Report.

<sup>14</sup> Letter from Marion Overby to Inslee Hopper, Section of Fine Arts, Treasury Department, dated April 16, 1942 (Washington DC: Federal Arts Project files, National Archives [Box 100, Entry 133]).

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The sculpture, carved from California walnut, consists of two large figures (a Native American Indian and a Euro-American settler) and a small figure (fish). Each of the large figures measures three feet by one foot by seven inches; the small figure is nine inches by eleven inches by seven inches. The sculpture was completed and shipped to Spearfish on January 9, 1943. It was installed in early February 1943 and is attached to the wall above the Postmaster's Office with toggle bolts and screws. The cost for the sculpture was \$750. The contract number for the project was WA 1 pb-4450.<sup>15</sup>

The Spearfish Post Office exemplifies the type and style of post office construction undertaken during the Great Depression. It illustrates the simplified Classical style popular during that time period in its use of wide brick pilasters, a wide stone frieze topped by a simple stepped cornice. The building sits atop a base nearly equal in width to the frieze and has a symmetrical façade. The building is also an example of the Class C variety of post office. The primary character-defining features of the building are intact. The sculpture by Marion Overby is also still intact. The buildings, therefore, is eligible for consideration under Criterion C.

The Spearfish Post Office is also eligible under Criterion A as an excellent and well-preserved example of a building constructed in association with the federal relief programs during the Great Depression. The construction of this post office provided the community with a modern and up-to-date federal facility. Initiated under the Public Works Administration project in 1937, it was completed under the PWA's successor, the Federal Works Agency's Public Buildings Administration. The building and its construction exemplifies the New Deal ideals of using local or regional contractors, suppliers, and workforce, as well as the use of local building materials, whenever possible. The intact sculpture is an excellent illustration of projects produced by the federal arts projects.

The Spearfish Post Office is one of a small number of buildings and structures constructed with the assistance of federal relief programs. Others include the Spearfish City Hall (somewhat altered), the Spearfish airport tower and hangar (both demolished), and a number of buildings

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<sup>15</sup> Federal Art Project files.

Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Name of Property

Lawrence County, SD  
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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and structures at the Spearfish Fish Hatchery (listed on the National Register). With the exception of the Fish Hatchery, the Spearfish Post Office is the best remaining example of architecture associated with the federal relief programs locally.

Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Name of Property

Lawrence County, SD  
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

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*The following sources were consulted in addition to those listed in the Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941 Multiple Property Documentation Form.*

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Bevan, R.L. *Historical Record of the Spearfish Post Office Construction*. Washington, DC: Public Buildings Branch, Treasury Department, October 29, 1940.

Original blueprints for the Spearfish Post Office.

Overby, Marion. Letter to Inslee Hopper dated April 16, 1942. Washington, DC: Federal Arts Projects files, National Archives [Box 100, entry 133].

Public Building Service Records Group 121. Washington, DC: National Archives.

South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office. Survey records.

United States Postal Service. History of Post Office Construction 1900-1940. Washington, DC: U.S. Postal Service, Office of Real Estate, 1982.

Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Name of Property

Lawrence County, SD  
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated area is located in the NW ¼ NE ¼ Section 15, Township 6 North, Range 2 East in Lawrence County, South Dakota, and is legally described as all of Lots 9, 10, and 11 and the southerly 9 feet of Lot 12, in Block 41 in the town of Spearfish.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the building.

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(Photographs 1 through 6 are copies of historic photographs)

- Photo 1      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Dean L. Witcher, Contractor (attributed)  
Date of Photograph: October 11, 1940  
Negatives: whereabouts known  
Front facade of Spearfish Post Office (Old) from southwest comer.
- Photo 2      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Dean L. Witcher, Contractor (attributed)  
Date of Photograph: 1940  
Negatives: whereabouts known  
Rear of Spearfish Post Office (Old) with construction being completed on loading dock; taken from northeast comer.
- Photo 3      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Dean L. Witcher, Contractor (attributed)  
Date of Photograph: 1940  
Negatives: whereabouts known  
Workroom under construction; view from northeast comer.
- Photo 4      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Dean L. Witcher, Contractor (attributed)  
Date of Photograph: October 11, 1940  
Negatives: whereabouts known  
Completed workroom prior to post office opening; monitor type skylight visible at upper left; stairway to ground floor at far right; view from south.
- Photo 5      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Dean L. Witcher, Contractor (attributed)  
Date of Photograph: October 11, 1940  
Negatives: whereabouts known  
Lobby from southwest comer; original entry vestibule and original table at Left.

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Photo 6      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Dean L. Witcher, Contractor (attributed)  
Date of Photograph: October 11, 1940  
Negatives: whereabouts known  
View of original boiler on ground floor; view from west.

Photo 7      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Michelle L. Dennis  
Date of Photograph: September 1997  
Negatives: Michelle L. Dennis  
Front facade (west side) of building.

Photo 8      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Michelle L. Dennis  
Date of Photograph: September 1997  
Negatives: Michelle L. Dennis  
North side of building.

Photo 9      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Michelle L. Dennis  
Date of Photograph: September 1997  
Negatives: Michelle L. Dennis  
Rear (east side) of building.

Photo 10      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Michelle L. Dennis  
Date of Photograph: September 1997  
Negatives: Michelle L. Dennis  
South side of building.

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- Photo 11      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Michelle L. Dennis  
Date of Photograph: September 1997  
Negatives: Michelle L. Dennis  
View of lobby from southwest corner; sculpture visible at far end of lobby; original table at left of picture; newer entrance vestibule and mailboxes at left and right (respectively). Still in use as Post Office when photo was taken.
- Photo 12      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Michelle L. Dennis  
Date of Photograph: September 1997  
Negatives: Michelle L. Dennis  
Workroom from northeast corner of building. Still in use as Post Office when photo was taken.
- Photo 13      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Michelle L. Dennis  
Date of Photograph: September 1997  
Negatives: Michelle L. Dennis  
View of vault from workroom.
- Photo 14      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Michelle L. Dennis  
Date of Photograph: September 1997  
Negatives: Michelle L. Dennis  
View of ground floor boiler room (from west) with new boilers.
- Photo 15      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Michelle L. Dennis  
Date of Photograph: September 1997  
Negatives: Michelle L. Dennis  
Closer view of sculpture, Postmaster's office (with original gold leaf lettering), original bulletin board (left of Postmaster's office) and one of the original tables.



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- Photo 16      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Michelle L. Dennis  
Date of Photograph: September 1997  
Negatives: Michelle L. Dennis  
*Fish Story* sculpture by Marion Overby.
- Photo 17      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Michelle L. Dennis  
Date of Photograph: September 1997  
Negatives: Michelle L. Dennis  
Closer view of one of the original tables.
- Photo 18      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Michelle L. Dennis  
Date of Photograph: September 1997  
Negatives: Michelle L. Dennis  
Eagle crest over main entrance; replacement doors.
- Photo 19      Spearfish Post Office (Old)  
Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Michelle L. Dennis  
Date of Photograph: September 1997  
Negatives: Michelle L. Dennis  
Cornerstone.