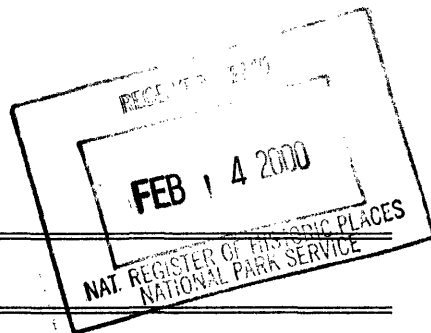


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

244



1. Name of Property

historic name United States Post Office and Courthouse

other names/site number Federal Building

2. Location

street & number 224 South Boulder Avenue not for publication N/A
city or town Tulsa vicinity N/A
state Oklahoma code OK county Tulsa code 143 zip code 74103

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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.
(N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Constance Werner Ramirez
Signature of certifying official

February 3, 2000
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Bob Schuler
Signature of commenting or other official

11-15-99
Date

Oklahoma Historical Society/SHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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:) _____

Edson H. Beall
Signature of Keeper
3/24/00
Date of Action

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> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </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.)

 N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

Cat: <u>GOVERNMENT</u>	Sub: <u>post office</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>courthouse</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>government office</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>GOVERNMENT</u>	Sub: <u>courthouse</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>government office</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

Classical Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone:Limestone

roof Synthetics

walls Stone:Limestone

other _____

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

8. Statement of Significance

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.)

Politics/Government

Architecture

Period of Significance 1915-1949

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

Significant Dates 1917
1932

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Wetmore, James, Acting Supervising Architect, U.S. Treasury Department
M. Yeager and Son, Contractor

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than One (1) Acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>15</u>	<u>230770</u>	<u>4004900</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

N/A See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cynthia Savage, Architectural Historian

organization Savage Consulting for Geo-Marine, Inc. date June 1999

street & number Route 1, Box 116 telephone (405) 459-6200

city or town Pocasset state Oklahoma zip code 73079

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

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

name General Services Administration, Greater Southwest Region

street & number Fritz G. Lanham Federal Bldg., 819 Taylor St. (7PT) telephone (817) 978-4229

city or town Fort Worth state TX zip code 76102

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 7 Page 9

United States Post Office and Courthouse
name of property
Tulsa County, Oklahoma
county and state

Narrative Description:

SUMMARY

The United States Post Office and Courthouse in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is a three-story, Classical Revival style building with a full basement. Originally constructed in 1915-1917, the building was only two stories in height and did not extend all the way to Second Street. In 1930-1932, the building was expanded by a 160-foot addition on the north side of the building and a third-story was added. Although this major addition occurred 15 years after the original building was constructed, the addition employed the same style and materials and is not discernible from the original. Both the original and the 1932 design were completed under the supervision of James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect of the Supervising Architect's Office of the Treasury Department.

Constructed of limestone with terra cotta ornament, the building has a built-up, asphalt, mansard roof. The dominant decorative features of the building are 22 natural limestone Corinthian columns on the façade. These two-story columns support a full, limestone, denticulated entablature which continues around the north and south walls and partially on the west elevation. The building is topped by a terra cotta cornice, which has an acanthus leaf motif. The fenestration pattern is symmetrical, in keeping with the Classical Revival style. The windows, replaced in the mid-1970s, are single-hung or fixed anodized aluminum windows. The windows have a bronze, heat-absorbing glass, and in the early 1980s a solar film was also applied. The majority of the first floor windows on the north, south, and west elevations are four vertical panes topped by a double transom window. The first floor windows in the large central bay of the façade contain three large center panes flanked by narrow sidelights. The windows on the second and third floors are primarily one-over-one single-hung windows. The second floor windows in the front elevation's central bay are the exception being one-over-one single-hung windows with narrow one-over-one sidelights. The basement windows are covered with wrought iron grilles with a repetitive "X" pattern similar to the grilles above the doors. The entry doors on the façade are double, glazed slab with bronze frames. Above the southernmost and central doors are bronze grilles in a repetitive "X" pattern. The northern entry has a large transom window. The central entry is also flanked by single, glazed slab doors, which are also topped by matching bronze grilles. The remaining exterior doors, located on the rear elevation, are of hollow metal construction and appear to date to the 1930s expansion. In about 1982, a handicap ramp was constructed on the south end of the front elevation. The building occupies one-half of a city block on the north side of Tulsa's business district. Downtown Tulsa has retained much historic fabric; particularly outstanding are the number of Art Deco style buildings. Nonetheless, the United States Post Office and Courthouse stands out as an excellent example of a federally designed, Classical Revival style building. Despite the addition of the handicap ramp and the replacement of windows, the building maintains a high degree of integrity of setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The United States Post Office and Courthouse in Tulsa is a three-story, limestone, Classical Revival style, public building. The building also has a full basement. Originally constructed in 1915-1917 as a two-story building, the building was expanded in 1930-1932 with the addition of a third floor and a 160-foot addition on the north side of the building. The building has a built-up, asphalt, mansard roof. A terra cotta, acanthus leaf cornice ornaments the top of the building. Highlighting the building are the 22, two-story Corinthian columns on the façade. Above this, and extending around the north and south elevations and partially along the west side, is a limestone entablature. The entablature, originally the building's cornice line, is about six feet high and projects two feet from the wall. The entablature's various cornice moldings and dentils appear to be constructed of carved, natural limestone. The symmetrical fenestration pattern decorates the north and south elevations. Except on the front central bay, the first floor windows are four vertical panes topped by a double transom window. Again, with the exception of the second floor windows in the façade's central bay, the second and third floor windows are one-over-one single-hung. The majority of the first and second floor windows have a slightly projected limestone sill. All windows are replacement. There are three entries on the façade. All have glazed slab doors with bronze frames. Other metal, hollow doors are located on the rear elevation. On the north, east, and south sides of the building are concrete walks. A service alley runs the length of the west side. The building has a few areas planted with trees and shrubbery on the east and south elevations.

The building's primary elevation is the east side which extends a full block along Boulder Avenue. The east elevation is divided into five bays. The three central bays project away from the outside flanking bays. Contained within the central bay is the magnificent *in antis* columned portico, which extends the full length of the bay. The portico is shallow, only about six feet deep. The portico has 22, two-story, natural limestone Composite Corinthian columns that are located on 10-foot centerlines. Directly behind each column is a shallow pilaster with a stylized capital. The columns are round and unfluted. The shafts of the columns are fabricated in 3-foot, 8-inch-high sections and taper in diameter from 2 feet, 11 inches to 2 feet, 8 inches. The column's Composite capitals, which are about 3 feet, six inches tall, are fabricated from architectural terra cotta. The columns are on individual plinths that are at the edge of the portico. Also decorating the central bay, located between each pilaster at the second floor line, are cast bronze spandrels. The bas relief motif is a garland suspended between two urns. The central bay also contains the main entry. Consisting of a central, double, glazed slab door and two flanking, single, glazed slab doors, the main entry is accessed by an expansive flight of stairs with multiple wrought iron railings. The stairs have cheek walls on either side. On top of the cheek walls, are cast iron light standards.

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The light standards have an acanthus motif, matching the building's cornice and Composite Corinthian columns. On either side of the stairs is a small landscaped area. Above each of the doors in the central bay are bronze grilles in a repetitive "X" pattern. The first floor windows in the central bay, providing light into the lobby, consist of three large center panes flanked by narrow sidelights. The central bay's second floor windows are single-hung, one-over-one windows with narrow one-over-one sidelights. Above the limestone entablature are the third story windows. Matching other windows on the second and third floors, the central bay's third floor windows are one-over-one single-hung. Flanking the central bay are two narrow projecting bays delineated by Composite pilasters. Secondary entrances are located on the first floor of both bays. These entries consist of double, glazed slab doors topped by a projected, denticulated cornice, which appears to be supported by two carved limestone consoles. Immediately above the door and below the projected cornice, the southernmost entry is topped with a bronze grille, matching the grille over the central entries. The northernmost entry, constructed as part of the 1932 expansion, does not have the grille, instead having a large transom window. The grille was probably removed when the window replacement project occurred in the mid-1970s. Because Boulder Avenue slopes down about six feet along the length of the building, the southern entry is just two steps above grade, while the north entry has six exterior steps and an additional six interior steps. Both entries have cheek walls ornamented with two light standards matching those on the main central entry. In approximately 1982, a handicap ramp was constructed to the north of the southern entry in a space once occupied by an areaway. The ramp has a simple metal railing and, although extending in front of the central bay, is fairly unobtrusive. A simple handrail was added in recent years to the northernmost entry steps. Above the entries on the second and third floors of both bays are one-over-one, single-hung windows flanked by narrow one-over-one windows. The second floor windows are differentiated from the third floor because they are slightly larger and have a slightly projected sill. The two outer bays are nearly identical. Due to the slope of the site, a basement window is visible in the northernmost bay. The basement window is covered with a wrought iron grille in a repetitive "X" pattern matching the grille over the front entries. The first floor windows in the outer bays are slightly larger than those above but are also one-over-one. The second floor one-over-one windows have a slightly projected sill, matching the second floor window sills in the adjacent bays. The third-story windows, slightly smaller than those below, have no visible sill. Off the southeast corner of the building is a 40-foot aluminum flagpole.

The south elevation fronts onto Third Street and is divided into two unequal bays. The narrow, easternmost bay is slightly projected. Unlike the rest of the elevation, the easternmost bay's lower fenestration does not correspond to the interior floor levels. Located at the landing level of the monumental interior stairs, the easternmost bay is highlighted by a large, eight-pane, color and etched glass window with a limestone balconet. Immediately below this is a narrow, two-

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pane, vertical window. Above the entablature, a single-hung one-over-one window is set at the third floor. The larger, western bay contains six basement windows covered with wrought iron grilles, six first floor windows consisting of four vertical panes topped by a double transom, eight second floor, single-hung one-over-one windows with slightly projected limestone sills, and eight one-over-one single-hung, third story windows. In front of the basement window is a simple metal railing protecting pedestrians from falling into the window well. The 1932 expansion of the building included an addition to the southwest corner which at grade level formed a covered loading area. One of its arched openings is visible on the south elevation. The large arch has limestone voussoirs and a fixed wrought iron grille in a traditional picket motif.

Unlike the other elevations, the rear elevation is uneven with a combination of two- and three-story sections. Due to the slope of the site, basement level openings are also readily visible on the west elevation. On the northern end of the west elevation, a three-story section is decorated with the limestone entablature, three sets of windows on the first, second, and third floors, and a large overhead basement door. Next to this is a two-story section with 11 windows at the first floor and at the basement level. Sitting atop this middle section is mechanical equipment. South of this is a short, two-story section, which has Doric pilasters supporting a full entablature and covered openings. This gives way to another two-story section, matching that to the north but with only four openings per floor. On the very southern end of the west elevation is the 1930's covered loading area. This area has a total of three large, arched openings on the first floor and basement levels, three windows on the second and third floors of the west side, and four windows on the second and third floors of the north wall. The covered loading dock has one opening on the south elevation, one to the west, and one opening on the north. The arched openings on the rear of the building do not have wrought iron grilles, unlike the opening on the south elevation. Within the loading area, there is an entry door. Another entry is located to the north. Both doors are composed of hollow metal. Above these various two-story sections are second and third floor sections. The window types match the windows on the other elevations. The basement windows are not covered with ornamental grilles. The west elevation is also differentiated from the other elevations due to its combination of limestone and brick cladding. The southernmost portion and the inner walls of the rear are limestone, with the northern two-story section being brick.

The north elevation of the building fronts onto Second Street. Compared to the east and south elevations, the north elevation is relatively plain. The primary decorative element is the limestone entablature which encircles the building and the window openings. The fenestration pattern of this elevation is symmetrical. There are no door openings on this side of the building. There are 10 windows on the third floor, identical to the other walls' third floor windows. The 10 second floor windows also match the north elevation's second floor windows. The two easternmost first floor windows

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are different from the other first floor windows on the elevation. The easternmost windows are single-hung, one-over-one, windows. The remaining eight first floor windows are identical to those on the north elevation. Also visible are ten basement windows. These windows are covered with cast iron grilles with a repetitive "X" pattern.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The first floor lobby was sensitively rehabilitated in the mid-1990s and returned to much of its former glory. Extending the full length of the east elevation, the lobby has three exterior entrances. Each entry has an ornate, interior, bronze and glass vestibule. The vestibules are of similar design and detail as the railing of the monumental stairs on the south side of the lobby. The vestibules have a variety of geometric and floral decorative patterns and eagles perched above the vertical framing members. Due to the slope of the site, the north vestibule gives way to six interior stairs with a matching ornamental rail. The south vestibule is level with the rest of the lobby. The predominant materials in the first floor lobby are yellow gray marble walls and the elaborately geometric-patterned marble floors. The predominant marble used on the lobby floor surfaces, and throughout the building and the monumental stairs, is Gray Tennessee marble while the borders are Verde Antique and Oriental. The walls are Yellow Gray Tennessee marble. The patterned floor surfaces that occur by the entries are comprised of Italian Parvonazzo marble that is a cream color with green striations, Verde Antique marble which is a dark green variety, and Oriental marble which has a reddish-brown color. Flanking each vestibule and on the opposite wall are monolithic, interior, Doric columns. The columns are Royal Antico marble which is similar in appearance to the Italian Parvonazzo. Above the interior doorways are cast iron grilles with a repetitive "X" pattern, matching those on the exterior. The expansive lobby ceiling is coffered and ornamented with rosettes.

The first, second, and third floors are interconnected by an elaborately detailed monumental staircase with marble treads. It has a heavy, gold bronze handrail with traditional design elements that are very characteristic of the building's Classical Revival style. The stairs emanate from a base on the south side of the lobby that is elevated two steps above the lobby level. There is a wide, central flight to an intermediate landing from which the staircase divides into two flights and continues to the second level. When the building was enlarged in the 1930s, this configuration was continued to the new third level. The gold bronze handrail has balusters in a repetitive ornamental caducean pattern. The handrail terminates at the ground level into a massive newel post that is topped with a ram's head. The stairs have 6½-inch risers and well-proportioned treads making it comfortable to walk on.

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On the intermediate stair landing between the first and second floors is a large window. The window now contains the "Tulsey Judicial Window" by Marrayllynn Adams. The window has eight glass panels in a combination of color and etched glass. Each panel tells a theme related to Oklahoma and Tulsa history. One window is dedicated to Robert S. Kerr, oil man, Oklahoma governor, and U.S. Senator. Another window honors Jim Thorpe, Native American athlete. Another famous Oklahoman, Will Rogers, is the subject of one panel. Pioneer Women, particularly Millie Frances Perryman, Creek Indian princess, and Kate Barnard, Oklahoma's first Commissioner of Charities and Corrections, are also honored. Exploration of the future Oklahoma by the Spanish is another topic depicted. The "traveling judges" bringing justice to Indian Territory are illustrated along with the Native American lighthorsemen. The Creek Council Tree in Tulsa, an historic meeting and council place for the Creek Nation, is also pictured. The final window depicts an event unique to Oklahoma history, the land runs. The window was commissioned as part of the General Services Administration's Art-In-Architecture program.

The monumental stairs also give way to lobbies on the second and third floors. These lobbies are similar to the grand lobby on the first floor but are not as opulent. The second floor lobby is slightly more ornate than the third floor lobby. The second floor lobby, off the original courtroom, contains a double, stained oak, panel door and two Verde Antique marble columns with white, painted, plaster capitals. At the corners are pilasters with matching capitals. The third floor has no doors and is ornamented only with pilasters. The lobbies have an elaborate plaster cornice and flat plaster ceiling. The walls are Yellow Gray Tennessee marble.

Another major interior space is the original 1917 courtroom on the southeast side of the second floor. The courtroom's primary feature is the tall oak paneling and oak plank ceiling. The oak paneling on the walls reaches nearly to the ceiling. The ceiling has matching oak planks separated by plaster. The floor is carpeted. The judge's bench is set on the north side of the room on a raised, recessed space flanked by single doors. Flanking the recessed space are wood pilasters. Above the judge's bench is a plaque with the federal seal. Approximately in the center of the west wall is a double upholstered door matching the door to the second floor lobby on the north wall. There are six windows on the east wall.

On the third floor, another courtroom was constructed in the 1930-1932 expansion. This courtroom, located in the middle of the west elevation, is larger than the original courtroom. Much of the floor is carpeted, however, in a large half circle around the judge's bench, and the witness box has a parquet floor. The walls are plaster with a low marble border

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and a simple crown molding. The ceiling is coffered and ornamented with frets. The judge's bench is located on the south wall in a large recessed niche. Above the bench is a plaque with the federal seal. On the north wall, opposite the judge's bench, is a small room connected to the courtroom by a square opening. There are two, double, fly doors on the east wall and four single, wood panel doors on the south wall. The doors have a simple, Classical style, wood surround. There is one window west of the judge's bench on the south wall and four windows on the west wall. Across from the window on the south wall is another single window on the north wall.

In the mid-1990s, when the judiciary moved back into the United States Post Office and Courthouse in Tulsa, two new courtrooms were constructed on the first floor. These courtrooms have modern finishes and furnishings.

The second and third floor corridors have retained much historic fabric. The original marble flooring on the second floor and the terrazzo flooring on the third floor remain intact. The plaster walls are painted a mustard yellow and the Yellow Gray Tennessee marble border remains. Most of the original wood panel doors with obscure glass and operating transoms are still in use in the corridors. The basement level houses mechanical and electrical as well as shop and maintenance areas in that portion built in 1915, with tenant space occupying the balance of the floor space. The service and maintenance areas have concrete floors.

ALTERATIONS

The exterior of the United Post Office and Courthouse in Tulsa has been modified by the replacement of the windows and the construction of a handicap ramp on the southeast corner of the façade. The windows were replaced by single hung and fixed aluminum windows in the mid-1970s. Although not exactly matching the historic windows, the replacement of the windows does not significantly impede the ability of the building to convey its historic appearance. In approximately 1982, a concrete handicap ramp was built on the south corner of the east elevation. The ramp is relatively unobtrusive and, as such, does not adversely impact the integrity of the building.

The interior of the building was drastically modified in the 1960s when both the post office and federal courts moved out of the building. In 1968, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers moved into the building, which had been turned into an office building. This change in function resulted in the majority of the lobby being turned into small offices. Small portions of the original lobby remained at each end adjacent to the two entrances. The 1917 courtroom was turned into a

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conference/presentation room and the 1930 courtroom was converted to office space. Additionally, on the exterior, the original main entrance stairs in the center of the façade were made into a large planter. By 1990, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had outgrown the available space in the building and made plans to move into another larger one. At about the same time, the U.S. District and Bankruptcy Courts determined that their court facilities were inadequate. Plans were then made to rehabilitate the building back to a courthouse. Two bankruptcy courts were located on the first floor in the original post office space. The lobby was rehabilitated to its former grandeur, extending the full length of the east elevation. On the exterior, the main stairs were restored, and the center entry was again made the primary entrance for the building. The courtrooms were also returned to their original function and magnificence. The rehabilitation design was conducted from 1991 to 1993 and the construction phase took place from 1993 to 1996. The work was carefully coordinated with the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

As part of the 1990's rehabilitation of the building, a new color and etched glass window was installed on the intermediate landing of the monumental stairs on the south side of the first floor lobby. The window project was undertaken as part of the General Services Administration Art-In-Architecture Program. The window has eight panels which contain various depictions of Oklahoma and Tulsa history.

Overall, the United States Post Office and Courthouse in Tulsa retains a high degree of integrity of setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The interior has largely been sensitively rehabilitated to its former splendor. The exterior modifications do not significantly impact the building's ability to convey its historic significance as a federal building, nor its architectural significance as an excellent example of a federally designed, Classical Revival style, public building.

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Narrative Statement of Significance:

SUMMARY

The United States Post Office and Courthouse in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the federal government at the local level and Criterion C as an excellent example of federal architecture from the early twentieth century. From the start of construction in 1915 to 1949, the building provided a federal presence in the town as well as many federal services, including postal and legal. Although many historic buildings remain in downtown Tulsa, the building is an outstanding example of a federally designed, Classical Revival style, government building.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The town of Tulsa existed as early as 1879 when a post office was established on the Perryman Ranch in the Creek Nation. Three years later, the Atlantic & Pacific Railway built a terminal with a roundhouse and a large loading pen on the site of the future town's business section. The railroad had not originally planned to build into the Creek Nation, but the Cherokee Nation did not allow commercial transactions by native, intermarried, or adopted Cherokee citizens. As the Creek Nation allowed whites to trade if they posted a bond, the railroad extended the line. The town, first called "Tulsey Town," grew slowly. During the early 1880s, the town was a haven for gamblers and "bad men" due to its isolation. At the time of the first government townsite survey in 1900, Tulsa's population stood at merely 1,390.¹

In 1901, the state's first important commercial oil well blew in. Located in Red Fork, this landmark well was across the Arkansas River from Tulsa. Two years later, the Secretary of the Interior allowed the leasing of land under Department of the Interior supervision. The oil rush was on as oil men from Pennsylvania and other states flocked to Indian Territory. In 1904, three men built a toll bridge over the Arkansas River connecting Red Fork and Tulsa. In addition to allowing Tulsa to benefit from the Red Fork strike, the toll bridge also enabled the town to profit from the fabulous Glenn Pool strike, which occurred in 1905. Within months of the discovery, the Glenn Pool was "famous throughout the industry as the richest small field in the world."²

¹ The WPA Guide to 1930s Oklahoma (Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1986), 206-208.

² Ibid., 208. See also Angie Debo, Tulsa: From Creek Town to Oil Capital (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1943), 86-88.

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By 1910, a building boom was well underway in Tulsa with brick plants working at capacity. Hotels, office buildings, and fine residences were under construction as the streets were paved. By late August 1910, construction activity underway was valued at over one million dollars. Pipelines to the Gulf of Mexico opened as oil prices climbed. Although the drilling activity occurred all over eastern Oklahoma, the headquarters were generally located at Tulsa and that is where the oil men in charge made their homes. As such, Tulsa became known as the "Oil Capital of the World."³

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

In 1889, portions of western Indian Country opened to non-Native American settlement. This resulted in the creation of Indian Territory in the east and Oklahoma Territory in the west. In 1907, the combined territories officially entered the United States as the state of Oklahoma. In early 1908, while Congress was debating the passage of an omnibus public building bill that would appropriate at least \$20 million for U.S. Courthouses and Post Offices, the Oklahoma delegation was seeking to get an appropriation for every large town in Oklahoma. Towns for which appropriations were sought included Oklahoma City, Muskogee, Enid, Ardmore, McAlester, Tulsa, Bartlesville, Lawton, Chickasha, Vinita, El Reno, Anadarko, Woodward, and Alva. The amounts sought varied from \$500,000 for Oklahoma City and Muskogee to \$50,000 for Anadarko, Woodward, and Alva. The Oklahoma delegation made such bold demands because they contended that both the Oklahoma and Indian territories had been neglected up to that point in the allocation of federal buildings.⁴

Prior to 1902, federal buildings were authorized on a building-by-building basis. Beginning in 1902, Congress began authorizing the construction of multiple federal buildings through omnibus acts. The omnibus public building acts saved considerable time in Congress because it allowed for authorization of a large body of projects in one vote. However, the increase in the number of authorized buildings during the early part of the twentieth century flooded the Supervising Architect's Office of the Treasury Department with new projects. The Supervising Architect's Office had charge of all federal building construction projects during the period. In 1899, the Supervising Architect's Office managed or was in the process of constructing a total of 399 buildings. By 1912, the number of buildings rose to 1,126. Within the next four years, it was estimated that the number of federal buildings was increasing "at a rate of a new building every fourth day in the year." Additionally, the omnibus bills allowed for considerable political abuse. Political influence often dictated the

³ Ibid., 208.

⁴ The Muskogee (Oklahoma) Times Democrat, 6 March 1908.

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size, ornamentation, and location of the buildings, rather than actual operational needs. Often viewed as federal “presents,” the buildings confirmed to the town’s residents the importance of their community and the power of their Congressional delegation.⁵

Although the federal buildings were often viewed as “pork” projects, they did serve the communities in which they were placed. In some communities, the buildings were also genuinely needed and deserved. In 1907, nearly 7,300 people lived in Tulsa. By 1910, the population of Tulsa more than doubled to equal 18,182. The decade of the 1910’s was another major boom period for Tulsa. By 1920, the population had grown to 72,075. Nearly doubling in the ensuing decade, Tulsa’s population by 1930 was 141,258, and the city was ranked the second largest in the state. The town’s business was dominated by oil and oil-related industries. According to Angie Debo, noted Native American and Oklahoma scholar, “Since the opening of the Glenn Pool every major oil development in Oklahoma has been operated wholly or partly by Tulsa men and capital.”⁶

In May 1908, Congressman Bird McGuire notified Tulsans that \$25,000 had been appropriated to purchase a site for a federal building in Tulsa. Although the money had been allocated, a location for the federal building had not been settled by January 1909. At that time, Congressman James A. Davenport also introduced a bill seeking \$250,000 for the actual building. A month later, it was announced there was trouble over locating the site due to money issues. One of the potential sites, known as the “Brown Site,” was located at Third Street and Boulder Avenue. In 1913, Senator Robert L. Owen sought to increase the appropriation to \$350,000.⁷

Although the construction of a federal building seemed imminent, it was not until March 1915 that local landowner Mr. McCullough was given notice that the building then standing on the site at Third and Boulder had to be moved “at once.” According to the local newspaper, “The last promise of the government in regard to Tulsa’s federal building was that the

⁵ H.J. Kolva and Steve Franks, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Historic U.S. Post Offices in New Mexico 1900-1940” (September 1988), E-5. See also Lois A. Craig and the Staff of the Federal Architecture Project, The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics and National Design (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1984), 213.

⁶ Debo, Tulsa, 88 and 97. See also The WPA Guide, 209.

⁷ The Muskogee (Oklahoma) Times-Democrat, 15 May 1908, 18 January 1909, and 2 February 1909. See also Walk, Haydel & Associates, Inc., “Historic Structures Report: Federal Building, Tulsa, Oklahoma” (January 1991), 12.

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plans would be drawn by the fall of 1915, and it is the general belief that the structure is only a few months away." At that time, the appropriation for the building stood at \$315,000. According to Postmaster Crutchfield, this would "build a structure which is ample to accommodate a city of three times the size of Tulsa and will be a building for which the city might be proud even though it (may) double in size in the new few years."⁸

By late September 1915, bids for the new building had been received by the Treasury Department. The low bidder "for the construction of Tulsa's new and up-to-the-minute federal building" was the firm of M. Yeager and Son of Danville, Illinois, which bid \$185,000. Although the government had not awarded the contract by early October, it was expected the news would be announced quickly. The delay in awarding the contract was attributed to the fact that "The plans call for the finest kind of building to be had for the money and the government would rather bide its time and investigate thoroughly before finally awarding the contract."⁹

It was announced in mid-October 1915 that the Treasury Department did in fact award the contract for construction of a federal building at Tulsa to M. Yeager and Son of Danville, Illinois, for \$184,856. This did not include the mechanical equipment or a mail conveyor. The firm of Farewell Heating & Engineering Company of Joplin, Missouri, received the contract for installing the mechanical equipment at a cost of \$25,667. Both contracts called for the work to be completed in 20 months.¹⁰

There were some local concerns that Tulsa was being cheated due to a recent Treasury Department policy to accept "the cheapest material in the construction of all public buildings." All construction bids included estimates for exterior finishes of marble, sandstone, and limestone. The lowest bids on the Tulsa building for each finish were \$226,000 for marble, \$198,000 for sandstone, and \$185,000 for limestone. Even with the addition of the mechanical equipment, the use of limestone for exterior material left a surplus of \$64,000. When this information was disclosed, a meeting was immediately called in Tulsa. The intended outcome of the meeting was a "formal demand for the best finishing which can be had with the money appropriated as most communities have exceeded their appropriations and there is no reason why Tulsa should be made an exception of." Because the building is constructed of limestone, this formal demand was obviously unsuccessful.¹¹

⁸ The Tulsa (Oklahoma) Daily World, 25 March 1915.

⁹ Ibid., 2 October 1915.

¹⁰ Ibid., 16 October 1915.

¹¹ Ibid.

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O.K. Yeager of M. Yeager and Son arrived in Tulsa on the 15th of October and began preparations to start construction as soon as possible. By mid-November, excavation of the site was underway. It was anticipated that the foundation would be complete no later than 1 January 1916 with the expectation that construction would progress rapidly. Twenty-one months after the awarding of the contract and some false alarms concerning the readiness of the building and its furnishings, Tulsa's United States Post Office and Courthouse was deemed complete and the occupants moved in. The post office opened for business in its new quarters on 23 July 1917. The building was touted as "...the postal beauty of the southwest..." and "...a marble and bronze and granite memorial to its builders." One of the features of the building was an "ammoniac apparatus which cools the water to ice-coldness." This device took water from the Arkansas River, purified it and chilled it so that "Ice-cold water (was) available in all parts of the building for drinking from bubble fountains."¹²

One of the major occupants of the building was the U.S. Post Office which was allocated the entire first floor of the new federal building. With the advent of statehood in 1907, the Tulsa post office was located in the First National Bank Building, where it had been located since 1905. That year, the revenue of the Tulsa post office was \$28,688. Due to the tremendous rate of growth of both the city and postal services, the post office moved into the Hayward Building at 320 Main Street in 1910. However, the post office was quickly in need of additional space as Tulsa continued to grow at a tremendous rate. In 1913, the Tulsa post office ranked third of the first class post offices in the state with postal receipts of \$94,330. Only Oklahoma City and Muskogee had greater postal receipts than Tulsa. However, Tulsa led the state in the amount of gain during the year. Tulsa's accelerated growth was attributed to the great advances in oil and "the phenomenal stimulus it has given to the oil sections of the state." In 1914, the post office moved to its last temporary home, the Edwards Building on Fourth Street. Three years later, the post office made its last move for 50 years to the new federal building. According to the local newspaper, "Uncle Sam, recognizing and appreciating the fact that Tulsa is helping toward the support of the post office department by increasing receipts averaging more than 50 per cent a year, made up his mind that this city should have a post office building commensurate with its importance."¹³

The other principal occupant of the new federal building was the federal court. Indian Territory first came under federal court jurisdiction in 1844 when the United States District Court, Western District of Arkansas at Fort Smith was given nominal jurisdiction over non-Native Americans in Indian Territory. Native American criminals were tried by Indian

¹² Ibid., 16 November 1915 and 22 July 1917.

¹³ The Tulsa Sunday World, 24 March 1946. See also Walk, Haydel & Associates, Inc., "Historic Structures Report," 11-12 and The McAlester News-Capital, 21 July 1913.

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Tribal Courts which had no jurisdiction over non-Native Americans. Lawlessness within Indian Territory, however, continued mostly unabated until the mid-1870s when Judge Isaac C. Parker came to Fort Smith. Judge Parker appointed 200 deputy marshals to roam the territory and bring non-Native American lawbreakers to Fort Smith to face judgment. The deputy marshals faced a daunting task as they patrolled over 74,000 square miles of Indian Territory. In 1883, Congress authorized the United States District Court of Kansas to extend its authority over the northern half of the western part of Indian Territory, while the United States District Court, Northern District of Texas was to assume jurisdiction for the southern half of the western part of Indian Territory. Two years later, the Major Crimes Act of 1885 further restricted the jurisdiction of the Indian Tribal Courts. This act required that Native Americans accused of certain crimes would be tried in federal courts rather than by Indian authorities. To facilitate implementation of the Major Crimes Act, Oklahoma's first federal court was established at Muskogee in 1889. The federal court at Muskogee had jurisdiction over all civil cases if at least \$100 and one U.S. citizen was involved and all criminal cases except those which carried a sentence of hard labor or death.¹⁴

Another momentous event in Oklahoma history occurred in 1889 with the opening of the Unassigned Lands. When opened on 22 April 1889, the Unassigned Lands did not have any provisions for government. The Organic Act of 1890 provided the legal framework for government in the newly created Oklahoma Territory, which essentially covered the western half of the future state. The land of the Five Civilized Tribes in the eastern half of Oklahoma remained as Indian Territory. Muskogee continued as a federal court but now had jurisdiction only over the eastern portion of Oklahoma. A new court encompassing western Oklahoma was established at Guthrie, the territorial capital of Oklahoma Territory. Additionally, South McAlester and Ardmore were named as court towns in Indian Territory.¹⁵

Following the procedures used by the courts of Arkansas, the Indian Territorial Court system gave both civil and criminal jurisdiction to the federal government under the *Mansfield Digest*. In 1895, the Northern, Central, and Southern divisions of the Indian Territorial Court were organized, with court being held in each of the Indian nations. Court was held at the following locations: Northern District – Vinita, Miami, Tahlequah, and Muskogee; Central District – South McAlester, Atoka, Antlers, and Cameron; and Southern District – Ardmore, Purcell, Pauls Valley, Ryan, and Chickasha.

¹⁴ Jeanette W. Ford, "Federal Law Comes to Indian Territory," The Chronicles of Oklahoma (58:4, Winter 1980-1981), 432-434.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 434. See also Colonel Clarence B. Douglas, The History of Tulsa, Oklahoma: A City with a Personality (Chicago, Illinois: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921), 64.

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Additionally, a Court of Appeals was established at McAlester with terms to be held in January and July. Three years later, the Curtis Act of 1898 abolished tribal courts and declared Indian law unenforceable in federal court. In 1904, the federal court system in Indian Territory was divided into four districts. The newly created Western District held court at Muskogee, Wagoner, Okmulgee, Sapulpa, and Wewoka. Court in Oklahoma Territory was largely the same throughout the period except that the Oklahoma Territorial Court used Nebraska State law as a guideline and the court was never divided.¹⁶

In 1907 with the advent of statehood, the two territorial courts were replaced by United States District Courts. Interestingly, Oklahoma was the only state in the union that had two district courts from the time of statehood. Headquarters for the Eastern District Court was located at Muskogee and the headquarters for the Western District Court was situated in Guthrie until 1910. In 1910, Governor Haskell moved the state seal and papers to Oklahoma City, thereby designating it as the state capitol. Although court continued to be held in Guthrie, the headquarters of the Western District Court also moved to Oklahoma City. Court towns for the Eastern District included Muskogee, Vinita, Tulsa, McAlester, Ardmore, and Chickasha. In the Western District, federal court was held at Guthrie, Oklahoma City, Enid, Lawton, and Woodward. In 1924, the Northern District was created with headquarters at Tulsa. Court towns for the Northern District included Vinita, Pawhuska, Miami, and Bartlesville.¹⁷

Many of the cases that came before the federal courts in Oklahoma dealt with the same issues that district courts in other states were dealing with. Due to its unique history as Indian Country, however, Oklahoma federal courts also dealt with issues that were fairly peculiar to the state. Much of the work of the federal courts in Oklahoma during the first decades of the century had to do with two dominant forces in Oklahoma history: Native Americans and oil. In addition to abolishing the Indian Tribal Courts, the 1898 Curtis Act had harsh provisions for the disbursement of tribal land in Indian Territory and the dissolution of tribal governments. In order to ease the transition, the tribes entered into agreements with the federal government in which some land was retained under tribal ownership while the majority of land in Indian Territory was allotted to members of individual tribes. The remaining land, including townsites, was to be sold at auction. Due to the numerous legalities involved in this process, (often not understood by the citizens of Indian Territory who were made wards of the federal government to protect them) there was much illegal and immoral activity related to the allotment process. A number of the early court cases dealt with Indian allotment issues, particularly in the Eastern

¹⁶ Ibid., 434-435. See also Douglas, The History of Tulsa, Oklahoma, 64.

¹⁷ Ibid., 435. See also W.B. Richards, The Oklahoma Red Book (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Secretary of State, 1912), 428-429 and William C. Kellough, "Power and Politics of the Oklahoma Federal Court," The Chronicles of Oklahoma (65:2, Summer 1987), 183-184 and 191-192.

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District Court. Combined with the discovery of oil in the late nineteenth century, often on land held in trust for the thousands of Native American wards of the federal government, the allotment-related cases mushroomed.¹⁸

Prohibition was another major issue the Oklahoma federal courts dealt with from an early date. In the mid-1890s, a federal law was created which barred the shipment of liquor into areas occupied by Native Americans. In 1913, the Supreme Court held that this law was not repealed by the 1906 Enabling Act, which allowed for the creation of the state of Oklahoma. The Enabling Act stipulated that liquor was prohibited in Indian Territory and the Osage Nation for 21 years. The delegates of the Oklahoma Constitutional Convention subsequently extended prohibition to the entire state. However, federal law continued to apply in situations where the liquor was transported from outside the state, and federal officials enforced the law more frequently than the state government. Indicted by federal court for introducing liquor into Muskogee County, Bob Wright raised the point that he did not introduce liquor on land owned or occupied by Native Americans but rather into the town of Muskogee, the title of which had been relinquished by the Creek Nation. In 1913, the Supreme Court determined that the unrepealed 1896 law prohibited the introduction of liquor from outside Oklahoma into any Oklahoma counties occupied by Indians. Because this issue dealt with the shipment of liquor into the state, state laws did not have jurisdiction. The local newspapers contained numerous references to people being indicted in federal court for liquor-related offenses.¹⁹

In addition to the District Court and the post office, other 1917 occupants of the United States Post Office and Courthouse in Tulsa included the U.S. Marshal, U.S. Commissioners, and an office for the "special-referee in bankruptcy." Located on the second floor of the new building were offices for the U.S. District Attorney, U.S. Marshal, U.S. Geological Survey, and "other federal officials." Off of the Marshal's office was "... a small recess which is the only federal jail in Tulsa." The room measured approximately five feet-by-six feet. Additionally, there were rooms for the grand jury and petit jury to meet and a large room for civil service examinations.²⁰

Tulsa continued to grow at a phenomenal rate during the 1920s. Postal receipts during the decade reached the million dollar mark in 1928. Additionally, as mentioned above, in 1924 Tulsa was designated the headquarters of the newly created Northern District Court. Due to increasing demands upon both the post office and court, expansion of the

¹⁸ Kellough, "Power and Politics," 187-191.

¹⁹ The McAlester (Oklahoma) News-Capital, 26 May 1913 and 6 July 1914.

²⁰ The Tulsa Daily World, 2 October 1915 and 22 July 1917.

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building was vital. As early as 1926, the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce was “promised an extension to the main post office.” In 1928, the Treasury Department approved the money necessary to purchase the land on the north side of the existing building all the way to Second Street. By September 1930, a contract had been awarded to Charles Weitz and Sons of Des Moines, Iowa, to construct a major addition to the existing building. The addition included expanding the building north to Second Street approximately 160 feet and adding a third story to the entire building. The contract called for the contractor to receive \$632,800 for the project; however, the completed building represented an investment of \$1 million. The project was completed with all spaces being occupied by April 3, 1932.²¹

The local newspaper claimed the building contained “...every structural and housing innovation which contributes to making this structure one of the most imposing municipal and government edifices in the southwest.” The revamped building had 107 offices, which allowed for the first time all federal agencies located in Tulsa to be housed in one building. The post office, in addition to a more commodious work space and offices, now enjoyed 32 service windows and 1,845 private mail boxes on the first floor. The reserve federal court was given the original second floor courtroom, and Judge Franklin Kennamer was given the new third floor courtroom which, according to some unnamed attorneys, was probably “one of the best-appointed courtrooms in the west.” The majority of the second floor was allocated to various federal agencies including the Internal Revenue Service, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Customs Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Army Recruiting Office, National Guard offices, and Marine Recruiting Office. The postal carriers also enjoyed a large clubroom, dining hall, and shower on the second floor. The third floor was given over to court-related offices except for the Geological Survey. Other third floor occupants included the federal court clerk, district attorney, assistant prosecutors, court clerks, U.S. Marshal, deputy marshal, marshal clerks and field deputies.²²

The post office and federal court moved out of the building in the mid-1960s when the federal government constructed a new \$12 million post office and federal building at Fifth Street and Denver Avenue. The building was then turned over to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for use as district offices. In the early 1990s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also needed additional space and planned to move out of the building. The building was then returned to its historic function as a courthouse with the General Services Administration undertaking a sensitive rehabilitation of the building.

²¹ The Tulsa Sunday World, 24 March 1946. See also Walk, Haydel & Associates, “Historic Structures Report,” 14-15 and The Tulsa Sunday World, 3 April 1932.

²² Ibid., 3 April 1932.

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Business at the United States Post Office and Courthouse in Tulsa was fairly routine, for Oklahoma at least. Nonetheless, the building is significant within Tulsa for its association with these events because both the post office and the district court represented the federal government in Tulsa during the period of significance. Often seemingly a remote entity, the federal government was made a tangible reality in Tulsa through the construction and use of the United States Post Office and Courthouse.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

As with all federal buildings constructed during the period, the Department of Treasury in Washington, D.C. was responsible for the design of the original building and the 1932 addition. From 1915 to 1933, "Judge" James Wetmore presided over the Supervising Architect's Office. As Wetmore was a lawyer, he was designated only the Acting Supervising Architect. As such, Louis Simon, who joined the Supervising Architect's Office in 1896 and was superintendent of the architectural section from 1905 to 1933, was actually responsible for determining the office's architectural directions during this period. Simon subsequently served as Supervising Architect from 1933 to 1939.²³

During the early part of the twentieth century, Beaux-Arts Classicism returned to federal architecture the classical traditions that the eclectic styles of the Victorian period had disrupted.²⁴ The Classical Revival style followed the flowering of classicism brought on by the Beaux-Arts revival. One of the defining differences between the two styles was that the Classical Revival style employed much less opulent decorative detail while maintaining the classical order. The United States Post Office and Courthouse in Tulsa is an excellent example of federally designed, Classical Revival style architecture. In addition to the expansive portico dominating the façade with its 22 Composite Corinthian columns, other features of the Classical Revival style present on the building include Composite and Doric pilasters and symmetrical fenestration pattern. Additionally, the interior, particularly the first floor lobby but also including the second and third floor lobbies, the monumental stair, and historic courtrooms, contains some fine examples of Classical Revival style finishes and detailing.

The United States Post Office and Courthouse in Tulsa served the community well from the date of its construction in 1915. The building is a physical representation of federal government policies and practices at the community level. It is also an excellent example of federally designed Classical Revival style architecture in Tulsa.

²³ Craig, *The Federal Presence*, 238.

²⁴ Craig, *The Federal Presence*, 214.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, Block 103, Original Townsite, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries include the property historically associated with the United States Post Office and Courthouse in Tulsa, Oklahoma.