

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 7 1985  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Shelby Street Station Post Office

and or common same

2. Location

street & number 620 Shelby Street N/A not for publication

city, town Bristol N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Sullivan code 163

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name U.C.C. Realty Corp.

street & number P.O. Box 1280

city, town Bristol N/A vicinity of state Virginia 24203

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sullivan County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Blountville state Tennessee 37617

6. Representation in Existing Surveys See continuation sheet

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Shelby Street Station Post Office is a three story, rectangular five by three bay structure with a low hipped roof hidden behind a brick and limestone parapet. Started in 1899, the Renaissance Revival building was completed in 1900. A one story three bay deep addition was made to the rear in 1910 and a loading dock appended to this in 1936. The building is constructed on a steel frame with concrete foundations, and is sheathed with a combination of red and buff pressed brick. The exposed foundations are faced with ashlar granite. The post office is situated one block south of State Street, the spine of the linear shopping district that serves Bristol, Tennessee and Bristol, Virginia. The surrounding area is now predominately light industrial and parking in land use, with a small amount of secondary retail and service activities. The structure and site are in excellent condition. Having undergone few alterations, the Shelby Street Station Post Office has retained its architectural integrity.

Designed in the Renaissance Revival style by the office of James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the United States Treasury, the main block of the Shelby Street Station Post Office is rectangular in plan, three stories high with a low hipped roof, five by three bays with the front elevation facing due north. It is a steel frame structure on a concrete foundation with an ashlar granite watertable and deep flattened ogee weathering. The first floor, faced with buff brick, is lighted by massive round arched (brick voussoirs) casement and transom windows, set below a projecting string course which becomes a narrow platform of a three bay wide area that spans the center section of the facade. The upper floors are faced with red brick with buff brick quoining and architrave trim at the windows. The three story part of the structure (1889-1900) is surrounded at the roof line by a classical bracketed limestone cornice and a brick and limestone parapet wall. A one story, two bay deep addition was made to the rear of the original structure to expand the mail room in 1910, with all details respecting and in most cases repeating the details of the 1889-1900 design. An enclosed loading dock was appended to this rear addition in early 1936, under Neal Mellick, supervising engineer, U.S. Treasury Department.

The five bay front (north) facade has end bays set in projecting pavilions that flank the three bay central section with the entrance porch. Segmental arched 1/1 double hung windows are let into the granite watertable at either side of the central entrance, the windows served by lightwells. The end bays and the bays flanking the entrance have wide round arched window openings, with hinged casements, opening out below a full width fixed transom. The transom bar is curved in an undulating pattern, creating two large panels below it that have flat 'S' heads. The transom area in the east end pavilion is infilled (wood paneling) to hide the interior stair to the upper levels. All sash, molded architraves and archivolt and transom bars are of wood. The arched openings are faced with rusticated buff brick voussoirs at the head (four courses at the extrado gauged so they taper to the width of three courses at the archivolt), with a recessed course separating each fourth course. The top of the round arch is slightly flattened by the soffit of an overhanging loggia at the second floor line. The wall surface of the entire first floor is faced with buff brick laid in common bond (four courses of running stretchers to one recessed course of headers).

The central entrance repeats the details of the window openings, with the flattened 'S' transom bar above a pair of wood and glass doors. Flanking the entrance are two large wrought iron Renaissance Revival (electrified) candle lanterns that are supported by elaborate scroll brackets. The entrance is reached by a run of five granite steps to a granite platform, all enclosed by buff brick cheek walls and pedestals, with granite bases and caps. The caps

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Shelby Street Station Post Office item number 6

Page 2

The United States Postal Service requested a determination of eligibility on the Shelby Street Station - Bristol in 1980. The property was determined eligible by the Keeper of the National Register in July, 1982.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Shelby Street Station

Continuation sheet Post Office

Item number 7

Page 2

have a cavetto bed mold and fillet and an inverted cavetto crown. The stair terminates at a concrete walk with a concrete curb that extends to a wider semi-circular sidewalk flanked by two cast iron lamp posts set on granite bases at the property line. The base of each post is comprised of torus and scotia moldings while the capital is square and is surmounted by an opaque lamp.

A limestone stringcourse encircles the building at the second story floor level. The three central bays of the facade on the second story are protected by three ornamental wrought iron ogee shaped balustrades. The central part of this facade has three two-story tall windows that light what was the original main court room. The rectangular openings have buff brick quoins at the jambs, and excellent stacked limestone voussoirs, and keystones. The sash is divided into two 2/2 double hung wood units set below a heavy molded transom bar of the same 'S' shape as used in the first floor windows, with oculus windows in the transom area. All trim is wood.

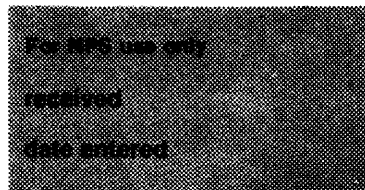
The end pavilions at the upper floors have the limestone string course at the second floor line and a second string course at the height of the sills of the large windows in the end sections. Each end pavilion has a double hung window at each of the two upper floors, 2/2 at the second, 1/1 at the third. The outer edges of the pavilions and the second floor windows are quoined with buff brick, while the wall surfaces are of red brick. The second floor windows have limestone voussoirs like those used in the center block. The third floor windows have limestone bracketed sills and limestone splayed arched heads that project into the lower band of the cornice. This cornice surrounds the entire structure, and consists of a stepped fascia architrave of pressed buff brick, a limestone ovolo bed mold and fascia with a continuous band of heavy scroll modillions, and a limestone corona with a cyma-recta crown. The frieze is inscribed UNITED STATES POST OFFICE. The cornice is surmounted by a red brick parapet wall with buff brick pedestals, all of which has a limestone coping.

The three bay end walls (east and west elevations) of the original structure repeat the details of the front facade, with the east end wall incorporating an entrance at the central bay. Windows at all levels duplicate the details of the windows in the end pavilions of the front facade - the cornice and parapet wall also duplicating the front elevation. The east entrance has a concrete stair enclosed with buff brick cheek walls similar to those at the front entrance. The two-bay deep end walls of the 1910 addition at the rear repeat the details of the original end walls, with a small rectangular door with a splayed brick arched opening set between the two windows in the east elevation. The string course at the second floor level continues as a cornice to this one-story addition, and returns across the rear wall. The five bay rear wall of the 1910 addition has the same openings as those at the first floor of the front facade, but the 'S' transom bar has been removed. There are paired 1/1 double hung sash in the lower part of these openings and three vertical lights in the transom area. There is a large rectangular, wire glass skylight in the roof of the 1910 addition. Windows at the upper levels of the rear wall of the original building have segmental openings with 1/1 double hung wood sash, except those in the end pavilions, which are blind.

The one-story, flat roof loading dock is sheathed with galvanized metal siding. The double doors are wood with glass lights in the upper section.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Shelby Street Station

Continuation sheet Post Office

Item number 7

Page 3

The 'T' shaped lobby has a terrazzo floor and margins, a white marble base, plaster walls without chair rails, and a plaster ceiling that is paneled into four sections by a cast plaster cornice comprised of a triple stepped fascia architrave with a cyma-reversa bed mold to an unenriched frieze. The cornice band has an ovolo on ogee bed mold, with heavy modillions, a flat corona and a cavetto on cyma-reversa crown mold. The interior corners of the lobby are enriched with paired oak pilasters on molded wood pedestals, and have carved Ionic capitals that butt to the ceiling architrave. A pedimented double door in the east end wall leads to the main stair. Set into a segmental opening, the door has a full width rectangular transom with crosset casing and is bracketed by elaborate deep scroll consoles. The carved oak architrave has an egg and dart band on a bed mold to the pediment, the egg and dart repeated as a raking cornice. The paired glass panel oak doors repeat the flattened 'S' curved heads as used at the windows in the front elevation. The interior of these windows are trimmed with molded architraves and archivolt, with paneled imposts and molded lug sills. The lobby is lit by four hanging opaque glass globe light fixtures.

The lobby is served by an exceptional vestibule, with glass and oak doors repeating the details found at the east stair hall. The rear wall of the vestibule is paneled in oak to chair rail height, with glass windows above. The roof of the vestibule is a glass hood, leaded in a fish-scale pattern. The south wall of the lobby, and the recessed section that completes the 'T' plan and includes the post office lock boxes, is paneled in oak, with oak counters at the service windows and full height casements above. The stair has an oak skirt, wrought iron balusters and scroll brackets as handrail supports, and vinyl asbestos risers and treads. The pedimented east exterior entrance door has a recessed vestibule with a semi-circular fan light above a pair of glass doors. The single window in the stair hall is similar to those in the lobby. There are also two pedimented doors in the hall, one in the north wall under the stairs to the second floor, serving the basement stairs, and one in the south wall to the Postmaster's Office. All woodwork is oak.

The Postmaster's Office has a vinyl tile floor, plaster walls and ceiling and a simple but classic cornice consisting of an ovolo on ogee bed mold, flat frieze with ogee crown, flat corona, cyma-reversa bed mold and shallow cavetto crown. Two doors in the south wall are oak, three horizontal panel in design, with molded architrave trim. There is an oak chair rail and picture molding. The room is lit by modern fluorescent lights. The mail sorting room at the rear of the first floor and its one-story addition have seven foot high wainscoting (beaded tongue and groove) and plastered upper walls and ceiling. There is a 12' x 40' coffered skylight in the addition. The floor is asphalt planking. The rear wall has five round arched openings similar to those in the front elevation, with paired 1/1 double hung sash. There are two of the same windows in each end wall of the addition, with a door in between the windows in the east wall. All lighting is fluorescent.

The full basement is entered by stairs in the east hall, and by an open cast-iron spiral stair in the northwest part of the mail sorting room. The basement floor is concrete, the walls exposed brick, columns cast-iron. The heating system is coal fired hot water, with the furnace and boiler manufactured by the Pacific Steam Boiler Corporation.

The second floor has the stair hall in the east end, with offices at the west and what was the main courtroom in the center block. The floors are wood, with a wood base and chair rail on the plaster walls. The ceilings are also plaster, without a cornice in the end pavilions. Doors are oak with a square glass panel over three horizontal panels. All doors

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Shelby Street Station

Continuation sheet Post Office

Item number 7

Page 4

For NPS use only

received

date entered

have transoms. The rear hall, which runs the full width of the three bay center block, links the end pavilions, and has three 1/1 double hung sash in segmental openings. The courtroom is three bays wide, with the bays defined at the two story high ceiling by cased beams and a 36" deep cornice consisting of a stepped fascia, cyma-reversa bed mold, un-enriched frieze with an ovolo band below a shallow cyma-reversa bed mold at the projecting corona, ovolo on fillet band and cyma-recta crown. The three two-story windows are cased with molded architraves. Doors in the west part of the space are pedimented, with egg and dart casings. The original courtroom has been partitioned into three offices, with plaster on frame walls running north-south below the two cased ceiling beams.

The third floor has a passage along the rear of the courtroom, with single offices at either end and the stair in the east pavilion. Floors are wood, walls and ceiling plaster, windows 1/1 double hung with flat transom lit oak doors.

There are no dependencies associated with this building. The post office is situated on a flat, rectangular shaped lot and formally landscaped with shrubs near the foundation of the facade. Several large trees are also located on the property.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1900-1935 **Builder/Architect** James Knox Taylor

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Shelby Street Station Post Office (1900) is being nominated under National Register criterion C. When constructed, one block south of the state line between Virginia and Tennessee (State Street, the major shopping street) the post office was the most important structure in the Bristol, Tennessee business district, and remains so to this day. Its well executed detailing in the Renaissance Revival style favored for federal construction at the turn-of-the-century is unlike anything in the Tennessee part of the city, and its design quality is equal to that of several churches and the Bristol, Virginia Post Office across the state line. Architecturally, the Shelby Street Station Post Office is the only fully developed example of the Renaissance Revival in Bristol (Tennessee or Virginia) and is by far the most impressive architectural statement in the Tennessee section of the city. Built at a cost of \$50,000, the post office was an important economic stimulus to the development and commerce of this area at the turn of the century, the post office serving both parts of the then growing city. The structure set the scale and established a visual quality for the growth that was to come after the First World War.

Prior to the opening of the Shelby Street Station, postal facilities were located in rental space in various structures. In 1890 it was situated in the YMCA building on Fifth Street, relocating soon thereafter to the rear of Minor's Drug Store, finally settling at the Telephone Company Building that was then located at the corner of Sixth and Shelby Streets. The Shelby Street Station Post Office was one of twenty-nine post offices constructed throughout the country in 1900. Most of these structures were built to act as monuments that would bring federal ideas and more sophisticated architecture to communities around the nation.

Construction of the Shelby Street Station Post Office was started in 1899 and completed in 1900 to the designs of James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the United States Treasury Department from 1897 to 1912. Ellis A. Warren was the postmaster for Bristol, Tennessee when the facility was under construction. The structure was built on the site of the New Market House, which was destroyed by a cyclone on June 5, 1893. The lot, measuring 125' x 174', was deeded to the Federal Government by the City of Bristol on March 4, 1899. The Shelby Street Station Post Office was designed in the Renaissance Revival style. On the exterior, the ornamental brickwork, denticulated cornice and metal work combine to form a significant example of Renaissance Revival architecture in Bristol, Tennessee. The interior features include an elaborate leaded glass vestibule, a denticulated cornice and suspended globe lights. Most of the original interior and exterior design features of the station have not been altered.

As mentioned, the design was prepared under the direction of the Treasury Department's Supervising Architect, James Knox Taylor. Taylor completed a two-year architectural program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and began practice in first Boston and later New York, where he worked for Cass Gilbert. He returned to the place of his early childhood, St. Paul, in 1882. Here he teamed with Cass Gilbert in 1884 and established the firm of Gilbert and Taylor. Gilbert did most of the designing, while Taylor managed the

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .50 acre

Quadrangle name Bristol, TN

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

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

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is .5 acres in size and rectangular in shape. It is bounded on the south by Crumley Street, on the north by Shelby Street, and on the east and west by unnamed service alleys. It includes all land historically associated with the Shelby Street Station Post Office.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Russell Wright, AIA Consultant  
Martha Gray Hagedorn, Historic Preservation Planner

organization U.S. Postal Service date April 20, 1982  
First Tennessee Development District date May 9, 1985

street & number P.O. Box 8601  
207 N. Boone St., Suite 800 telephone 615-928-0224

city or town Philadelphia state Pennsylvania 19197  
Johnson City state Tennessee 37601

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Hager

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 9/27/85

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for Delores Byers date 11-7-85  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

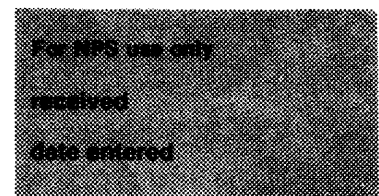
date

Chief of Registration



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Shelby Street Station

Continuation sheet Post Office

Item number 8

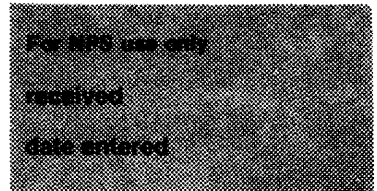
Page 2

business aspects of the firm. In 1892 Taylor moved to Philadelphia. Three years later he began work for the Treasury Department. Taylor was named to the post of Supervising Architect in 1897, a position he held until 1912. Some of the post offices in Tennessee designed by Taylor are the U.S. Post Office in Johnson City (1906 non-extant), the extension of the Jackson Post Office (1909), and the Post Office in Columbia (1908). In 1912 Taylor returned to Boston and reopened a private office. His most important federal building, of a great many, is perhaps the Federal Building in San Francisco. Taylor died in 1929.

The postal facility served all of the city, Virginia as well as Tennessee until the first Virginia post office was opened in 1912 in space rented at the H.E. Jones Building, four blocks north of the Shelby Street Station. The post office continued to serve all of Bristol, Tennessee until the Stephen Holston Station was opened in 1961 to alleviate the increasing volume of mail. The new post office opened in early 1982. In July, 1982 the Shelby Street Station Post Office was determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register (prior to its sale to a private corporation). The building is currently occupied by the city of Bristol Planning Department. U.C.C. Realty, the owners, have plans to renovate the building for use as a restaurant.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Shelby Street Station

Continuation sheet Post Office

Item number 9

Page 2

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bristol, VA-TN Directories. Bristol, TN: Hill Directory Co., 1905-1961.

"Industrial Supplement: Bristol - A story of its early history, its prominent citizens, houses, industries, resources, and future prospects." Courier (Bristol), 2 October 1904.

Loving, Robert S. Double Destiny: The Story of Bristol, TN-VA. Bristol, TN: King Printing Co., 1951.

Preston, T.V. The Story of Bristol. 2 vols. Bristol, TN: King Printing Co., nd.

Sullivan County. Deed Books, 1899-1985. Blountville, Tennessee.

