

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



1. Name of Property

Historic Name: United States Post Office and Court House
Other name/site number:
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 424 South Kansas Avenue
City or town: Topeka State: Kansas County: Shawnee
Not for publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following levels of significance:
 national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

David Delabayo FPO 1-15-15
Signature of certifying official / Title Date
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
Patricia G. ... DSHPO 1-9-15
Signature of commenting or other official Date
Kansas State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain: _____

For Edwin H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

3.3.15
Date of Action

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

<input type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

Category of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
0	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: GOVERNMENT/ post office and court house

Current Functions: GOVERNMENT/ post office

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Classical Revival

Principal Exterior Materials: Limestone, terra cotta

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-6 through 7-10)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations:

Areas of Significance: Law (A), Architecture (C)

Period of Significance: 1933, 1951

Significant Dates: 1933 (C), 1951 (A)

Significant Person (only if Criterion B is marked):

Cultural Affiliation (only if Criterion D is marked):

Architect/Builder: James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect (actual architect unknown); James L. Barnes, builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 8-11 through 8-13)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet 9-14)

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 -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

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10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property: Less than 1 acre

Coordinates (either UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 39.053205 | Longitude: -95.671759 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

UTM References

NAD 1927 NAD 1983

Zone:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| 1. Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Easting: | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation page 10-15

Boundary Justification: See continuation page 10-15

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Kurt Korfmacher, Architectural Historian and Thomas Eisenhour, Historical Architect
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Date: August 2014

Additional Documentation

Continuation Sheets

Maps (see continuation sheets MAP-16 and MAP-17)

Additional items (see continuation sheets FIGURE-18 and FIGURE-19)

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Photographs (see continuation sheets PHOTO-20 through PHOTO-34)

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Narrative Description

The United States Post Office and Court House is a four-story building occupying half a city block in the commercial district of Topeka, Kansas. The Classical Revival building, completed in 1933, features a concrete foundation with basement, limestone masonry and structural clay tile over a steel structural frame, Corinthian columns and temple fronts, and fluted pilasters. The flat main roof has two fourth-floor penthouses (also with flat roofs). The footprint of the building is in the shape of the letter "G" with the open side facing north. Exterior windows and public lobby doors are non-historic replacements.

Site

The building sits in the south half of the block formed by S. Kansas Avenue, SE 4th Street, SE Quincy Street, and SW 5th Street, in downtown Topeka. SE 4th Street is a major east-west city street that connects the downtown with residential areas to the east and west. S. Kansas Avenue is the primary north-south street that bisects the downtown area and roughly parallels U.S. Highway 75 to the east. Prior to construction of the current building, this block was occupied by the previous post office along with commercial buildings (Figure 1). The building occupies Original Town Lot 129; Quincy Avenue Lots 129, 131, 133, 135, 137, 139, 141, 143; and Kansas Avenue Lots 134, 136, 138, 140, 142, 144.

Exterior

Stylistically, the four-story building is an eclectic blend of Classical Revival and Art Deco. Classical temple fronts are superimposed on the east and west facades. (Unless otherwise noted, all fabric dates from the period of significance.) The building's main entrance on the west facade is set in a recessed portico with four Corinthian columns and two fluted pilasters supporting a frieze inscribed with the building's name in Roman font and decorated with garlanded bucrania, floral and heraldic designs, all accented in gold leaf. Above the frieze is a dentiled pediment with cartouche. A stepped gable rising above the pediment is flanked by Art Deco eagles. The upper facade terminates in a flat parapet above a simple cornice. Three pair of non-historic aluminum doors with fixed transoms and classically ornamented white marble proscenia access the lobby vestibule from S. Kansas Avenue. Non-historic windows are set into slightly recessed vertical panels on either side of the portico.

The south facade extends the length of the block from S. Kansas to S.E. Quincy Street. The central portion of the facade is recessed and divided into nineteen bays by fluted pilasters supporting an entablature decorated with garlanded bucrania and floral and heraldic designs, accented with gold leaf. Non-historic windows are set into recessed panels as on the west facade. A single pair of non-historic aluminum-and-glass doors in the center of the facade provides access to the lobby from S.E. Fifth Street. Four decorative wall-mounted bronze light fixtures illuminate the entry. An area way extends the length of the facade, providing light and air to the basement.

The east facade is broader, but otherwise similar to the west facade. Due to the change in elevation, which decreases from west to east, the ground floor sits on a raised basement. A double stair leads up to the building entry, which consists of a single pair of non-historic aluminum doors. As on the west facade, the entry is set within a recessed portico. Three recessed vertical window panels flank the portico on either side, with basement windows beneath. A service dock with access into the basement is located at the northeast corner of the facade.

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The north facade consists of three-story blocks at the eastern and western ends, with a one-story connection over the workroom and a three-story block beyond, giving the building a G-shaped plan above the first level. Fourth floor penthouses are on the eastern and western ends of the building. Like the main roof, they have flat roofs with non-historic ethylene propylene diene monomer (EPDM) roofing and internal drains.

Interior

The basement was originally partitioned for storage and a boiler room. A large room at the eastern end of the building opens onto the covered loading dock on Quincy Street. This area has glazed ceramic tile extending 5'-5" above finished floor with plastered masonry walls from the top of wainscot to the exposed concrete ceiling. An elevator to the third floor courtroom, a caged stair, and a cold storage vault are located in this area. The remainder of the basement was later partitioned into smaller rooms that are currently used for storage. Typical finishes in this area are painted masonry walls without base and exposed concrete floors and first floor structure.

The first floor of the building reflects the standardization of 1930s post office layouts, with its arrangement of dual entrances with vestibules, elongated public lobby, service windows, post office boxes set flush with the face of the lobby walls, workroom, administrative offices, and loading dock. The flooring is quarry tile, with white and verde antique—a dark green serpentine—borders and base. The walls have St. Genevieve gray marble high wainscoting and pilasters. Doors are cased with verde antique serpentine with a cartouche motif, and aluminum doors between the lobby and entry vestibules are decorated with brass rosettes and topped with a spread-winged eagle. The elevators have verde antique casing with brass rosettes; their metal doors are decorated with octagonal panels and rosettes.

Counter services are provided at the northern end of the lobby. The original bank teller style service windows have been replaced by three service windows with non-historic pull-down aluminum shutters. Non-historic postal boxes are set in three alcoves along the north wall of the lobby. Two elevators are located in the northwest corner of the lobby. Another elevator that served the third-floor courtroom is located at the Quincy Street entrance. The space south of the public lobby, originally occupied by the bookkeeping department, has been partitioned into a series of offices with carpeted floors and suspended acoustical ceilings. A rustic "Santa Fe Room," designed to resemble a railroad depot, has been added at the northwest end of the lobby in the space formerly occupied by the postmaster's office. The suite of offices in the northwest corner of the floor have painted plaster walls, carpet flooring, and stained paneled wooden doors. Other major first floor spaces include the work room and the former swing room. Both areas have non-historic vinyl composition tile flooring and painted plaster walls with glazed clay tile wainscoting. The swing room, located in the southwest corner of the first floor, has a non-historic suspended acoustical ceiling with fluorescent light panels.

A double-loaded central corridor extends the length of the second floor. Elevators and stairs are in the southwest corner and in the east wing. The corridor has quarry tile flooring with white marble border and verde antique base, painted plaster walls, and a non-historic suspended acoustical tile ceiling. Offices have painted plaster walls and carpet over the original red oak flooring. Office doors are paneled wood with obscure glass in the upper portion and a ventilation grill in the bottom panel. The offices retain their original plaster ceilings but have non-historic suspended fluorescent light fixtures in place of the original incandescent ones.

The third floor contains former court rooms and offices that are currently unoccupied. As on the second floor, a central corridor extends around three sides of the building with offices on both sides. The east wing houses the former courtroom, judge's library, and judge's chambers. Elevators and stairs are in the southwest corner and in the east wing. The corridor has quarry tile flooring with white marble border and verde antique base, painted plaster walls with gray marble wainscoting, and painted plaster ceiling. The courtroom, which also served as an auditorium, has stained paneled wood walls. The dais/stage has a verde antique-clad proscenium and stained

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paneled wood walls. The courtroom has non-historic carpeting over the original oak flooring, and modern fluorescent light fixtures. The courtroom was sub-partitioned by creating a room in the southeast corner after the historic period of significance. Between the former offices of the U.S. District Court and the U.S. Circuit Court is a law library with wood wainscoting and built-in wood bookcases with wood and glass doors. Non-historic carpeting covers the historic oak flooring.

The fourth floor contains an equipment penthouse and a suite of offices. The equipment penthouse, which is directly above the elevators on the west end of the building, houses the elevators' electric motors and hoisting equipment. Finishes are utilitarian: exposed masonry walls and concrete roof and floors. A stair in the northeast corner leads to the lower floors and a door on the east facade provides access to the roof. Finishes in the offices and corridor in the east wing are the same as on the second and third floors.

Non-Historic Alterations

Dates of alterations, if known, are shown in parentheses

Exterior

- Historic windows replaced with bronze-anodized aluminum sashes with tinted glass building-wide (1985)
- Exterior public-access doors replaced with replicas (2011)

Interior

- Replacement of original incandescent light fixtures with fluorescent fixtures building-wide
- Carpeting installed over the original hardwood floors on second, third, and fourth floor offices
- Original bank-style service windows replaced by aluminum slat roll-up shutters in lobby
- Original lobby desks replaced
- "Santa Fe Room" added in lobby
- Sub-partitioning of former bookkeeping space south of lobby
- Vinyl composition tile flooring in work room
- Sub-partitioning of court room
- Court room ceiling stenciling painted over
- Suspended acoustical ceiling installed in swing room and new first floor offices south of lobby

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Statement of Significance

The United States Post Office and Court House is significant under Criterion A at the local level of significance in the area of Law as the site of the district court case of *Brown v. Board of Education* and under Criterion C at the local level in the area of Architecture as a good example of the Classical Revival style applied to a multi-story Federal building.

Historical Background and Context

The building was constructed in 1932-33 by the Department of the Treasury headed by Secretary of the Treasury Andrew W. Mellon. The Public Buildings Act of May 25, 1926, also known as the Keyes-Elliott Act, authorized \$100 million for buildings outside the District of Columbia. The Act stipulated that no more than \$25 million could be spent annually and no more than \$5 million could be spent in any one state. Further, the Secretary of the Treasury and Postmaster General were directed to conduct a nationwide survey to determine the need for new postal facilities and to report annually to Congress on proposed locations and costs. For the first time since 1913, the Secretary of the Treasury was authorized to hire private architects to develop designs and layouts for post offices, although construction documents would continue to be prepared by the Office of the Supervising Architect. The Stock Market Crash of 1929 delayed full implementation of the building program outlined in the Act of 1926; however, as the Public Buildings Program ramped up in the 1930s it was guided by the 1927 survey of needs. In May 1930, Congress amended the Public Buildings Act of 1926 to increase funding for public buildings and also authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to utilize the services of private architects and engineers "to such extent as he may require."

The Post Office and Court House is an example of the style of architecture known as Classical Revival or Neoclassical with Art Deco influences. Many post offices, court houses, and other Federal, state, and local government buildings constructed in the 1920s and 30s were designed in the Classical Revival style. It was popularized by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago which promoted a renewed interest in the classical forms. Although it is similar to the Colonial Revival style that was widely used for Federal buildings during the same period, the Classical Revival style is more formal and monumental in its design. Windows and doors are arranged formally and symmetrically, with the centrally placed main entrance emphasized by a proscenium or sidelights.

A cornerstone at the southwest corner of the building credits James A. Wetmore as the Acting Supervising Architect. Wetmore, who served as Acting Supervising Architect from 1915-33, was not an architect; he received a law degree from George Washington University in 1896 and joined the Treasury Department that same year. His name appears on the cornerstones of 2,000 Federal buildings.

Tied to the founding of the state of Kansas, the city of Topeka was established shortly after the Kansas-Nebraska Act of May 30, 1854. In December 1854, nine settlers hailing from Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Iowa met and established the town site known as Topeka. The following day the men entered into an agreement and proceeded to survey the land and plot the town site. They formed the Topeka Association and officially named the town in January 1855. In 1857, the city was incorporated.

In the spring of 1855, settlers began pouring into Topeka. Soon a saw mill was erected to accommodate the building needs of all the new residents. Upon the discovery of limestone, more permanent structures surfaced, such as Constitution Hall (where the first state constitution was written), hotels, churches and houses. Topeka became the county seat of Shawnee County in 1859. Kansas was admitted into the United States on January 29, 1861 and Topeka was chosen as the state capital. During the late-19th century Topeka experienced

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tremendous growth due in large part to the arrival of the railroads, particularly the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railway. The AT&SF brought approximately 5,000 jobs to Topeka. Utilities expanded and the entire city experienced a building boom. However, this boom time fell prey to a brief depression during the 1890s, during which the population dwindled, and the AT&SF went into receivership.

During the early-20th century, Topeka's economy regained stability relying on the recovered railroad, meat packing and agricultural industries and the population grew. In celebration of Kansas's 50th anniversary, the city sought to update the buildings along Kansas Avenue and the city once again experienced a building boom. This growth halted during the 1930s and new construction was limited to government buildings. During World War II, the economy shifted to manufacturing and government/military services. The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company and Forbes Air Force Base both opened during the war. The Morrell Meat Packing Plant closed in 1951 but manufacturers such as Hallmark Card and Dupont helped diversify the economy. The city appointed an Urban Renewal Authority to revitalize many of the older decaying areas of the city in 1956.

In March 1855, F.W. Giles became the first Postmaster General and the city received its first mail in May. The original post office was in Sidney J. Case's house on the east side of Quincy near Second Street which also contained a blacksmith's shop. Later in 1855, the post office was moved to one of the first frame buildings in Topeka. It shared the space with the newspaper, a dry goods store, a hotel and the Garvey residence and law office. For the next thirty years, the post office moved to approximately ten different locations, twice due to fire.

In 1878, the U.S. Congress passed a bill to construct a U.S. Courthouse and Post Office in Topeka. Designed by architect Col. John G. Haskell, the Romanesque Revival building was completed in 1884 for \$180,000. The post office incorporated a clock tower that had been salvaged from a local Methodist church. This clock was so beloved by the community that they took up a collection to move it to another court house during the demolition. This post office was razed before construction began on the current post office at 424 South Kansas Avenue.

During the 1930s, the U.S. Government constructed two post offices in Topeka: a smaller facility at 935 North Kansas Avenue and a larger building at 424 South Kansas Avenue that also housed the U.S. Court House. According to a 1920 newspaper article, the former post office was too small for the volume of mail in Topeka and the property for the new site was purchased from various citizens for \$107,800. In 1920, the plans were going to be "thrown open to architectural competition and a standard type of building will not be erected." Vice President Charles Curtis (under President Herbert Hoover) and Senator Arthur Capper lobbied to get an outstanding facility for their hometown of Topeka.

Construction of the Post Office and Court House began on January 29, 1932 by the Indiana-based James L. Barnes construction firm. W.N. Collier, Federal district engineer of Kansas City and Frank L. Moore, Federal resident engineer, supervised the construction. The total cost of the building was \$615,512.67. The building opened to the public at noon on December 9, 1933 with no formal ceremony. The first floor contained the lobby, the work room, the bookkeeping department and offices of the postmaster and assistant postmaster. The second floor held offices for the Bureau of Animal Industry, Post Office Inspector, Prohibition Bureau, District Attorney, Agricultural Economics, Navy, Army, Officers' Reserve, Coast Guard, and Internal Revenue Collector. The U.S. District Court was on the third floor, and it contained the U.S. Circuit Court, the U.S. Marshall's office and holding cells, Clerk of the District Court, and the following offices: Probation Officer, Naturalization Bureau, Geological Survey Bureau, and the Agricultural Extension Bureau. The roof contained two penthouses: one for the Weather Bureau and one for elevator machinery. The building was formally dedicated on August 20, 1934.

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Brown v. Board of Education

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) attempted to challenge the idea that “separate but equal” was a valid constitutional argument. While these efforts met with some success in improving the conditions at black schools, segregation remained a common practice in many parts of the country (particularly in the southern states).

In 1951, the NAACP turned its efforts to Topeka, where segregation was allowed under Kansas law but not required. Thirteen families filed a class action lawsuit against the Board of Education of Topeka arguing that segregation resulted in unequal facilities. The children of the affected families, some living in integrated neighborhoods, had to walk to bus stops for transport to their distant black elementary schools despite the presence of nearby white schools (that in some cases were safer for the children to reach). Oliver Brown, the lone male plaintiff, was chosen as the head of the lawsuit to help lend political weight (as it was felt that a male plaintiff would be better received by the court than a female).

The Topeka law firm of Scott, Scott and Scott, along with Robert Carter (the top assistant of Thurgood Marshall), argued before U.S. District Court Judge Walker Huxman to end racial segregation in the city’s public schools. Using the results of a 1940 psychological study on the impact of segregation as evidence, the plaintiffs argued that segregation had a negative impact on school children and thus the schools could never be equal. The study, conducted by psychologists Kenneth Clark and Mamie Phipps in New York, used dolls of different races to test how children viewed themselves and their self-worth. The study concluded that segregation planted feelings of inherent inferiority in black children, thus impacting their psychological health and development. On August 3, 1951, Judge Huxman, while sympathetic to the psychological impact of segregation on the plaintiffs’ children, nonetheless found that the Board of Education’s segregation policies did not violate *Plessy v. Ferguson* and dismissed the plaintiff’s suit.

The case was quickly appealed, but sat at the Supreme Court for several months before finding a place on the Court’s docket. Initially combined with one other similar case, *Brown v. Board of Education* eventually encompassed five cases by the time it was finally argued in front of the Court in December 1952. *Brown* was chosen as the lead case because it was the first to arrive, and the only non-southern case before the Court. Nine months passed after oral arguments without word from the Court, and in September 1953 Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson died unexpectedly of a heart attack. President Eisenhower named Earl Warren to the Court as his replacement, and the case was reheard in December 1953 for Warren’s benefit. On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that “separate but equal” in the nation’s public schools was a violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and thus unconstitutional. The psychological impact of segregation was too great, and in the words of Chief Justice Warren, “[s]eparate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”

Significance

The Post Office and Court House is locally significant under Criterion A for Law as the site of the 1951 district court hearing of the suit brought by Oliver Brown against the Topeka Board of Education. The suit was later combined with four other cases into *Oliver Brown et al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka* that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) argued before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1952 and 1953.

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The building is eligible under Criterion C at the local level of significance for Architecture as a good example of the 1930s blend of the Classical Revival and Art Deco styles applied to a multi-story Federal building. The characteristics of the Classical Revival style of architecture in this building are:

- Classical columns with Corinthian, Doric or Ionic capitals;
- A full-height columned front porch topped with a classical pediment;
- Formal and symmetrical arrangement of windows and doors;
- The main entry flanked by pilasters or side lights or placed within a proscenium, and capped with a flat entablature, broken pediment or rounded fanlight.

The historic exterior character-defining features of the building exemplify its Classical Revival-Art Deco hybrid style and the unique interior features allow the building to stand out as architecturally significant.

Significant exterior character-defining features are:

- Mass and scale of the building;
- Symmetrical, classically-inspired arrangement and detailing of the west, south, and east facades;
- Classical temple front with Corinthian columns and fluted pilasters on the east and west facades;
- Entablature decorated with garlanded bucrania, floral, and heraldic designs accented in gold leaf;
- Dentiled pediment with cartouche;
- Stepped gable flanked by terra cotta eagles;
- Flat parapet with simple cornice;
- Design and materials of doors to public lobby;
- Classically decorated white marble doorway proscenia on west facade;
- Window locations and opening sizes;
- Decorative wall-mounted bronze light fixtures on the south facade; and
- Exterior stairs on east facade decorated with bas-relief eagles.

Significant character-defining features of the lobby are:

- Volume and layout of the lobby and vestibules;
- Gray marble wainscoting;
- Flooring of quarry tile accented with gray-and-white mosaic tile and white marble, and verde antique serpentine base;
- St. Genevieve gray marble high wainscoting and pilasters;
- Verde antique serpentine door casing topped with a cartouche motif;
- Entry vestibule interior metal doors and frames decorated with brass rosettes topped with a spread-winged eagle sculpture;
- Metal elevator doors decorated with octagonal panels and rosettes;
- Elevator door casing of verde antique serpentine with brass rosette medallions; and
- Wall-mounted display cases with verde antique serpentine casing.

The period of significance for the building under Architecture is 1933, the year of completion. Although changes have occurred to the building in the years following the period of significance, they do not substantially alter the significant character-defining features of the building nor impact its historic integrity to a degree that it can no longer convey its significance. The building retains sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship to convey its significance under Criterion C.

Criterion B was considered and rejected. The case was argued by lawyers from the Topeka law firm of Scott, Scott, and Scott, assisted by attorneys from the NAACP. Research is inconclusive regarding the role of

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Thurgood Marshall in the district court case. Other buildings have a longer and more direct association with the life of Justice Marshall, including the Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse in New York City, where Marshall served from 1961 to 1965 as a judge of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals and the Anthony Bowen YMCA in Washington D.C. where Marshall often stayed while preparing his arguments for the Supreme Court case. No information came to light regarding any other prominent individual who was significantly associated with the building during the historic period.

Criterion D was also rejected because the Post Office and Court House does not possess, or is likely to possess, information important in history.

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Williams, Juan. *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1987.

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas

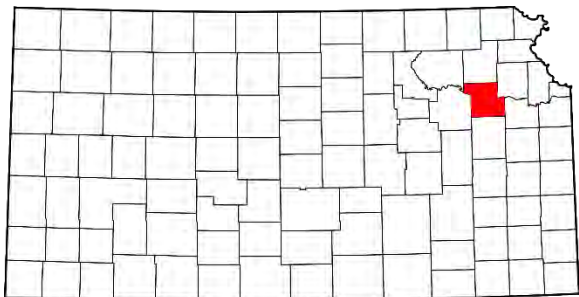
Section 10: Boundary Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description: South half of the city block bounded on the north by SE 4th Street, on the east by SE Quincy Street, on the south by SW 5th Street, and on the west by S. Kansas Avenue, in Topeka, KS.

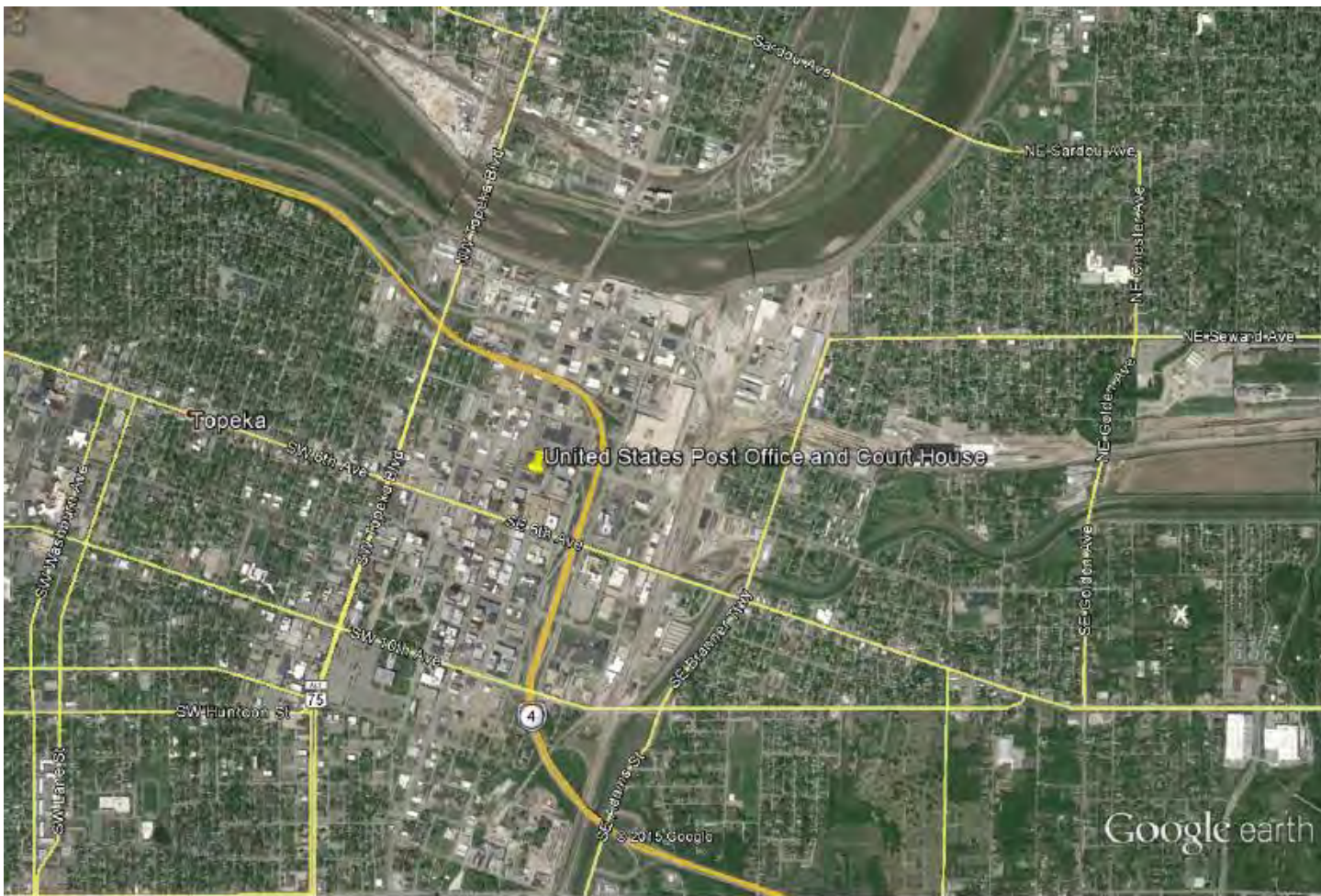
Boundary Justification: The boundaries encompass the entirety of the parcel occupied by the United States Post Office and Court House and conform to its historic land boundaries.

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas

Map 1. Shawnee County (highlighted) is in northeastern Kansas (*Source: Wikipedia*)

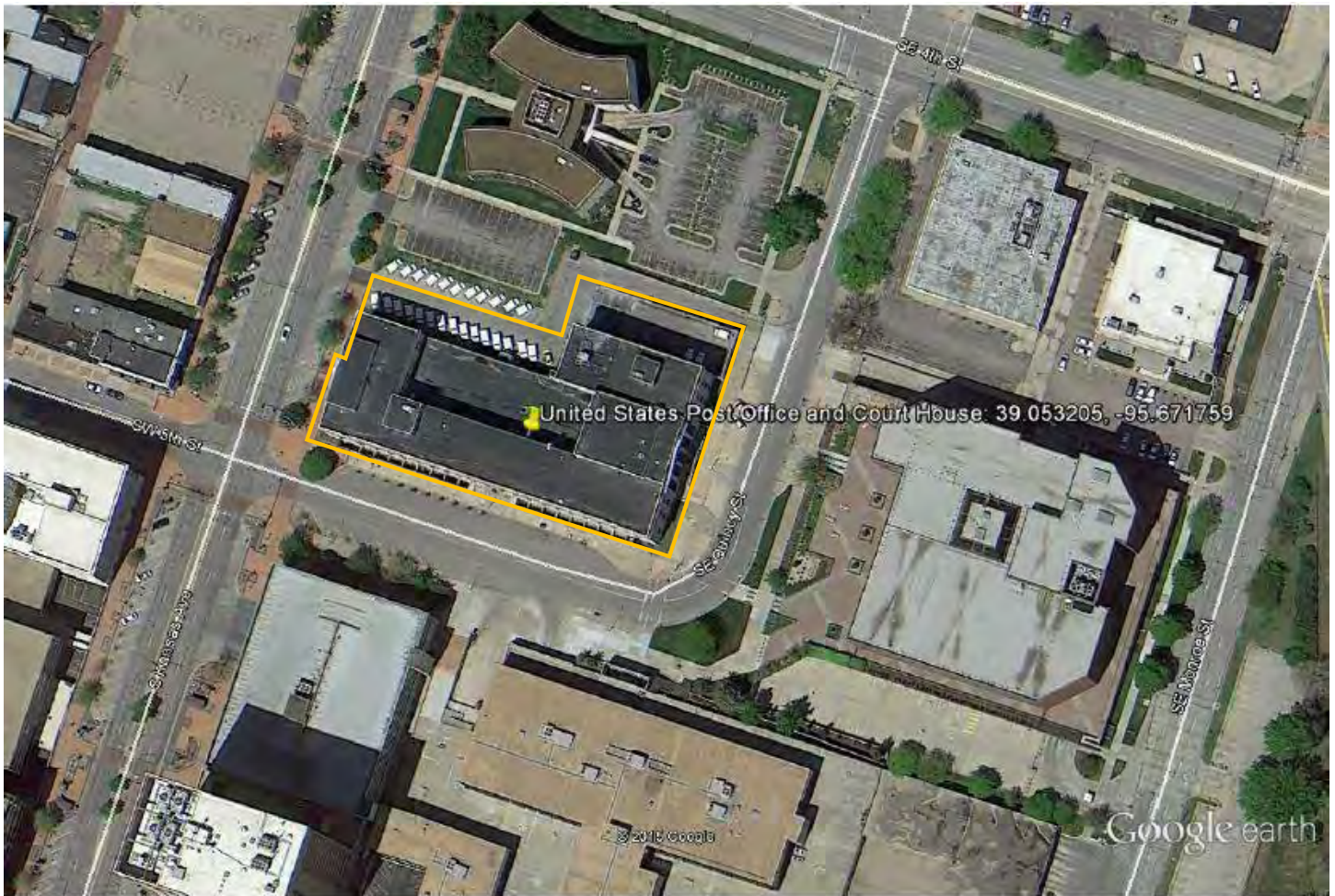


Map 2. The United States Post Office and Court House is located in downtown Topeka (*Source: Google Earth*)



United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas

Map 3. Google Earth map of the nominated property's boundaries and latitude and longitude coordinates.



Google earth

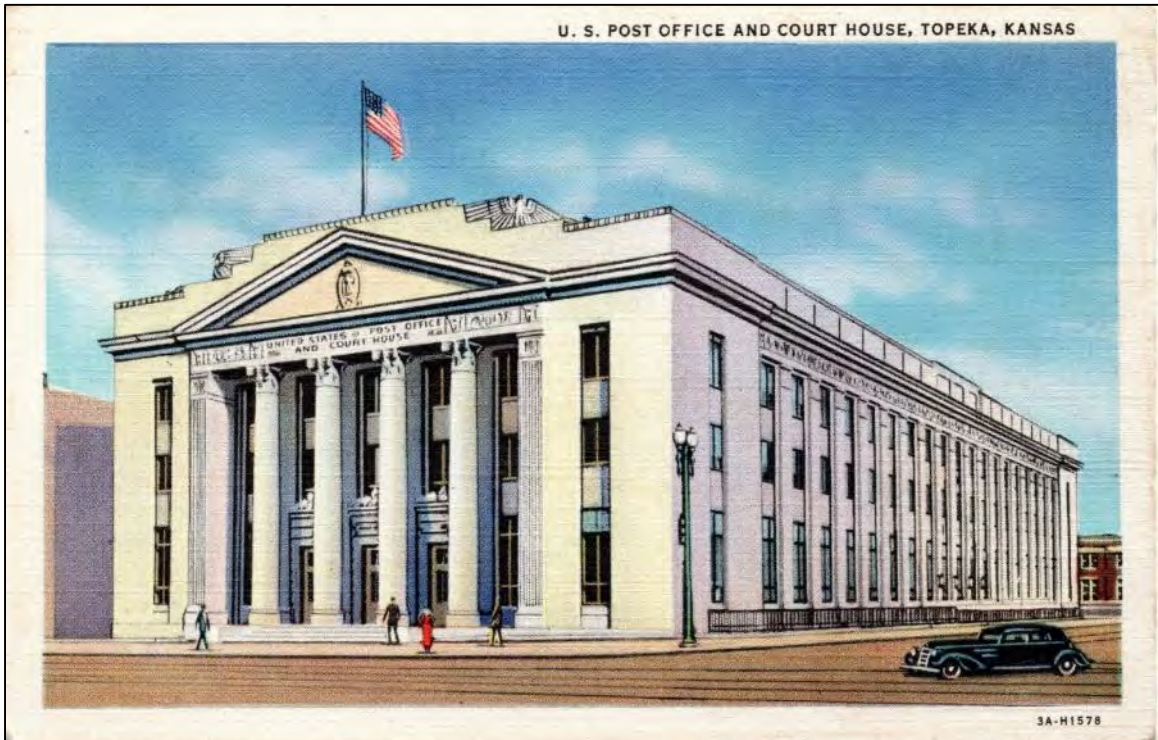


United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas

Figure 1. Former Topeka post office circa 1914, demolished 1931.



Figure 2. United States Post Office and Court House, 1933.



United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas

Figure 3. A construction progress photograph from November 1, 1933 shows the building's original casement windows.



United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas

Photographs

The following information pertains to all current photographs provided for this property:

Name of Property: United States Post Office and Court House

City or Vicinity: Topeka

County, State: Shawnee County, Kansas

Photographer: Thomas P. Eisenhour

Date Photographed: February 2014

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0001
Description of Photograph(s): Oblique view of west and south facades, facing east.

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0002
Description of Photograph(s): View of west facade, facing southeast.

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0003
Description of Photograph(s): Detail of eagle bas-relief on west facade, facing southeast.

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0004
Description of Photograph(s): Detail of entry on west facade, facing east.

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0005
Description of Photograph(s): Oblique view of south facade, facing northwest.

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0006
Description of Photograph(s): Detail of entry on south facade, facing northwest.

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0007
Description of Photograph(s): Oblique view of east facade, facing northeast.

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0008
Description of Photograph(s): View of garage and north facade, facing southwest.

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0009
Description of Photograph(s): View of north facade and penthouses, facing southwest.

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0010
Description of Photograph(s): View of the main lobby, facing northwest.

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0011
Description of Photograph(s): Detail view of west entry vestibule doors, facing west.

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0012
Description of Photograph(s): View of courtroom, facing northwest.

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0013
Description of Photograph(s): View of courtroom, facing south.

Photograph Number: KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0014
Description of Photograph(s): View of second floor corridor, facing east.

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0001

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0002

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0003

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0004

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0005

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0006

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0007

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0008

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0009

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0010

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0011

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0012

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0013

United States Post Office and Court House, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas



KS_Shawnee County_United States Post Office and Court House_0014



CHICAGO
COURT HOUSE

SW 5th St SE

s Ka

ONE WAY
ONLY





UNITED STATES AND COURT POST OFFICE HOUSE

MUSKEGON

UNITED STATES POST OFFICE







UNITED STATES
POST OFFICE

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS AND MARITIME SERVICES



NO
PARKING
ANY TIME

POST OFFICE









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NO RETAIL SALES, PLEASE



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EXIT



EXIT



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: United States Post Office and Court House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: KANSAS, Shawnee

DATE RECEIVED: 1/16/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/06/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/23/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/03/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000046

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 3-3-15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



November 4, 2014

Via email: kansasshpo@gmail.com

Sarah Martin
National Register Coordinator
Kansas State Historical Society - Cultural Resources Division
6425 SW 6th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66615

Re: KSR&C# 14-06-077
National Register Nomination Submittal
Topeka Main Post Office
424 South Kansas Avenue
Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas 66603 (the "Property")

Dear Ms. Martin:

The United States Postal Service (USPS) is submitting for your review the enclosed nomination form to have the Property listed on the National Register of Historic Places prior to transfer of the Property out of federal ownership. Pursuant to 36 CFR § 60.9(c), any comments must be received by the close of business on the 45th day from receipt of this letter. We ask that you respond by December 5th, if possible, so that your comments may be considered in advance of the approaching holiday season.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Should you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact the undersigned at (202) 268-2782, or by email at daniel.b.delahaye@usps.gov.

Sincerely,

Daniel B. Delahaye

Digitally signed by Daniel B. Delahaye
DN: cn=Daniel B. Delahaye, o.ou,
email=Daniel.B.Delahaye@USPS.gov, c=US
Date: 2014.11.04 17:25:02 -0500

Daniel B. Delahaye
Federal Preservation Officer

cc: Mayor Larry Wolgast, City of Topeka, 215 SE 7th Street, Topeka, KS 66603
Bob Archer, Shawnee County Commissioner – Chair, 200 SE 7th Street, B-11, Topeka, KS 66603

Enclosed: National Register Nomination Form

December 15, 2014

Daniel B. Delahaye
Federal Preservation Officer
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW Room 6631
Washington, DC 20260-1862
Via email: Daniel.B.Delahaye@usps.gov

Re: U. S. Post Office & Court House – 424 S. Kansas Avenue, Topeka, Shawnee County, KS
Kansas Historic Resource Inventory #: 177-5400-00044

Dear Mr. Delahaye:

This letter is in response to our receipt of a draft nomination to National Register of Historic Places for the U. S. Post Office and Court House in downtown Topeka. We received the document via email on December 8. Our staff has reviewed the document, and we offer the following comments:

Section 2: Location

- The address is listed as 424 South Kansas Street. It should be listed as 424 South Kansas Avenue.

Section 7: Narrative Description

- Are the dates, or approximate dates, of the various non-historic alterations known, particularly the replacement of windows?

Section 8: Statement of Significance

- Our survey record for this property lists Louis Simon as the supervising architect, but provides no source for this information. The draft nomination and the building's cornerstone list James A. Wetmore as the acting supervising architect. Would Simon, who apparently served as supervising architect with the U.S. Department of the Treasury from 1933 to 1939, have succeeded Wetmore? We are simply seeking clarification to make sure Simon is not overlooked if he had any involvement in the construction of this building.
- We disagree with the omission of Criterion A significance regarding the 1951 court case involving Oliver Brown and the Topeka Board of Education. We argue that the building should be nominated under Criterion A in the area of Law at the local level of significance for three reasons. First, we agree that the *Brown v. Board* U. S. Supreme Court Case carries considerably more significance than the local court case, but that should not overshadow the *local* significance of the 1951 U. S. District Court case that took place in this building. Second, we acknowledge that the court room space has undergone some changes over the years. Not only are some of the changes noted in the nomination reversible, but nominating the building for its local significance also factors into our less critical view of the integrity of this space. Lastly, the NHL/NR-listed Monroe and Sumner schools only tell part of this nationally important story that has its roots in

Topeka. Acknowledging in the nomination the local significance of the U. S. District Court case that took place in this Topeka court room is warranted.

Section 9: Bibliography

- An important source to add to the document is a set of photographs of the building as it was being constructed. They are digitized and accessible online and list the names of a contractor and construction engineer. See: <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/307225>

Photographs

- We recommend including a representative photograph of one of the double-loaded corridors to illustrate the character and integrity of the upper floors. Additionally, we suggest including a photograph of the courtroom.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this nomination, and we look forward to receiving a final copy for our files. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions. I can be reached at 785-272-8681 ext. 216 or smartin@kshs.org.

Sincerely,

Sarah J. Martin
National Register Coordinator

cc: Ann Sarver, USPS Facilities Environmental Specialist
[via email: Ann.M.Sarver@usps.gov]

From: Sarah Martin <smartin@kshs.org>
Sent: Tuesday, December 16, 2014 9:12 AM
To: Sarver, Ann M - Tampa, FL
Cc: Delahaye, Daniel B - Washington, DC
Subject: Re: Message - Topeka Post Office

Categories: Green Category

Thanks Ann, this is what I suspected.
Sarah

Sarah J. Martin / National Register Coordinator Kansas Historical Society
6425 SW 6th Ave., Topeka, KS 66615
785-272-8681 x 216

Like us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/KSHPO>).
Become a member of the Kansas Historical Foundation (kshs.org/foundation).

On 12/15/2014 4:57 PM, Sarver, Ann M - Tampa, FL wrote:

> Sarah,

>

> Thank you for the quick review.

>

> To clarify bullet number 3 - Louis Simon succeeded Wetmore.

>

> A cornerstone at the southwest corner of the Main Office lists James A. Wetmore as the Acting Supervising Architect. Wetmore never was an architect; he received a law degree from George Washington University in 1896 and joined the Treasury Department that same year. In 1911, he was promoted to executive assistant to Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor (1897-1912) and later served in the same position under Taylor's successor Oscar Wenderoth (1913-1915). Following the resignation of Wenderoth, Wetmore assumed the job of Acting Supervising Architect, a position he held until 1933. Wetmore's name appears on the cornerstones of 2,000 Federal buildings, including the Topeka Main Office. During Wetmore's tenure as Acting Supervising Architect, Louis A. Simon was responsible for the direction of much of the design work. Although most of Simon's post offices were designed in the Colonial Revival style, he would occasionally design in a classically derived style.

>

> Hope this helps and we are continuing to review the other comments provided.

>

> Thanks again,

> Ann Sarver

> Facilities Environmental Specialist

> USPS Facilities Department - HQ Field Office Facilities Implementation

> Team A PO Box 39430 Tampa, FL 33630-9430

> 813-877-0327 office

> 813-465-2831 cell

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Sarah Martin [<mailto:smartin@kshs.org>]

> Sent: Monday, December 15, 2014 10:30 AM

> To: Sarver, Ann M - Tampa, FL; Delahaye, Daniel B - Washington, DC
> Subject: Re: Message - Topeka Post Office
>
> Hi Daniel and Ann,
>
> Please find attached our comments on the draft NR nomination for the U.
> S. Post Office and Court House in Topeka. Let me know if you need a signed copy mailed.
>
> Thank you,
> Sarah Martin
>
> Sarah J. Martin / National Register Coordinator Kansas Historical
> Society
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>
> Like us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/KSHPO>).
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>> The document is relatively small and I attached it to this email. Please let me know that you have received it, as we
thought you had it a month ago. We appreciate a quick review.
>>
>> Thanks,
>> Ann Sarver
>> Facilities Environmental Specialist
>> USPS Facilities Department - HQ Field Office Facilities
>> Implementation Team A PO Box 39430 Tampa, FL 33630-9430
>> 813-877-0327 office
>> 813-465-2831 cell
>>
>> -----Original Message-----
>> From: Sarah Martin [<mailto:smartin@kshs.org>]
>> Sent: Monday, December 08, 2014 3:05 PM
>> To: Sarver, Ann M - Tampa, FL
>> Subject: Message - Topeka Post Office
>>
>> Hi Ann -
>>
>> Thanks for your message. I'm not aware of having received a draft to comment on. We can certainly provide
comment by the end of this week or very early next week without any problem.
>>
>> Can you please resend electronically to my attention at KansasSHPO@gmail.com?
>>
>> Thank you,
>> Sarah
>>
>> --
>> Sarah J. Martin / National Register Coordinator Kansas Historical
>> Society

>> 6425 SW 6th Ave., Topeka, KS 66615

>> 785-272-8681 x 216

>>

>> Like us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/KSHPO>).

>> Become a member of the Kansas Historical Foundation (kshs.org/foundation).

Delahaye, Daniel B - Washington, DC

Subject: FW: Message - Topeka Post Office

-----Original Message-----

From: Sarah Martin [mailto:smartin@kshs.org]
Sent: Tuesday, December 23, 2014 2:19 PM
To: Sarver, Ann M - Tampa, FL
Subject: Re: Message - Topeka Post Office

Will do, thanks!

Sarah J. Martin / National Register Coordinator Kansas Historical Society
6425 SW 6th Ave., Topeka, KS 66615
785-272-8681 x 216

Like us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/KSHPO>).
Become a member of the Kansas Historical Foundation (kshs.org/foundation).

On 12/23/2014 12:57 PM, Sarver, Ann M - Tampa, FL wrote:

> Hi Sarah,
>
> I believe that is correct and yes if you could mail the hardcopy to me in Tampa that would be great.
>
> Thank you,
> Ann Sarver
> Facilities Environmental Specialist
> USPS Facilities Department - HQ Field Office Facilities Implementation
> Team A PO Box 39430 Tampa, FL 33630-9430
> 813-877-0327 office
> 813-465-2831 cell
>
> -----Original Message-----
> From: Sarah Martin [mailto:smartin@kshs.org]
> Sent: Tuesday, December 23, 2014 1:55 PM
> To: Sarver, Ann M - Tampa, FL
> Subject: Re: Message - Topeka Post Office
>
> Hi Ann -
>
> See attached. Please make sure this is completed properly. Do you need a hard copy mailed to you (at the Tampa address below)?
>
> Thanks,
> Sarah Martin
>
> Sarah J. Martin / National Register Coordinator Kansas Historical
> Society
> 6425 SW 6th Ave., Topeka, KS 66615
> 785-272-8681 x 216

>
> Like us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/KSHPO>).
> Become a member of the Kansas Historical Foundation (kshs.org/foundation).
>
> On 12/22/2014 9:47 AM, Sarver, Ann M - Tampa, FL wrote:
>> Hi Sarah,
>>
>> We have reviewed your comments to the nomination and revised the nomination addressing each of your comments. Let us know if you have any additional comments and if not would the SHPO print the first page and sign and return to us so we may provide it to the Keeper for listing. With the holidays coming up we would appreciate the signed sheet returned to us by January 7. If that is not possible let us know.
>>
>> It has been a pleasure working with you and happy holidays.
>>
>> Thank you,
>> Ann Sarver
>> Facilities Environmental Specialist
>> USPS Facilities Department - HQ Field Office Facilities
>> Implementation Team A PO Box 39430 Tampa, FL 33630-9430
>> 813-877-0327 office
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Architect, a position he held until 1933. Wetmore's name appears on the cornerstones of 2,000 Federal buildings, including the Topeka Main Office. During Wetmore's tenure as Acting Supervising Architect, Louis A. Simon was responsible for the direction of much of the design work. Although most of Simon's post offices were designed in the Colonial Revival style, he would occasionally design in a classically derived style.

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>>> Hope this helps and we are continuing to review the other comments provided.

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>>> Thanks again,

>>> Ann Sarver

>>> Facilities Environmental Specialist

>>> USPS Facilities Department - HQ Field Office Facilities

>>> Implementation Team A PO Box 39430 Tampa, FL 33630-9430

>>> 813-877-0327 office

>>> 813-465-2831 cell

>>>

>>> -----Original Message-----

>>> From: Sarah Martin [mailto:smartin@kshs.org]

>>> Sent: Monday, December 15, 2014 10:30 AM

>>> To: Sarver, Ann M - Tampa, FL; Delahaye, Daniel B - Washington, DC

>>> Subject: Re: Message - Topeka Post Office

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>>>>

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>>>> Become a member of the Kansas Historical Foundation (kshs.org/foundation).



January 16, 2015

VIA EXPRESS MAIL



Mr. Paul Loether
National Park Service 2280, 8th floor
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street NW
Washington, DC 20005-5905

Re: National Register of Historic Places Nomination
United States Post Office and Court House
424 South Kansas Avenue
Topeka, Kansas; Shawnee County

Dear Mr. Loether:

The United States Postal Service (USPS) is submitting an original National Register of Historic Places form on disk. The enclosed Disk 1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the above-referenced United States Post Office and Court House to the National Register of Historic Places. The enclosed Disk 2 contains photograph files in TIFF format.

Provided also are an original NRHP signature page signed by the Kansas Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the USPS Federal Preservation Officer, as well as hard copy correspondence between the USPS and the SHPO, City of Topeka and Shawnee County. Neither the city nor county commented upon this nomination.

If you do not concur with this submission, we request that you please express your specific concerns and/or objections in writing so that USPS may provide you a USPS product that will consistently meet your needs now and in future submissions.

We look forward to working with you. Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Point of contact for this submission is the undersigned, who may be reached at (202) 268-2782, or by email at daniel.b.delahaye@usps.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Delahaye".

Daniel Delahaye
Federal Preservation Officer