

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED APR 17 1987
DATE ENTERED MAY 19 1987

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Newcastle Main Post Office
AND/OR COMMON
Newcastle Main Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
W. Main Street and Sumner Avenue
CITY, TOWN
Newcastle
STATE
Wyoming 82701

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
NA
VICINITY OF
CODE
056
COUNTY
Weston
CODE
045

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thematic Group	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*
United States Postal Service, Western Regional Headquarters
STREET & NUMBER
850 Cherry Avenue
CITY, TOWN
San Bruno
VICINITY OF
STATE
CA 94099

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Weston County Assessor's Office
STREET & NUMBER
PO Box 837
CITY, TOWN
Newcastle
STATE
Wyoming 82701

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None
DATE
____ FEDERAL ____ STATE ____ COUNTY ____ LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>NA</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Newcastle Main Post Office is a one story red brick structure on a raised basement. Seven bays divide the symmetrical front facade--five in the slightly projecting central section and one in each of the end wings. The centered entry bay is accentuated by a finely detailed wooden architrave consisting of flat fluted pilasters and pedimented frontispiece. Blind brick arches enclose the two window bays immediately flanking each side of the entry. Limestone lintels with pronounced keystones top the flat-arched windows including those of the end wings. The facade is terminated by a limestone frieze with fretwork, slightly projecting cornice, and balustraded parapet. The roof is flat, built-up tar composition. The building maintains good integrity despite an addition to the rear (1967).

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The basement is constructed of reinforced concrete and structural steel supports the main floor. Red brick faces the exterior walls with detailing provided by limestone. Granite is used for the front entry stairs. The flat roof consists of built-up tar composition.

The front facade (north) is flat, symmetrical in elevation, and strongly horizontal in mass. The horizontal massing is subtly reduced by slightly projecting the central portion of the facade so as to present a central salient flanked by wings on either side. The central section contains a centered entry bay with two equally spaced flanking window bays. A single window bay is centered in each wing.

The entry is approached by five granite steps and granite landing. Wrought iron balustrades flank the stairs. Double, wood-frame glass paneled doors with 10-lights each provide access to the lobby. A 6-light transom window is located above the doors. "Post Office", in inscribed letters, is located in the lintel above the transom window. The entry bay is framed with

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/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES	Site Acquisition 1916	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Federal Government/James A. Wetmore, OSA
	Building Completed 1933		

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Newcastle Post Office is an excellent example of a small single-purpose post office. In its Neo-Classical design, placed in the context of a relatively modern building, the building represents the transition from the Beaux-Arts tradition of the early-1900's to the "Starved Classicism" of the International design movement. While relatively flat, the facade makes use of traditional design features which include a finely detailed entry architrave, blind brick arches which enframe stone lintels with keystones, the window bay, and a balustraded parapet. Located across the street from the Neo-Classical Weston County Courthouse (1910) and Carnegie Library (1911, and unfortunately modernized and significantly altered) the post office is located in an ensemble of buildings which form the civic center of Newcastle. As the city's first federally constructed post office and having been constructed in the early stages of the Depression era, the building symbolizes the presence of the federal government and its assistance to small communities during that era.

ARCHITECTURE

The Newcastle Main Post Office is locally significant as a fine example of post office construction and Neo-Classical public architecture. Its quality of design and detail is manifested in its symmetrical design, well-crafted entry architrave with pedimented frontispiece, stone lintels with keystones, blind arches, and balustraded parapet. The building is somewhat typical of the buildings designed by the federal government in the late-1920s and early-1930s. This period represents the transition in federal design philosophy from the well-defined Classical influence to the "Stripped" or "Starved Classicism" of the later 1930s. Although flat in facade, the degree of detailing distinguishes the building and strongly exhibits the Classical influence.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Nelson, May and Shelia Nelson Hart, "Weston County", (Newcastle: Weston County Library Files) no date.
2. Parrish, Jim "The Editor's Graphomania", Journal-Newsletter (Newcastle), July 1, 1982.
3. The New's Letter, various articles 1928-1932.
4. Sanborn Insurance Rate Map, June 1903.
5. Newcastle Post Office, various floor plans 1932 and 1966.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.31

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 3	5 6 41 2 0	4 8 5 5 88 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 8-12, Block 9 of Original Addition.

The site is rectangular with 123 feet of frontage along Main Street (northern boundary) and a depth of 140 feet with frontage along S. Sumner Avenue (western boundary).

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

H. J. "Jim" Kolva, Senior Associate

ORGANIZATION

Institute for Urban and Local Studies

DATE

June 1986

STREET & NUMBER

W. 705 1st Avenue

TELEPHONE

(509) 458-6219

CITY OR TOWN

Spokane

STATE

WA

99204

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

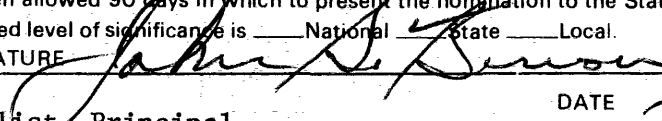
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES _____ NO _____ NONE _____

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is State National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE



TITLE

Realty Acquisition Specialist, Principal

DATE

2-9-87

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

MAY 19 1987

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

**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 Newcastle Main Post Office Item number 7 Page 1

flat fluted wooden pilasters which support a triangular pedimented frontispiece. A series of triglyphs adorn the entablature frieze and dentils define the horizontal and raking cornices of the pediment. Wrought iron lanterns affixed to the brick wall flank the entry bay. The two window bays flanking either side of the entry bay are defined by semicircular arches which enclose a tympanum and surrounds of brick (blind arches). Limestone lintels with angular ends, pronounced keystone, and limestone sills complete the window framing. The sash consists of double-hung wood with 12-over-12 lights.

The windows of the end wings are identical in size and configuration to those described above. However, the brick arch is deleted and replaced with a flat limestone panel which is inset above the windows.

The facade wall is terminated by a limestone frieze (embellished by molded fretwork) and projecting cornice upon which rests a brick parapet. The portion of the parapet over the central section of the facade consists of alternating brick battlements and limestone balustrades. The parapet sections over the wings are solid brick. A limestone coping course caps the parapet.

The side facades are identical to each other and are detailed similarly to the front facade. Four equally spaced window bays divide the facades. The window bays and sash configuration are identical to those of the end wings of the front facade. One of the bays of the east facade is filled with brick. The frieze, cornice, and solid brick parapet are identical to the corresponding detailing of the front.

The rear facade is dominated by the loading vestibule and platform which project rearward from the main building. The platform is off-centered to the west of the building axis (apparently as a result of an expansion to the loading platform in 1967). The west

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

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

Continuation sheet Newcastle Main Post Office Item number 7 Page 2

corner of the main building is plain brick and two 25-light metal sash windows are located in the east corner. The platform roof is flat, built-up tar composition and is lower in height than the main building. A flat metal marquee projects from the vestibule over the concrete loading platform. Fiberglass panels have been used to enclose the platform area.

**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 Newcastle Main Post Office Item number 8 Page 1

The post office occupies a prominent position in the city's civic core. The county courthouse, a fine Neo-Classical (Greek influence) building of brick and native stone, and the Carnegie Library (recent remodeling has significantly altered the original design integrity) are located across the street to the north. These buildings have served as the public center of the community through its formative years. Following the county courthouse, the post office is the most prominent of Newcastle's downtown buildings.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

At the time of the construction of the post office, Newcastle was recovering from a period of depression which spanned the early to mid-years of the 1920s. Construction of the federal building provided reassurance that the city was, indeed, on its road to recovery and further growth. As the city's first federally constructed post office, it not only symbolized the federal presence, but also demonstrated the government's faith in the city's future. Newcastle citizens had awaited their post office for several years since the acquisition of the site, and were jubilant when the news of an appropriation for a building was finally received. Former Congressman Frank W. Mondell, a former Newcastle mayor and practicing lawyer in Washington, was given credit for wielding his considerable influence and assisting the Wyoming delegation in obtaining the appropriations for the post office. Termed as "Uncle Sam's Christmas Present to the City of Newcastle" the link to and recognition of that link to the federal government was demonstrated in the December 24, 1931 issue of the News Letter. The association with Congressman Mondell and the symbolism of the federal government and its gift to the city provide Criteria B and A.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Newcastle, the county seat of Weston County in northeastern Wyoming, has a population of approximately

**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 Newcastle Main Post Office Item number 8 Page 2

3,600. Newcastle is located on Highway 85, a major route to the nearby Black Hills and Devil's Tower National Monument. Cattle ranching, grain crops, oil, and mining contribute to the economic base of the area.

Newcastle came into existence on September 10, 1889 when the Lincoln Land Company sold its first lots. The Lincoln Land Company was the development subsidiary of the C.B.&Q. Railroad which had just recently extended its trackage into the area. The discovery of coal and the development of the railroad provided the stimulus for the area's growth. Newcastle was named by J.H. Hemmingway of the Newcastle Coal Company in memory of the great coal center of England. On March 12, 1890 Weston County was created and Newcastle became the county seat. Frank Mondell, Wyoming's notable congressman, served as the city's first mayor and L.R. Davis as the first postmaster.

The downtown business district developed from the late 1890s through the 1920s. The Weston County Courthouse was constructed in 1910 and the Carnegie Library in 1911. A new high school was constructed in 1922. According to the 1920 census, Newcastle had 1,003 residents as compared to a population of 975 in 1910. Although the early 1920s was a period of economic hardship with bank closures and tax delinquencies, the later years of the decade brought an economic resurgence. In 1928 the Cambria coal mines closed and brought about the death knell of an industry that had prospered since the town's beginning. In 1930, the population reached 1,201 and the development of producing oil wells continued the prosperity of the late 1920s. Growth and new development continued and by 1940 the city had a population 1,962.

The Newcastle Post Office is located at the east end of the downtown business district. The building is located on the southeast corner of the W. Main Street/Summer Avenue intersection with Main as the primary business street. The Weston County Courthouse (1910) and adja-

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 Newcastle Main Post Office Item number 8 Page 3

cent Carnegie Library (1911, remodeled in 1984) are located across Warren Avenue to the post office. Two single-story brick office buildings (pre-date post office) and a 7-11 store are located in the post office block to its east. Single family residences are located across the alley to the south. A service station is located across Sumner Street to the west of the post office. A two-story frame building with gambrel roof (pre-dates post office) is located adjacent to the service station's south.

LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEWCASTLE MAIN POST OFFICE

The construction of the Newcastle Post Office was reported locally in the News Letter between 1930 and 1933. Since the late 1920s, Newcastle had been recovering from the economic depression of the early decade. Although the Cambria coal mine closed in 1928, thus ending the coal era, the banks were regaining their footing, a bentonite plant was opened, and prosperity was in the air. In 1930, the area's first producing oil wells were underway and the Newcastle Mercantile opened its new store in the Weare Building.

On April 24, 1930 the News Letter headlined its edition with "Newcastle Federal Building is Assured". F.W. Mondell, Newcastle's first mayor and noted former Wyoming congressman, in a letter to Mr. Frazine of Newcastle made assurances that the city would soon receive a new federal building. A site had been purchased years before through the efforts of Mondell when he was serving in Congress. Even though Mondell was privately practicing law in Washington, his influence along with the present Wyoming delegation was bearing fruit. Mondell was also working to secure the use of local stone for the building rather than the typically used Indiana limestone.

A follow-up article of May 1st provided further assurance of a new federal building. Since the site was

**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 Newcastle Main Post Office Item number 8 Page 4

already owned by the federal government and postal receipts exceeded \$47,500 a year, it was felt that Newcastle would be included in the next appropriations bill. As the year neared a close, a December 4th article reported that the federal building might be built in the next year. Again, a case was made for local stone. In addition to being in harmony with the buildings already located in the immediate vicinity (the courthouse and Wyoming National Guard Armory (has been removed)), the use of native stone would provide work for local labor. The Newsletter expressed its faith in Mondell's ability to get the city's new building. "That Mr. Mondell still looks upon Newcastle as his home ... he is personally, closely following the project and will use his best influence to see that it is included in the 1931 program."

The year 1931 opened with an announcement in the January 15th edition that the new post office would cost \$75,000. Congressman Carter advised that a special appropriation may be made. Seven projects were in line for the state: Casper (\$275,000), Thermopolis (\$75,000) Green River (\$75,000), Torrington (\$75,000 not yet authorized), Kemmerer (\$75,000 not yet authorized), Wheatland (\$75,000 not yet authorized), and Newcastle (\$75,000 not yet authorized). On January 29th, it was reported that the site survey was underway. Although the money was not yet appropriated, a special appropriation was under request. It was felt that the funding was soon to come. The use of native stone continued to be urged.

An article of February 12th surmised that early action on the Newcastle federal building was expected. This supposition was based on a communication from President Hoover to the House. Mrs. Edna Jessen, postmaster, had received communication that a \$60,000 appropriation was requested in the deficiency bill. Two weeks later telegrams from Senator Robert D. Carey and Congressman Vincent Carter announced that the federal building was assured via the passage of the Second Deficiency Bill.

**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 Newcastle Main Post Office

Item number

8

Page 5

It appeared that the federal building was actually nearing reality when, on July 9th, the News Letter reported that the Treasury Department had applied for a permit to connect to the sewer. The December 24th issue included a sketch of "Uncle Sam's Christmas Present to the City of Newcastle" and stated that bids would be received on December 30th.

The bids had been reviewed, and according to an article of January 28th, 1932, were too high. Senator Carey felt that the plans might have to be amended and that a delay might be incurred. On February 11th it was announced that new bids would be requested. As reported on March 17th, N.A. Pearson of Sheridan, the low bidder on the project, expressed his opinion that the project would soon begin and further stated that the insistence on the use of local stone would cause additional delay. The request for new bids was announced on April 7th. Phelps-Drake of Minneapolis was awarded the construction contract with a bid of slightly over \$53,000 (article of April 28th).

Work was scheduled to begin in June, according to a May 12th article. On September 1st it was announced that the Masons had received a permit for the cornerstone laying ceremony. Concrete work for the basement and foundations would be underway in a few days. The cornerstone was laid on September 29th (reported on October 6th) with the appropriate pomp and ceremony. Mrs. Jessen, postmaster, set the stone. Frank Mondell, who served Wyoming in Congress for 26 years, was given credit for the appropriation of the new building.

Several articles of February and March of 1933 reported the construction progress of the nearly completed building. An article of March 30th reported that the new building was now in use, but that formal dedication would not be held until all of the equipment arrived.

**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 Newcastle Main Post Office Item number 8 Page 6

As a final note, the Journal News Letter included an extensive spread on the Newcastle Post Office in its July 1, 1982 edition in celebration of the building's 50th anniversary. An article recounted the history of the "downtown landmark" and included photos of the building's construction.

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 Newcastle MPO Item number 10 Page 1

