

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM  
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Hawaii  
 COUNTY: Honolulu  
 FOR NPS USE ONLY  
 ENTRY DATE: JAN 27 1975

1. NAME

COMMON: <sup>U.S.</sup>  
~~United States~~ Post Office, Custom House and Court House  
 AND/OR HISTORIC:  
 Federal Building

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 335 Merchant Street  
 CITY OR TOWN: Honolulu  
 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Rep. Spark M. Matsunaga - 1st  
 STATE: Hawaii CODE: 51 COUNTY: 003

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. AGENCY

General Service Administration, Region 9  
 REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)  
 STREET AND NUMBER: 49 Fourth Street  
 CITY OR TOWN: San Francisco  
 STATE: California CODE: 04

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
 Bureau of Conveyances, State of Hawaii  
 STREET AND NUMBER: 403 Queen Street  
 CITY OR TOWN: Honolulu  
 STATE: Hawaii CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
 DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
 STREET AND NUMBER:  
 CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:



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## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE						
<p>The present United States Post Office, Custom House and Court House in Honolulu was designed by architects York and Sawyer of New York City. The original portion, as well as the later addition, are in the Spanish Colonial Revival style with certain modifications. The original portion was designed in 1918 and was built in 1921-22. It is "U"-shaped structure three floors in height, with the central portion containing the courtrooms in the upper floors (being equivalent to four floors) full basement, and two square towers rising to six floors. The approximate overall dimensions of the building in plan are 177' x 143'. The building fills the mauka (east) half of a square city block. The Ewa (north) side of the original building contains an open-air arcade where postal business is conducted. The arcaded courtyard faces mauka (east) toward Iolani Palace, the former State Capitol. The windows facing the courtyard are arched and covered with decorative window grilles. The capitals in the arcade are modified Corinthian. The two marble stairs, leading to the second floor courtrooms, wing offices, and the lanai overlooking one of the 1930 courts, are symmetrical. The upper passageways are barrel vaulted with groin vaults at the landings. The interior plaster walls are plain.</p> <p>The addition was designed in 1929 by the Treasury Department using the same style as the original building. It was constructed in 1930 makai (west) of the existing structure. The original portion is set back from King Street with a lawn; the addition was built with a lawn on Mililani Street (Diamond Head side-south), but Queen Street (makai side-west) and Richards Street (Ewa side-north) are built to the sidewalk. The 3-story addition contains two courts, one enclosed with access for vehicular traffic Diamond Head to Mililani Street, and the other open for vehicular traffic Ewa towards Richards Street. The functions of the spaces of the building, in both portions, have not changed appreciably since being designed. Both were constructed using caissons, a steel skeleton frame with concrete beams, and concrete ribbed floor slabs.</p> <p>The architectural character of the exterior with its thick plaster walls, arched openings, and deep overhanging tile roofs has been retained in spite of minor changes over the years. Local public groups in the past have strongly protested changes which would have altered the building's basic design. It is unfortunate that jalousies have been installed in place of the original windows in the courtrooms, and that many of the decorative window grilles have been cut and original portions of window sash removed to install air conditioners. These elements could be modified to better suit the overall architectural design. The 3-story height keeps the building comfortably in scale with the other significant structures in the Honolulu Capital District.</p>						

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**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1922, 1930**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

After the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands by the United States in 1898, many offices of the federal government, as well as those of the Territory of Hawaii, were housed in the former royal Iolani Palace. The Palace was used as the main governmental executive office building, and this led to eventual overcrowding and the desire on the part of Territorial officials for federal offices to be housed in a separate building. Successive early Territorial governors-- Sanford B. Dole, George R. Carter, Walter F. Frear and Lucius E. Pinkham-- agreed that a separate federal office building should be constructed in Honolulu. Their efforts culminated in the erection of the original portion of the present United States Post Office, Custom House and Court House, completed in 1922.

This building including its 1930 addition is a good example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and its adaptation to Hawaii. Its design was later echoed by Honolulu Hale (City Hall) by architects Miller, Dickey, Wood, Rothwell, Kangeter and Lester in 1927 and by the YWCA Building by architect Julia Morgan in 1927. This building forms an integral part of the historical style and scale continuity of Honolulu's Civic Center, together with the adjacent Aliiolani Hale (State Judiciary Building, 1872-1874), and Iolani Palace (1879-1882), two of Honolulu's most significant buildings.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Roy E. Ford, Hawaii Buildings Manager, GSA, private tour and interview held 12 March 1973.  
 York and Sawyer, Architects, New York, blueprints (January 1919) in office of maintenance supervisor.  
 Department of the Treasury, blueprints (May 1929) in office of maintenance supervisor.  
 GSA factsheet in office of Hawaii Buildings Manager, Honolulu.  
 Executive Letter Books and Folders 1900-1917, Hawaii State Archives.

(continued)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
NW	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		
NE	0 ' ' "	0 ' ' "	0 ' ' "	21° 18' 33"	157° 51' 48"	
SE	0 ' ' "	0 ' ' "	0 ' ' "			
SW	0 ' ' "	0 ' ' "	0 ' ' "			

UTM  
 4/617880  
 2356840  
 CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 2.84

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Hawaii	51		
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Randall J. Biallas, Gerron S. Hite for** DATE: **22 May 1973**

BUSINESS ADDRESS: **Geoffrey W. Fairfax A.I.A., Architect and Planner**

STREET AND NUMBER: **1210 Ward Avenue** PHONE: **808-521-3005**

CITY OR TOWN: **Honolulu** STATE: **Hawaii** CODE: **51**

12. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

State Liaison Officer recommendation:

Yes  
 No  
 None

*[Signature]*  
 State Liaison Officer Signature

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

*[Signature]* **2/6/74**  
 Federal Representative Signature Date

**Historic Preservation Liaison Officer**

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

*[Signature]*  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date **1/27/75**

ATTEST:

*[Signature]*  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date **10-4-74**