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| | | |
| Baxley, Georgia | | |
| | | |
| | | () vicinity of |
| | | |
| Category of | Property: | |
| () district () site | | |
| | | |
| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
| | Baxley, Georgia Category of (x) building(() district () site () structure | & EDUCATION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE Baxley, Georgia Category of Property: (x) building(s) () district () site () structure |

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A Name of previous listing: N/A Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. I hereby certify that this nomination 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 the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

100n

W. Ray Luce Director, Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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

Signature of commenting or other official

State or Federal agency or bureau

National Park Service Certification 5.

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

| 61 | entered | in | the | National | Register |
|-----|---------|----|------|----------|----------|
| VV. | entereu | | u ie | national | register |

() determined eligible for the National Register

() determined not eligible for the National Register

() removed from the National Register

() other, explain:

() see continuation sheet

Keeper of the National Register

Date

(c - (c - OO))



Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Government: post office

Current Functions:

Government: government office

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Colonial Revival

Materials:

| foundation | Concrete |
|------------|----------|
| walls | Brick |
| roof | Asphalt |
| other | Metal |

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The U.S. Post Office in Baxley is a one-story, rectangular-shaped Colonial Revival-style building. Built from 1935 to 1936, the post office is located one block west of the Appling County Courthouse in downtown Baxley, Georgia. The lot fronts Tippins Street and is bounded on the north by Parker Street and on the west by Deen Street. The rear parking area is entered from drives on Deen and Parker streets. The small lot includes grassed areas and a few trees and foundation plantings.

The Baxley post office is set on a poured concrete foundation and framed with structural steel. The brick walls are laid in English bond. Interior walls are built of hollow terra-cotta tile. The tile was furred to receive plaster, or smooth in areas where plaster was not applied. The flat composition roof features a brick parapet lined with white marble coping and a marble beltcourse that warps around all sides of the building, except the mailing platform.

The five-bay main facade features four large 12-over-12-light sash windows with limestone lintels that match the coping on the parapet. The nonhistoric aluminum-and-glass double doors are flanked by fluted pilasters that support an elaborate broken pediment, the principal decorative element on the facade. The entablature is inscribed, "Baxley Ga." with carved stylized flowers. A wood eagle was once located above the pedestal in the center of the pediment but is now missing. A flight of seven granite steps lined with wrought iron hand rails ascend to the main entrance, which is flanked by two Colonial Revival-style wall-mounted lamps.

A white marble cornerstone on the southwest corner on the main facade reads: Henry Morganthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury; James A. Farley, Postmaster General; Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect; Neal A. Melick, Supervising Engineer; 1935.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7--Description

The side elevations feature six bays with large sash windows similar to those on the main facade. A blind window on the east facade forms part of the exterior wall of the postal inspectors lookout. A sash window adjacent to the blind window provides light and ventilation for the postmaster's bathroom. An exterior basement entrance and a small coal window are also located along the west side of the building. The rear elevation features a large mailing platform which is sheltered by a metal awning. The north side of the platform is open to receive mail from postal service vehicles. A tall, exterior brick chimney is located on the west side of the building, against the north side of the mailing vestibule. A concrete handicap ramp was built on the west side of the platform in 1975.

The interior plan is organized around the large work room where the mail was handled and sorted for delivery, where post office boxes were serviced, and where walk-in customer service operations were performed. Typically, mail was brought to the mailing platform by truck from the regional post office. Inside the work room, postal workers sorted each sack of mail by carrier route. The carriers at the Baxley post office sorted their mail at stations in the order it was to be delivered. The sorting stations have been removed. Clerks serviced several banks of post office boxes located in the southwest corner of the workroom. These boxes were also relocated to the new postal facility.

The customer service counter is located along the south side of the work room and features window for two to four clerks to assist customers in the public lobby. The work room features a dark lacquered wood floor and wainscoting. Like all rooms on the main floor, the work room has a thirteen-foot ceiling.

The L-shaped public lobby is located across the front of the building and wraps around the west side to include several banks of post office boxes, which have been removed. The lobby is entered through an elaborately molded wood-and-glazed vestibule with entrance and exit doors. The wainscot and floor are faced with gray marble. A cove cornice molding joins the ceiling and the wall. Lobby furnishings included in the original post office design remain in situ and include: two wood lobby desks built from standard Public Building Service plans; and wall-mounted bulletin boards with glass doors and incised subject headings, such as "Bulletins," and "United States—Civil Service." These were also built from standard designs. During the 1960s, the lobby was enlarged to accommodate additional post office boxes by increasing the length of the lobby along the west wall and thereby reducing the size of the workroom.

A series of small rooms is located along the east side of the post office. The postmaster's office is located in the southeast corner and is entered from both the work room and the lobby. The postmaster's office includes molded window surrounds, door surrounds, chair rail, and baseboard. The postmaster's office includes a small bathroom and the entrance to the lookout gallery. Entered from a ladder and located above the vault, the lookout gallery provided postal inspectors with ability to monitor the conduct of postal employees in the work room. Because the interior of the room was painted black and the viewing windows consisted of only three narrow bands of glass set in the

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7--Description

ceiling against a small black field, it was impossible for employees to know they were being monitored.

The vault, also along the south wall, was used to store money, stamps, and registered mail. It consists of a concrete floor, walls, and ceiling, and is secured with large steel door, with a combination lock. A second secured area in the vault is located behind a wire mesh grille. Along the north wall at the rear of the work room are the women's bathroom, janitor's closet, mailing vestibule, access to a second lookout, and stairs to the upper-level swing room and bathroom. (The swingroom served as a breakroom for the letter carriers.) The swing room bathroom retains its marble floor and original porcelain fixtures. Stenciled room labels survive on all of the wood-panel doors except that of the postmaster's office.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

() nationally () statewide (x) locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

(x) A () B (x) C () D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): (x) N/A

()A()B()C()D()E()F()G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture Politics and Government

Period of Significance:

1935-1936

Significant Dates:

1935-1936 - Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury designs and builds the United States Post Office in Baxley.

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Simon, Louis A. (Supervising Architect) Melick, Neal A. (Supervising Engineer) J. M. Raymond Company (general contractor)

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The U.S. Post Office in Baxley, Georgia, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of <u>architecture</u> as a representative and highly intact example of post offices constructed in small towns in Georgia and throughout the United States between 1932 and 1942 by the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury under the auspices of various New Deal programs. Designed in the Colonial Revival style, the small, one-story, brick post office in South Georgia is similar in size, scale, materials, and architectural style to many of the other approximately sixty-five post offices built in Georgia during this period. The Baxley post office is also significant in the area of <u>politics and government</u> because it represents the efforts of the federal government to improve the infrastructure of small towns throughout the nation during the New Deal era.

During the 1930s, the number of post offices built in the United States increased dramatically as numerous public works programs were initiated to spur economic recovery and provide work for the unemployed, many of whom worked in the building trades. In 1933, the Public Works Administration (PWA) was formed to administer the planning and construction of Federal and non-Federal public works projects. The Public Buildings Act (1926) and the Federal Employment Stabilization Act (1931), enabled the PWA to begin its program without delay by starting with Federal projects such as post offices. By 1939, the PWA completed 406 post offices, nearly one-eighth of the total 3,174 construction projects funded by the Public Works Administration.¹

The role of the PWA in construction projects was similar to that of a bank or a large building and loan association. The PWA determined which projects received funding and ensured that its projects were completed according to the appropriate specifications. The Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury retained primary responsibility for design, construction, and allocation of post offices until 1939. By 1935, Treasury Department building projects were funded under the auspices of five separate programs: the original Public Building Program (1926); the PWA; the Emergency Relief and Construction Act (1932); the Emergency Construction Program (1934); and the Building Program for the District of Columbia (1926).²

In 1934, the Office of the Supervising Architect was reorganized and Louis A. Simon replaced Supervising Architect James W. Wetmore. The Supervising Architect's office, which lost its independence as a separate office in the Office of the Treasury Secretary, was replaced by the

¹Emily Harris, *History of Post Office Construction, 1900-1940* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Postal Service, 1982), 16.

²Emily Harris, *History of Post Office Construction*, 17.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Public Buildings Branch of the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department. In February 1934, the Supervising Architect's office was moved from the Treasury Building to the Federal Warehouse Building, renamed the Procurement Building. In addition, the Office was reorganized into four divisions consisting of a Supervising Architect, a Supervising Engineer, a Chairman of the Board of Award, and a Chief of the Legal Section.

Through the 1920s, the staff of the Office of the Supervising Architect developed standardized designs and floor plans for its buildings. The Supervising Architect's office rarely hired local architects to design its buildings as it had during the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Local architects were hired from some projects from 1930 to 1934, when many of the Federal recovery programs were getting underway. In June 1934, the Treasury Department determined that it was not practical for private architects to handle small architectural projects. The staff of the Office of the Supervising Architect designed all of the remaining Federal buildings.³

Designs for post offices built between 1932 and 1942 followed standardized plans. Some stylistic variation was permitted on the facades, but the floor plans were well established by the early 1930s. Post offices built in small towns were usually one-story, rectangular-plan buildings. Much of the building was devoted to the large, full-width work room, where much of the mail handling and sorting operations were conducted. The work room included a vault and sometimes an area enclosed with wire-mesh screen to secure money orders and registered mail. The rear of the building contained the mailing vestibule and mailing platform for receiving deliveries of mail. A swing room was located above the mailing platform. The public lobby was located across the front of the post office. It contained an entrance vestibule, post office boxes, and customer service windows. Lobbies were usually L-shaped to provide space for additional post office boxes. As the only public space in the building, the lobby was often adorned with decorative architectural elements, including marble wainscoting, terrazzo floors, and coffered ceilings and furnishings, such as lobby desks. The postmaster's office was generally located in a front corner of the building, with lobby and work room entrances.

The acceptance of standardized floor plans for post offices left little room for ingenuity on the part of the architect, except for the facades. Designs generated in the Office of the Supervising Architect under Louis A. Simon demonstrated greater stylistic variety than in the previous twenty-five years. During this period, more consideration was given to local architectural traditions. In California, for example, the Spanish or Mission style became popular. The small, Mission-style post office in La Jolla, built in 1935, is an example. The Colonial Revival-style, built throughout the East, remained the most popular historical revival style for post offices, as well as other PWA building types. Middle-

³Beth M. Boland, *National Register Bulletin 13: How to Apply the National Register Criteria to Post Offices* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1991), 4.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Atlantic examples include the two U.S. Post Offices in New Castle, Delaware, and in Easton, Maryland, both completed in 1936.

Most popular were modern designs (such as streamline moderne or Art Deco) or designs that mixed one or more historical styles with the "starved classicism" that dominated Federal building during the 1930s.⁴ Starved classicism, sometimes called PWA Modern, was described by Historian Lois Craig as a simplified classical style characterized by symmetrical massing, smooth expanses of unadorned planar surfaces, and reduced ornamentation. The style derived from the Beaux-Arts tradition and featured inspirational names or phrases incised on the facade as an economical decorative motif.⁵

The PWA was organized in seven administrative regions that comprised the continental United States. Region No. 3, the Southeast, included the states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky. C. W. Short and R. Stanley Brown observed in their survey *Architecture under the Public Works Administration, 1933-1939*, that "traditional architecture of the Colonial period still dominates design [in Region No. 3], except in Florida and Gulf coasts of Alabama and Mississippi where 'modern' has crept in."⁶

The vast majority of post offices built in Georgia during this period were designed in the Colonial Revival style. Small post offices featured hip or side -gable roofs with cupolas, elaborate pedimented door surrounds, sometimes with fanlights, and window treatments that included plain stone lintels or gauged arches with keystones. Decorative details varied at each building, some included stone beltcourses, dentil cornices, brick panels and quoins, or incised lettering. Examples of this type include post offices built in the following towns in Georgia: Adel (1940), Ashburn (1940), Calhoun (1936), Commerce (1937), Corneila (1937), Cuthbert (1937), East Point (1935), Hawkinsville (1938), Millen (1938), Summerville (1938), and Sylvester (1937).

⁴Beland/Associates, Inc., "U.S. Post Offices in California, 1900-1941," National Register of Historic Places multiple property nomination (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 1984), 8.14-.15

⁵Lois A. Craig, *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and National Design* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), 286.

⁶C. W. Short and R. Stanley Brown, *Public Buildings: A Survey of Architecture of Projects Constructed by Federal and Other Governmental Bodies between the Years of 1933 and 1939 with the Assistance of the Public Works Administration* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939), xii.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Less than a dozen post offices in Georgia were built in historical idioms other than the Colonial Revival or Neoclassical styles. Post offices in Buford (1941) and Vidalia (1936) were built in the Greek Revival style. Based on the same building type as the small Colonial Revival post offices, the two buildings feature modified Doric porticos with stout, unfluted columns, and incised lettering across the entablature. The post office in Eatonton (1932) is one of the few Mission-style post offices in Georgia.

Several post offices in Georgia were in built in the Art Deco style. Primarily built after 1935, these buildings are based on the same standardized plans that the Treasury Department used for its Colonial Revival-style post offices. These buildings feature few, if any, historical references. Ornament is minimal, often composed of corbelled brick window surrounds, stone beltcourses and coping, and relief sculptures above the windows and entrance on the main facade. Free-standing Art Deco lamps flank the entrance. Examples of this type include: Cairo (1935), Decatur (1935), Hartwell (1937), Manchester (1940), and Sylvania (1940).

National Register Criteria

The United States Post Office in Baxley is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A in the area of politics and government because of its association with the efforts of the federal government to improve the infrastructure of small towns throughout the nation during the New Deal era. The post office is also eligible under Criteria C in the area of architecture as a representative example of a New Deal-era post office in Georgia.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

Period of significance (justification)

The 1935-1936 period of significance represents the period in which the post office was built and achieved the characteristics that make it significant for the National Register under the areas architecture and politics and government.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The post office is the only contributing resource. There are no noncontributing resources associated with this nomination.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

The United States Post Office in Baxley was built in 1936 by the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury under the auspices of the Public Works Administration. On July 16, 1934, the federal government accepted bids on tentative sites for a new postal facility in downtown Baxley. Eight sites were offered with prices ranging from \$1,000 to \$12,500. Four of the lots were located within a block of the courthouse. The Baxley Women's Club offered a site at the corner of Tippins and Deen streets, one block west of the Appling County Courthouse, for \$5,000. On March 15, 1935, the federal government purchased the Women's Club lot for \$4,500. Drawings for the new post office were completed in October 1935. Work began that year and was completed in 1936. Louis A. Simon was the Supervising Architect and Neal A. Melick was the Supervising Engineer. The J. M. Raymond Company of Jacksonville, Florida served as the general contractor, C. I. Butler was the construction supervisor, and Stewart Blackman was the construction engineer.

In 1964, the Atlanta Regional Office of the General Services Administration modernized the Baxley post office. Air conditioning was installed and a 2,000-gallon fuel storage tank was installed in the basement. Work also included new aluminum front doors which replaced the original wood doors, new three-phase electrical service, painting interior and exterior, refinishing wood floors, and new lighting. During the 1960s, the need for additional post office boxes led the postal service to increase the length lobby along the west wall. The building served as a post office until 1997, when a new, larger postal facility in Baxley was completed.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Beland/Associates, Inc. "U.S. Post Offices in California, 1900-1941," National Register of Historic Places multiple property nomination. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 1984.

Boland, Beth M. National Register Bulletin 13: How to Apply the National Register Criteria to Post Offices. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1991.

Craig, Lois. *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and National Design*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984.

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_____. Records of the Public Building Service. Prints: Photographs of Paintings and Sculptures Commissioned by the Section of Fine Arts, 1934-1943. Record Group 121-GA, Box no. 53.

Phagan, Patricia. "New Deal Art in Georgia: A Guide to Post Office Murals and Sculpture." Pamphlet. Athens, Ga.: Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, n.d.

Short, C. W. and R. Stanley Brown. *Public Buildings: A Survey of Architecture of Projects Constructed by Federal and Other Governmental Bodies between the Years of 1933 and 1939 with the Assistance of the Public Works Administration*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9--Major Bibliographic References

Previous documentation on file (NPS): () N/A

- () preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- (x) preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued date issued: June 27, 1995
- () 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:

- (x) State historic preservation office
- () Other State Agency
- () Federal agency
- () Local government
- () University
- () Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.33 acres

UTM References

A) Zone 17 Easting 372170 Northing 3516440

Verbal Boundary Description

The property boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached map, drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification

The National Register boundary follows the legal bounds of the 0.33-acre parcel. This parcel is the same tract that was historically associated with the post office.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Steven H. Moffson, Architectural Historian organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources street & number 500 The Healey Building, 57 Forsyth Street city or town Atlanta state Georgia zip code 30303 telephone (404) 656-2840 date May 31, 2000

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) (x) not applicable

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs

| Name of Property: | United States Post OfficeBaxley, Georgia |
|--------------------|--|
| City or Vicinity: | Baxley |
| County: | Appling |
| State: | Georgia |
| Photographer: | James R. Lockhart |
| Negative Filed: | Georgia Department of Natural Resources |
| Date Photographed: | January 2000 |

Description of Photograph(s):

- 1. Photographer facing northeast.
- 2. Main facade, photographer facing north.
- 3. Cornerstone, photographer facing north.
- 4. Main facade, photographer facing north.
- 5. Phtotographer facing northwest.
- 6. Photographer facing northwest.
- 7. Photographer facing southwest.
- 8. Photographer facing southeast.
- 9. Interior, lobby, phographer facing east.
- 10. Interior, lobby, photographer facing east.
- 11. Interior, post master's office, photographer facing south.
- 12. Interior, work room, photographer facing southwest.
- 13. Interior, work room, photographer facing southeast.
- 14. Interior, workroom with vault and lookout windows above, photographer facing west.
- 15. Interior, ladder to lookout above vault.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs

- 16. Interior, lookout above vault, photographer facing west.
- 17. Interior, workroom, photographer facing northeast.
- 18. Interior, work room, photographer facing north.
- 19. Interior, swing-room bathroom, photographer facing southeast.
- 20. Interior, swingroom, photographer facing north.



| | BY | DATE | REVISION | ΒY | APPLI | NG COUN | TY, GA. |
|------------|--|------------|----------|--------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| ,6·6, 5·5, | United States Post Office-Baxley, Georgia Baxley, Appling County, Georgia Sketch Map National Register Boundary Scale: 1"=100' | | | MAP E3 | | | |
| | • | - North: 🕈 | | | DIST: 2nd | SCALE: "=100" | DATE 1-15-85 |

