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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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

**1 NAME** United States Post Office and Court House  
HISTORIC United States Post Office and Court House, Bellingham, Washington  
AND/OR COMMON Federal Building, Bellingham, Washington

**2 LOCATION**  
STREET & NUMBER 104 West Magnolia Street (at Cornwall Avenue) -- NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY, TOWN Bellingham VICINITY OF 02 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
STATE Washington CODE 53 COUNTY Whatcom CODE 073

**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"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 AGENCY** General Services Administration  
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable) Regional Headquarters Building  
STREET & NUMBER GSA Center, 10PG  
CITY, TOWN Auburn VICINITY OF Washington STATE 98002

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**  
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Whatcom County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER 217 Grand Avenue  
CITY, TOWN Bellingham STATE Washington 98225

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**  
TITLE Region 10 Inventory List of Public Buildings of Historic Interest  
DATE July 1972  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Regional Headquarters Building, GSA Center  
CITY, TOWN Auburn STATE Washington 98002

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

### SITE

The Federal Building (FB), built between 1912 and 1913 to house the U.S. Post Office and District Court, is centrally located in downtown Bellingham. The site at the corner of Cornwall Avenue and Magnolia Street is in the middle of a triangle; the twisting course of Whatcom Creek is to the north, Bellingham Bay is to the west and the tracks of the Northern Pacific Railroad are to the south.

Two blocks to the north is the "governmental sector," dominated by the County Courthouse, the City Hall and the City Library. Surrounding the FB are the turn of the century and modern commercial buildings of the Central Business District (CBD).

Magnolia Street, running north-south parallel to the bay, defines the eastern border of the CBD. The Renaissance Revival principal facade of the FB faces Magnolia Street. Next door (north of the FB) is the five storey Italianate Bon Marche Department Store (built circa 1927 as the Montague and McHugh Department Store). The two buildings form a continuous block of Renaissance Revival buildings that accentuates the Magnolia Street boundary of the CBD.

The 122' long X 105' wide Federal Building covers three-quarters of the site. The long side of the building, facing Cornwall Avenue, is set back from the street by 16' wide sidewalks. The principal facade at Magnolia Street also has a 16' wide sidewalk setback. Nine parking spaces occupy the 20' space between the north wall of the FB and the Bon Marche. The 40' wide space at the east side of the building has ten parallel parking spaces. At the northeast corner of the building a wrought iron marquee covers the loading dock of the former Main Post Office.

### BUILDING--GENERAL

Although revisions have changed some of the interior floorplans of the FB, the building's exterior has retained its original detailing and proportion. The three storey, stone-arched building has a low, horizontal appearance. The boxiness of the building's dimensions is counteracted by seven, two storey tall bays on the front facade and a tiled truncated hip roof above the orante cornice.

The building has a gross area of 45,526 square feet over four floors. A basement, completely below ground level, occupies the full 122' X 105' dimension of the building. Storage rooms, restrooms, and maintenance

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rooms lining the basement's exterior walls are partially illuminated by areaways filtering light down from streetlevel above. The major part of the basement is occupied by the boiler room and storage rooms of the various Federal agencies housed in the building.

Formerly, the first floor was entirely filled with the workroom and lobbies of Bellingham's Main Post Office. In 1963, after the post office moved to a new building a few blocks away, the old workroom and lobby were divided into individual offices. One quarter of the first floor is presently occupied by the Post Office City Center Station. Other first floor areas are now vacant but may soon be used by the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration.

Second floor office and courtroom are wrapped around the four sides of a central light court. A richly detailed courtroom with a two storey high vaulted ceiling is located along the building's west wall. Individual offices along the other three sides of the building are separated from the light court by an 8' wide corridor. Offices along the south wall are presently occupied by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Two east wall offices are used for the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service's Passport Office. Remaining second floor offices are presently vacant. The U.S. District Court, Western District of Washington, vacated the FB in 1975. The courtroom is now used infrequently by the Bankruptcy Court.

The third floor is similar in dimension to the second floor. Third floor offices are arranged around only three sides of the building because the second floor courtroom rises two stories to occupy the space along the third floor's west wall. The offices of U.S. Congressman Lloyd Meeds are situated along the east wall. The U.S. Coast Guard and Fisheries-Wildlife Departments are located along the south wall.

An attic space above the third floor, having the floor dimensions of the second and third floors, has never been occupied. Windows opening onto the light court and dormer windows at the south side of the building illuminate the attic.

EXTERIOR-GENERAL

The Bellingham FB belongs to what Marcus Whiffen has called the "Second Renaissance Revival" style. Recalling the dimension and proportion of Italian Renaissance palaces, the FB is straight-fronted, without any considerable projection or recessions into the main mass of the building.

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Typical to the Renaissance style, the FB facades are clearly divided into bottom, middle, and top sections. The building sits upon a smooth rusticated ground storey. Horizontal joints between stone courses on the ground storey are accentuated by the radiating voussoirs around arched ground storey windows. Smooth sandstone surfaces on second and third storeys provide a neutral background for both arched and pedimented windows. An ornate cornice with a sloping mission tile roof crowns the building. Certain elements of the Mediterranean style are evident in the red mission tiled roof, topped by copper-clad dormer windows. Entablatures on the dormers are similar to the building's major entablature.

STRUCTURE--GENERAL

All four exterior bearing walls are of light gray Chuckanut sandstone (from a quarry 20 miles to the south of Bellingham). The smooth, banded rustication of the ground storey emphasizes only the horizontal joints between sandstone blocks. Smooth finished sandstone on upper storeys is laid in stretcher bond (blocks are laid lengthwise in every course).

All four bearing walls facing the interior light court are of buff colored brick, laid in common bond (with a course of bricks laid endwise between every five stretcher courses). Windows opening onto the light court have brick segmental arches.

The foundation course upon which the entire building rests, is of light grey granite.

Because the foundation and basement were carved out of a solid sandstone hill, most of the building's concrete footings rest directly upon solid bedrock. Footings on bedrock have a square "step pyramid" shape. Footings not resting on rock were carried down 12 " into a thick bed of clay. Where rock was under only a part of a column footing, the rock was cut down 2' below the base of the footing and the space backfilled with sand and gravel and then tamped.

Structural steel interior framing supports reinforced concrete slab floors. Interior terra cotta clay partitions have a smooth plaster finish.

The truncated hip roof sloping toward the street is clad with red mission tile. Both the horizontal portion of the main roof and the roof at the bottom of the light court are surfaced with built-up asphalt and gravel.

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PRINCIPAL FACADE

The dominant facade of the Bellingham FB, facing Magnolia Street, is distinguished by seven arched window bays on the second and third storeys. Other facades of the building are more simple; rectangular window openings in the two facades flanking the main facade compliment but do not overpower the arch-dominated entrance facade.

True to Italian Renaissance form, the Magnolia Street facade is divided into four basic horizontal sections: 1) a stone foundation, 2) a rusticated ground storey (the "basement"), 3) a two storey middle section (the "piano nobile"), 4) a denticulated sandstone entablature with floral cheneaus (medallions) fixed to the top of the cornice.

The 3' high foundation, composed of granite blocks, acts as a "pedestal" from which the rest of the building rises. A moulded sandstone plinth at the top of the foundation emphasizes the foundation's supportive function and signals the junction between the foundation and upper levels.

The smooth rusticated ground storey has seven arched openings, each 14' tall. Radiating voussoirs accentuate both the arches and the 1" deep horizontal joints between sandstone courses.

The three central arches, highlighted by sandstone mouldings with flower-motif scrolled keystones, are the main entrances to the building. Fanlights within the three arches have copper mouldings. Double-swing aluminum entrance doors are located in the two arches to either side of the central arch. The former cast bronze revolving entrance doors were removed in 1963. At that time the copper spandrel panel beneath the window in the center bay was replaced with a cast stone panel.

The main entrances to the FB are on grade, an unusual feature in post office-courthouse buildings of this period (main entries were usually reached by a flight of granite steps).

An ornate cast bronze lamp is attached to the wall at either side of the three arched central openings. Recently one of these fixtures fell and shattered; a new lamp is being cast from a mold of the old fixture.

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An arched opening, having only a window, flanks either side of the three central arches. These window arches are without mouldings and have smooth-scrolled keystones.

All windows of the ground storey are double casement, with six panes to each window-half.

The seven, two storey tall bays of the piano nobile are indications of the courtroom inside. The bays are separated by smooth sandstone pilasters with doric order capitals that function as imposts for the arches above. Mouldings around arches are smooth sandstone. Copper frames surround the two storey double-hung windows and the semicircular fanlights above. Both upper and lower portions of the double-hung windows are divided into four panes.

The sandstone spandrel below the center arched window is intricately carved. Two eagles flank either side of a medallion, in the center of which is the raised scale of justice with the numerals MCMXI. Flanking the medallion are the fasces of justice. Spandrels below the two arched windows next to the center window have raised brass letters that read "Federal Building."

A convex disc of Pavonnazzo marble, set into the wall above each pair of second storey arches, helps to lead the eye upward to the sandstone entablature. Dentils are fixed to cyma recta mouldings that flare out to the cornice. A row of sandstone cheneaus (medallion-like projections) crowns the entablature, leading the vision to the skyward-sloping hipped tile roof.

SIDE FACADES

The three side facades lend a supporting role to the main facade. Side facades differ in style and ornamentation from the main facade, yet continue the proportion and massing of the main facade.

Similar to the principal facade, the side facades are divided into clearly defined horizontal sections typical to the Italian Renaissance: 1) a smooth rusticated ground storey (a basement), punctuated by arched openings, 2) a middle section (piano nobile) with rectangular pedimented windows, 3) a top section (attic) composed of a single row of rectangular windows above the piano nobile, and 4) a sandstone entablature.

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The side facades are more austere than the front facade. Arched openings on the ground storey of the side facade do not have mouldings. Each opening is ornamented by a single smooth scrolled keystone. The piano nobile on side facades has only rectangular openings, thus contrasting with the arch-dominated main facade. The tall piano nobile windows, 3' wide X 7' tall, rest upon the stone string course just above the ground storey. Each window has a stone moulding and a triangular stone pediment supported by scrolled brackets. A smaller rectangular window, 3' wide X 5' tall, is located in the attic above each large rectangular window. Each of these smaller windows has a simple cyma reversa moulding. Cornices on side facades are identical to the main facade cornice.

Dormers on the roof of the Cornwall Avenue facade are entirely sheathed in copper. Each dormer has a single double-hung window, flanked by copper pilasters and topped with a copper cornice (similar in detail to the sandstone corni<sup>e</sup> of the facade below).

LIGHT COURT

The 54' long X 40' wide light court has buff colored brick laid in common bond throughout. Windows between second and third floors are arranged in continuous bays, with painted wood spandrels between floors.

INTERIOR: FIRST FLOOR

As with many early 20th Century post office buildings, the Bellingham Federal Building once had an ornate entrance lobby. The richly decorated vaulted public lobby remained relatively intact until 1963, when the post office moved to a new building nearby. The entire ground floor was then "modernized;" all existing marble floors, cast bronzed-laced tellers' windows and stucco details were removed. The present first floor, with its fluorescent lighted suspended ceiling, office landscaping partitions, and white painted studwalls, bears little resemblance to the FB's original design.

The lone reminder of the post on the first floor is the elevator, with its cast iron pilasters and entablature, and the stairway, which has Alaska white marble treads and risers, brass handrails and cast iron newells.

SECOND FLOOR

Having always been devoted to District Court activity, the second floor has changed little from its original state. The courtroom is the focal point of the second floor. The 52' long X 40' wide room is highlighted

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by a coffered, vaulted ceiling, 20' tall at its highest point. Each octagonal coffer has an egg and dart moulding that surrounds a delicate stucco rosette planted in the coffer's center. Recessed downlights installed between coffers in 1964 accentuate the recesses of the coffers and the gentle curvature of the vault.

The vaulted courtroom ceiling springs from fluted pilasters projecting from courtroom walls. Each pilaster has a composite corinthian capital. A rectangular light green sylvan marble panel is embedded into the frieze of the entablature above pilaster capitals. Baseboards are also light green sylvan marble.

Solid, dark-stained Honduras mahogany was used unsparingly for courtroom furnishings. All of the audience benches are solid mahogany with carved end panels. The mahogany rail separating the court floor and audience areas has lathed balusters and a paneled swinging door. The judge's bench and window frames are also mahogany. Dark mahogany clerk's and attorney's desks and smooth, ribbed back chairs compliment built-in cabinetry. In 1965, a new witness stand and jury box were constructed in the same style and finish as the existing furniture.

Mahogany continues into the judge's chambers, where door and window frames and frames around transoms are made of the polished, dark-stained wood. Even the mirror in the judge's private bathroom has a mahogany frame. The mahogany rolltop desk, bookshelves, and the leather couch that once furnished the judge's chambers, were recently removed from the building.

Corridors separating second floor offices from the light court remain unchanged. White terrazzo floors have verde antique marble cross strips and borders. Ceilings have plaster mouldings. Doric-order pilasters placed at regular intervals breakup the hallways and form recesses for oak framed windows. Oak doors leading into the Courtroom and Clerk's Office have oak frames and entablatures. The openness of the hallway around the light court has been altered only by the addition of solid core fire doors near exits and entries.

All doors to second and third floor offices are solid core with varnished oak veneer. Mouldings around doors are also oak. Each door has a chipped glass center panel, with a chipped glass transom above. Polished brass fixtures on transoms are in good condition and the natural ventilation system appears to function well. All doorknobs, locks and hinges, even the screws used to attach the window stops to the doorframes, are polished brass. Finish carpentry work is impeccable.

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THIRD FLOOR

The third floor is similar in arrangement and detail to the second floor. Third floor offices are arranged around three sides of the light court. The fourth side is occupied by the second floor courtroom, which extends two stories from the second floor. Segmental arched windows facing the light court have oak frames and trim.

All restrooms on the second and third floor have white marble partitions and paneled oak doors. Restroom mirrors have oak frames with entablature-like mouldings at the top.





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The site was convenient to existing centers of downtown activity. Two blocks to the northeast was the newly completed red brick Victorian style Whatcom County Courthouse (now on the National Register). Behind the courthouse was the wood Neo-Classical style Great Northern Depot (also on the National Register). One block to the south, along Magnolia Street, was the Northern Pacific Depot.

In the early 20th century, Dock Street was one of the major commercial avenues, running from the waterfront past the FB site to the residential districts surrounding the downtown. The Beck Theater, on Dock Street a block away from the FB site, was one of the major local landmarks (the theater was torn down in the 1940's to make room for a department store). Across the street from the FB site was the town's new Elks Club building, still standing today, with its ornate cornice, moorish arches and intricate brickwork.

Design of the new post office was influenced by Hugh Eldrige, the town's Postmaster at that time. Born on December 19, 1860, Hugh Eldrige was the first pioneer child born on Bellingham Bay--his mother had been the first Caucasian woman in the region and his father, Edward Eldrige, was one of the founders of New Whatcom.

In 1885, Hugh was elected Auditor of Whatcom County and on July 1, 1898, he was appointed Postmaster by President McKinley. He continued in that post for the next 18 years. In 1916, President Wilson replaced him with a democratic candidate. In 1921 Eldrige was reappointed and he served as Postmaster until the early 1930's. He passed away in 1939.

Hugh Eldrige was a well liked town leader; "his substantial traits and kindly qualities have gained for him the warm and enduring regard of all whom he has been associated, from his boyhood to the present."<sup>2</sup> He spoke the Chinook jargon and was so highly regarded by the local Lummi Indians, that they would frequently bring him fresh fowl and berries.

Postmaster Eldrige insisted that all public entries to the post office be at ground level, citing the needs of the elderly and the physically handicapped. Standard post office designs of the era called for grandiose flights of steps leading up to the main entries well above street level. As a result of Eldrige's vigorous opposition and constructive suggestion, the new post office and courthouse was, at the time of its completion, the only Federal building having its entrance on a level with the sidewalk.<sup>3</sup>

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Design and construction of the FB was performed under the Federal Works branch of the Department of the Treasury. Working plans were finished and approved in October 1910 by the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department. James Knox Taylor was Supervising Architect at the time.

A native of Knoxville, Illinois, James Knox Taylor was educated at MIT. His early years were spent working for architectural firms in Boston, New York (in the office of Cass Gilbert), St. Paul, Minnesota, and Philadelphia. In 1895 he moved to Washington, DC to work in the Office of the Supervising Architect. After three years as a Senior Draftsman, he became Supervising Architect.

During his fifteen years as head of the office, he directed design and construction of numerous post office and courthouse buildings (including the U.S. Post Office and Customs House in San Francisco). After retiring in 1912, just after ground breaking of the Bellingham building, he set up private practice in Boston. He passed away in Tampa, Florida in 1929.<sup>4</sup>

The extent of the Supervising Architect's involvement in the project is difficult to ascertain from the original drawings. As was the prevailing Beaux-Arts tradition, several persons contributed to the design, each according to his or her specialty. Each sheet was initialed by superintendents of the structural, drafting and mechanical divisions of the office. All of the Bellingham drawings were checked by W. R. Ryerson (who was probably Job Captain in charge of design and construction).

The granite cornerstone at the southwest corner of the building, facing Magnolia Street, is inscribed: "FRANKLIN MACVEIGH, SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, JAMES KNOX TAYLOR, SUPERVISING ARCHITECT, MCMX."

In March 1911, construction was begun by J. H. Weise, a general contractor from Omaha, Nebraska. The solid sandstone hill that originally covered the site was excavated to a depth of 4' below the sidewalk grade at a cost of \$20,000. By March 1913 the building was almost complete, except for courtroom furniture.

Total cost of the building came to over \$300,000, a large sum for a turn of the century Federal building. Due perhaps to Postmaster Eldrige's influence, little expense was spared on the building's refined details.

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The grand opening of Bellingham's first specially designed post office and Federal courthouse was a major social event. Entering the spacious lobby, visitors were impressed with the vaulted ceiling, which rose from marble pilasters between the tall, arched lobby windows. The entire wall around the tellers' windows was sheathed in cast bronze. The white terrazzo floor had swirling cross strips and bases of verde antique marble. An elevator, caged in a lattice of wrought iron, whisked visitors to the second floor courtroom.

Unfortunately, after the main post office vacated the FB in 1963, the entire first floor was converted to individual office spaces. The only remnant of the original scheme is the stairway to the second floor, next to the elevator (due to fire code restrictions, the wrought iron cage around the elevator was sheetrocked in the 1950's).

Today, the courtroom is the most significant part of the building's interior. Although the District Court vacated the space in 1975, the courtroom has remained largely intact, save for the removal of some mahogany furniture. A coffered ceiling forms a barrel vault over the entire room. The octagonal coffers follow the Roman tradition, having egg and dart borders and a delicate stucco rosette in the center. Light penetrates the room from the two storey tall arched windows along the west wall.

Originally, exposed light bulbs projected from the ceiling between individual coffers. In 1966 these were replaced with downlight cans, recessed into the ceiling. The new fixtures project a sparkling light that accents the volumes of the individual coffers and the curvature of the vault.

The courtroom is one of the best preserved turn of the century courtrooms in Washington State. Built-in furnishings (judge's bench, witness stand, jury box, court rail, etc.) along with the original mahogany furniture (attorney's and clerk's desks, chairs, etc.) are an essential part of the room's early 20th century character.

Around the turn of the century, Bellingham was isolated from the main District Court in Seattle, 85 miles to the south. Roads were poor and rail and steamship travel between the two communities made prolonged trials inconvenient for witnesses and juries. Decision was made to include a courtroom in Bellingham's new Federal Building.

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The Bellingham Court served Whatcom and Skagit counties. The Seattle judge assigned to the court and the Clerk of the Court would come to Bellingham every three months to hear cases that had accumulated in the northern areas of the State. A Clerk in Attendance managed the Court Office, adjacent to the courtroom (the clerk kept track of records and handled local business affairs of the court).

One of the early Bellingham judges was Judge Jeremiah Neterer, a native of Bellingham and a former attorney in the town. His successor, Judge John Bowen, was responsible for preserving the original character of the courtroom. The courtroom's present state of preservation may be attributed to Judge Bowen.

Trials ranged from bootlegging cases and lawsuits involving defendants of differing nationalities (the Canadian border is only 55 miles to the north), to smuggling trials and international land disputes. Many foreign immigrants to the region underwent naturalization hearings in Bellingham's Federal Court.

As transportation to the counties improved, the Bellingham court became less important. In 1975 the court moved to Seattle. Today only occasional bankruptcy trials are held in Bellingham.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the FB is its front facade, which is similar in proportion and detail to McKim, Mead and White's Boston Public Library. The New York firm of McKim, Mead and White was one of the leaders of the early 20th century return to classical architectural forms. In 1890, the firm completed Boston's new public library, a landmark building of the period.

The Boston Public Library's principal arch-dominated facade has been compared to the Biblioteque Sainte-Genevieve, Paris (designed by Henry Labrouste in 1844-1850) and San Francisco, Rimini (designed by Leon Battista Alberti circa 1450). Charles Folem McKim, however, claimed that his building was inspired by the arcades of the Colosseum in Rome. In spite of arguments concerning the origin of the design, the Boston Public Library became the exemplar of the move towards classicism; "McKim's emphasis on propriety in composition inevitably carried with it such characterological implications as rectitude, discrimination and the like... the famous elevation (of the library) provided the very touchstone to the success of McKim, Mead and White as the Renaissance firm at a time when the academic revival brought Renaissance styles to the fore."<sup>5</sup>

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The Bellingham building's principal facade is a miniature version of the front facade of Boston's landmark building. Both buildings rise from a smooth-rusticated basement level--on the Bellingham building all of the openings into the first storey are arches with radiating voussoirs, on the Library, only the central three openings are arched (without voussoirs) and the remaining windows are rectangular. Both buildings have a piano nobile with tall, arched windows--the FB has seven windows, the Library has thirteen. The circular disks above each pair of arched windows on the piano nobile are common to the two buildings--on the FB the disks are marble, on the Library they are carved stone. Both buildings are crowned by a denticulated entablature with floral cheneaus atop the cornice. And finally, on both buildings a tiled roof leads the vision skyward past the intricate cornice.

The side facades of the FB are different from the arched side facades of the Boston Public Library. The division of the FB side facades into a rusticated basement, a piano nobile with square pedimented windows and an attic with smaller windows, is typical to many 15th century Italian palaces. Only the cheneaus atop the cornice and the Mediterranean tile roof depart from Renaissance forms.

Bellingham's Federal Building is an example of a period of Federal architecture that stressed styles of quiet elegance and authority. The detailing and proportion, indeed the entire design, are especially noteworthy in this northern Washington community. The second floor courtroom is equally striking as an expertly crafted example of the turn of the century Beaux-Arts inspired design. Moreover, the central location in the CBD makes the building a conspicuous urban landmark.

Bellingham's downtown is still an active commercial district. The Federal Building is a vital reminder of the city's cultural and architectural history.

- 1 Roth, Lottie Roeder, Supervising Ed., History of Whatcom County, Vol. II, Seattle, Pioneer Historical Publishing Co., 1926, p. 564.
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- 4 Withey, Henry F. and Withey, Elsie Rathburn, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), Los Angeles, Calif., Hennessey and Ingolls, 1970, p. 260.
- 5 Jordy, William H., American Buildings and Their Architects, New York, Anchor Books, 1976, p. 348.

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