0133

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

JAN 30 1989

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Orofino Main Post Office
other names/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: 320 Michigan Avenue — N/A not for publication
city, town: Orofino — N/A vicinity
state: Idaho code: ID county: Clearwater code: 035 zip code: 83544

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
☐ private	☒ building(s)	1	____ buildings
☐ public-local	☐ district	____	____ sites
☐ public-State	☐ site	____	____ structures
☒ public-Federal	☐ structure	____	____ objects
	☐ object	1	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic U.S. Post Offices In Idaho 1900-1941

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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 ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official — Date: 1-18-89

United States Postal Service
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official — Date: 12/14/88

Idaho State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet. — Carol D Shull — 3-16-89
☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89000133 Date Listed: 3/16/89

US Post Office--Orofino Main | Clearwater | ID
Property Name | County | State

US Post Offices in Idaho 1900-1941 MPS
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Carol D. Shull — 3-16-89
Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

The period of significance defined for this property is 1900-1941. However, this period pre-dates the property's date of construction. To resolve this issue, this property will be listed with a period of significance defined as 1940-1941. Also, 1937 will not be entered as a significant date because this date corresponds with the acquisition of the site and pre-dates the construction of the property. These changes were discussed with Steven S. Stielstra of the United States Postal Service during a 3/14/89 telephone conversation.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
U.S. Post Office	U.S. Post Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
Moderne	foundation Concrete walls Terra cotta roof Tar composition other Granite

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Orofino Main Post Office is a three-story building on a raised basement. Except for the main entry which is near the corner of the building, the front facade is symmetrical and divided into six bays. The flat facade is horizontally delineated by a projecting belt course at the top of the first story and a plain frieze beneath the slightly projecting cornice which terminates the building. Vertical emphasis is provided by the recessed upper window bays which span the second and third stories between the belt course and frieze. Constructed of reinforced concrete (poured-in-place), the building's exterior is clad with cream-colored terra-cotta panels. Polished red granite frames the main entry bay and cast stone panels are set beneath the second and third story windows. Granite is also used for the entry stairs and the flanking lamp standards. The roof is flat built-up tar composition.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The flat, six-bay front facade fronts on Michigan Avenue and faces south. On a raised concrete basement, the upper stories are faced with terra-cotta panels. A slightly projecting belt course divides the first and second stories. A plain terra-cotta frieze at the tops of the windows and a slightly projecting molded terra-cotta cornice terminate the building.

The first story contains the main entry bay near the west corner and five window bays to its east. Approached by eight granite steps and a granite landing, the main entry consists of double aluminum-framed glass doors (anodized-bronze). A single-light glass transom window is set above the doors. (The original bronze doors which extended the full height of the opening have been replaced.) Polished red granite frames the flat-arched entry bay and is used for the lamp standards which rest atop the square granite buttresses flanking the entry stairs. A handicapped ramp (straight run) with metal railings extends north of the entry stairs. The window bays are unframed except for terra-cotta sills. The

[X] See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☒ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Architecture	1900-1941	Site acq.-1937
Politics/Government		Const.-1940

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Significant Person: N/A

Architect/Builder: Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect/Federal Government

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Although not yet 50 years old, the Orofino Main Post Office possesses exceptional significance on the local level as the most imposing building and the only example of its design type in the city. Further, it is one of the most significant examples of the use of Starved Classicism for a public building in the entire Inland Northwest. In its refined modern interpretation of the Classical form, the building manifests the sophistication and strength of the Federal government. The construction of the building, as the city's first and only Federal building, was a major local event--an event that marked the Federal government's recognition of the city as an important regional center.

ARCHITECTURE

The Orofino Main Post Office is a well-preserved and essentially unaltered example of a combined post office and Federal office building in the Starved Classical style (alterations include replacement of the original bronze entry doors and the addition of a handicap ramp on the east side of the steps). The most dominant building in the downtown area and the only example of its design type, the building was noted during its dedication ceremony to exceed "in size and cost the government buildings of many Idaho towns two or three times larger than Orofino." Indeed, the Orofino Post Office is the largest of the Depression-era post offices constructed in Idaho. It is significant under Criterion C.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

As Orofino's first and only federally-constructed post office, the building is locally significant under Criterion A. It represents the link between the federal government and

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Clearwater Tribune (Orofino), various articles 1934-1940.

2. Original Floor PLans, 1940.

3. Construction Progress Photographs, October 31, 1939-February 28, 1941.

☐ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☒ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository:
USPS Facilities Service Center
San Bruno, CA 94099-0330

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.46

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	11	557440	5147480
B			
C			
D			

Quadrangle name: Orofino West
Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

115' of the West 170' of Block 7 of Blakes Addition to Orofino. Northeast corner of A Street and Michigan Avenue, Beginning in the Southwest corner, then N115', E170', S115' and W170' to point of beginning.

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the site originally purchased by the federal government for the post office site.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title H.J. "Jim" Kolva, Project Manager; Steve Franks, Research Assistant
organization Institute for Urban & Local Studies date August 1988
street & number West 705 1st Avenue telephone (509) 458-6219
city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99204

sash is double-hung wood with four-over-four lights. "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE" is incised in the terra cotta between the windows and the belt course.

The second- and third-story window bays are aligned over the first-floor bays. Extending from the first-story belt course to the third-story architrave, the recessed bays are divided by flat terra-cotta piers. These piers provide apparent support to the suggested entablature which terminates the building. Dark-colored cast stone panels lie beneath the second- and third-floor windows. The sash is double-hung wood with four-over-four lights.

The east and west side facades of the main building are almost identical to the front facade. Three equally-spaced flat-arched window bays divide each side. The east side, however, contains two small windows--double-hung wood sash with one-over-one lights--in the center bay of the first story. The bay detailing and window sash are identical to the corresponding windows of the front facade.

The materials of the rear facade are the same as the front and sides; the elevation, however, is somewhat different. Divided into three sections--center and end wings--the first-story center section projects beyond the wings and the second- and third-story center sections are recessed to form a 'U'-shaped floor plan. The end wings each contain a single window bay with the first-story and second- through third-story windows are identical to those of the front and sides.

The rearward projecting central section of the first story has a single window (identical to others) on the west side. A chimney is on the east side. The rear consists of a centered loading dock with two windows (identical to others) on either side. The dock is enclosed on the east and north sides and opens to the west. A flat roof with projecting metal marquee covers the dock. A single pedestrian door is set between the dock opening and the central section.

The second and third stories of the central section are divided into four window bays, configured identically to those of the front and sides. A skylight penthouse which was originally on the first-story roof has been removed and replaced by air-conditioning equipment.

the local community and is a manifestation of the successful lobbying efforts of the community, through its elected representatives in Washington, to secure a federal building. The appropriation and construction phases of the building's evolution were important local events that were followed closely in the local press. The building, which according to the local newspaper was designed to harmonize with the natural surroundings of the site and adjacent structures, also symbolizes the federal government's recognition of the community's regional importance.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Orofino is in northcentral Idaho, approximately 50 miles east of Lewiston and Moscow. The seat of Clearwater County, Orofino is the gateway to the vast wilderness areas of northcentral Idaho. Tourism and timber provide the economic base for the community. Dworshak Dam, four miles northeast, and the Dworshak National Fish Hatchery also provide local employment. In 1980 Orofino had a population of 3,711.

The origins of Orofino date back to April of 1860 when gold was discovered on the Clearwater River by an Indian trader, Capt. E. D. Pierce. In 1861 Orofino sprang up near Pierce City at the junction of Rhodes and Orofino Creeks. The gold discoveries at Orofino and Pierce City, the first in Idaho, attracted gold seekers from California; by June of 1861 Orofino had 60 log buildings, 10 businesses, and 500 inhabitants. When rich gold deposits were found beneath Orofino, however, its buildings disintegrated and its people moved to Pierce City.

On November 18th, 1895 the Nez Perce Indian reservation was opened to whites; on the following day the second Orofino was homesteaded, by Clifford C. Fuller. In 1897 the post office in Ahashka (called the Gilbert post office) was moved to Orofino and Mrs. Lois J. Anderson was appointed postmistress. In 1898 the Clearwater Improvement Company was established (with Fuller as head), the town was platted, lime quarries and kilns (a major early Orofino industry) were established, and a branch railroad was extended to the town. In 1899 the first city hall was constructed; five years later the town's first church (Methodist-Episcopal) was built. The Northern Idaho Sanitarium and Insane Asylum was established in Orofino in 1905.

On January 17th, 1906 the City of Orofino was officially dedicated. That same year, on September 28th, fire destroyed most of the buildings in Orofino's main business section. The town rebuilt and by 1910 had a population of 384. In 1911 Clearwater County was founded; the next year Orofino's high school was constructed. From 1920 to 1930 the town's population grew from 537 to 1,078. In the early 1930s over 3,000 Civilian Conservation Corps were active in the area, developing Clearwater County and stimulating Orofino business. Orofino's population continued to grow, slowly but steadily. From 1940 to 1950 it grew slightly from 1,602 to 1,656; from 1960 to 1970 it climbed from 2,471 to 3,883. In 1973 the Dworshak Dam was dedicated after two decades of endeavor by the Army Corps of Engineers and at a cost of $270 million. In 1980 Orofino's population was 3,711.

The Orofino Main Post Office is on the east edge of the central business district. Located on the northeast corner of Michigan Avenue, the city's main east-west through route, and 'A' Street, the building faces the south. Adjacent to the east of the Post Office is the VFW building (two stories, concrete, 1951). Across the alley to the north are single-family residences. Across Michigan to the south, directly across from the Post Office, is the Masonic building (wood frame, Neo-Classical, circa 1920s). East of the Masonic building is a parking lot and a recently constructed bank building is on the northeast corner of the block. The Orofino Junior High School (two-story, brick, 1910, with WPA-constructed front addition, 1939) is in the block east of the bank building. West of the Post Office, across 'A' Street, is a single-family residence (commercial use) and to its west, a restaurant. On the southwest corner of the intersection is a used car dealership, with the main business block to its west. Most of the buildings in the downtown area are one and two story, brick. The city's other prominent governmental building is the Clearwater County Courthouse (two-story, brick, 1928), two blocks west of the Post Office.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE OROFINO MAIN POST OFFICE

On August 10th, 1934 Orofino's Clearwater Tribune reported that the Orofino commercial club was investigating the possibility of securing a federal building in Orofino to house the post office and the offices of the Clearwater

National Forest. It was soon reported that the club had written Congressman Compton L. White, the area's representative, regarding this proposal. White had responded with encouragement and the club was planning on sending an application to Washington (September 28th article).

Other local economic and construction news filled the Tribune's pages in late 1934 and throughout 1935: the federal government was spending over $5,300 on the Lewis and Clark highway as part of an experimental project to landscape and beautify roadways (November 23rd article), federal relief workers were beginning excavation on Orofino's new school building (November 23rd), tax collections in Clearwater County were increasing (December 28th), county relief rolls were dwindling due to CCC work and private employment (July 26th), and a WPA project to remodel the school gym and improve the grounds was approved (November 22nd).

1937 brought news of Orofino's proposed federal building. On September 17th the paper reported "Orofino Slated For Federal Building--Treasury and Post Office Departments Have Allocated $80,000 For Structure." Rep. White had telegrammed "Two years of effort has brought success." The Tribune gave credit to the Orofino commercial club, noting that Preston was the only other Idaho town to receive an allocation. A week later site bids were called for, with $8,000 the maximum amount available for the site. It was also noted that the exterior of the building would be designed to "harmonize with both natural surroundings of the site and adjacent structures" (September 24th article).

On November 19th the Tribune reported that the post office site inspector was in town to inspect the four sites that had been offered. The inspector stated "he found no fight in Orofino over the final location," with the townspeople feeling that as long as the building would be erected "the government could chose, without undue local pressure, the place it thought best suitable." On December 24th it was reported that a site, costing $3,500, had been selected. Construction was predicted to begin "at least by next spring." It was also noted that the commercial club had written Rep. White and Senator Borah encouraging the use of local materials (lumber and cement) and labor in the project.

Other local federal projects continued to be reported.

A "federal aid project" to build a 433.7-foot bridge across the Clearwater river was being planned (January 7th, 1938 article) and a 44 man WPA crew was working on the town's Memorial Park (February 4th).

On January 28th it was reported that the site was being surveyed and government architect L. L. Donlin was in town, "studying other Orofino buildings with a view of having the new structure conform in design with the courthouse and school." Donlin was quoted as saying "It may be two years before it is constructed." A delay was reported on May 13th when it was revealed that plans were being redrafted because the forest service needed more space than originally planned. Another delay was reported on September 9th: additional funds were being sought since $80,000 was insufficient to build a larger building. A third floor was now being considered. On October 7th the Tribune reported that, after the commercial club had written Rep. White about the delays, the Treasury Department announced that an additional $80,000 had been allocated for the federal building, which would house the Post Office, Forest Service, and offices of the Dept. of Agriculture. The Tribune wrote: "A $160,000 building to provide facilities and appointments for these public services will be a great benefit to Orofino and the whole region."

A sketch of the proposed building was published in the May 5th, 1939 Tribune, which noted that the sketch had been requested by the Chamber of Commerce "for publicity purposes." On June 9th the paper reported that plans were completed; bids were called for in the July 21st edition ("Here's welcome news many Orofino people have been anxiously awaiting"). "New Postoffice Contract Signed" was the news of September 29th. Benjamin Sheldon of Bellingham, Washington was the low bidder at $144,900. Sheldon said he would employ as much local labor as possible and that local concerns would furnish "considerable material" on the job. Work was slated to be completed by September 1st, 1940.

By October excavation work was almost completed (October 13th article). Concrete was poured on the main floor in February (February 29th article) and the terra cotta arrived and was being placed in April (April 11th article). On May 2nd the Tribune reported the cornerstone laying. An "impressive ceremony" attended by a "large gathering" had marked the occasion: the school band played, speeches were made, and a

telegram from the U.S. Postmaster General read.

Finally, on August 29th, the Tribune reported "Workmen Finish New Building." Plans for the dedication ceremony were announced on September 4th. On September 12th the paper reported that Orofino was a "beehive of activity" as it prepared for the opening of the post office that day. The paper published a history of the Orofino post office along with a large photo of the new building and gave credit to the Chamber of Commerce and Congressman White for the "sparkling new Orofino office." It was also noted that the new federal building exceeded "in size and cost the government buildings of many Idaho towns 2 or 3 times the size of Orofino." A week later the Tribune reported that the building was open for business and that over 200 spectators had attended the opening and "went through the structure inspecting it as soon as the doors were thrown open" (September 19th article).

OROFINO

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

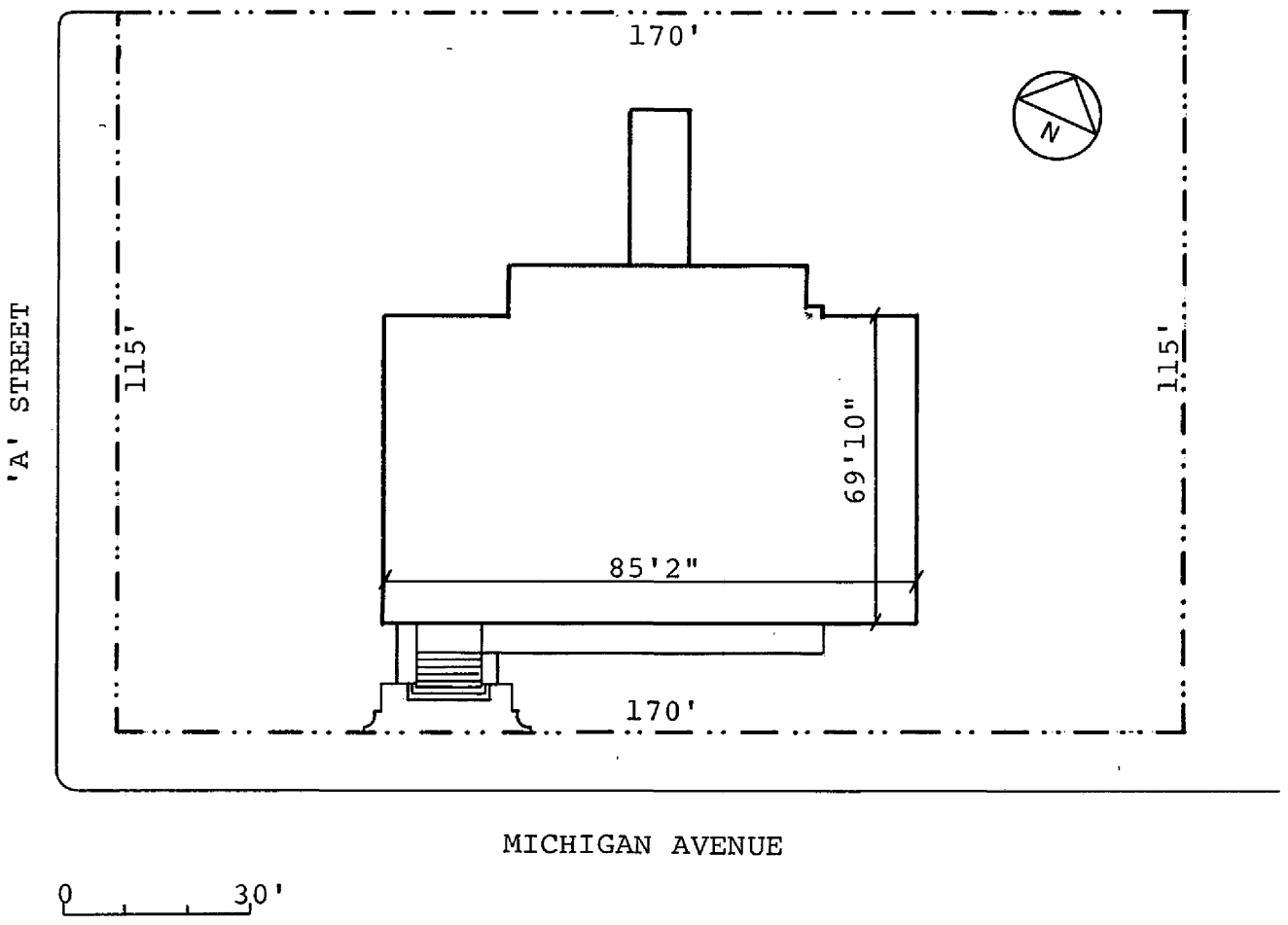
OMB No. 1024-0018
Expires 10-31-87

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 OROFINO MPO Item number 10 Page 1



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 1 Orofino MPO

The following information is the same for all the photographs listed:

1. Orofino MPO
2. Orofino, Idaho
3. Jim Kolva
4. June 1987
5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center, San Bruno, CA.

Photo No. 1 (negative #6A-7)
6. View to northeast

Photo No. 2 (negative #8A-9)
6. View to north

Photo No. 3 (negative #2A-3)
6. View to northwest

UNITED STATES POST OFFICE

USPS - IDAHO
OROFINO MPO
PHOTO NO. 1

Clearwater W

UNITED STATES

USPS - IDAHO
OROFINO MPO
PHOTO NO. 2

Clearwater

USPS - IDAHO
OROFINO MPO
PHOTO NO. 3

Clearwater Co.