

NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW COVER SHEET

Board Meeting Date: June 13, 2000

Nomination Number: 12

United States Post Office, Punxsutawney. 201 North Findley Street,  
Punxsutawney, Jefferson County

Previous Determinations, Site Visits, Etc.:

Initial BHP opinion of eligibility issued on 5/12/80. Survey form received from U. S. Postal Service for formal determination of eligibility on 4/12/84 and BHP opinion of eligibility issued on 5/22/84. Another survey form prepared in 1986 as part of Jefferson County Historic Sites Survey (NPS/PHMC Survey and Planning Grant). BHP confirmed eligibility for nomination purposes on 12/30/99. BHP returned NR form for revisions on 2/11/00. Latest copy of NR form received on 4/3/00.

Staff Comments: Since this property is under federal ownership, the nomination must be submitted to the Register by its owner, the U. S. Postal Service. Although Board review is not required, we are requesting that you evaluate the property in the normal manner. If approved, we will send the nomination to the U. S. Postal Service for processing to the National Register.

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Board Member's Preliminary Evaluation:

APPROVE: MEETS CRITERIA  A;  B;  C;  D

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE  LOCAL;  STATE;  NATIONAL

REJECT: NOT SIGNIFICANT/LACKS INTEGRITY

REJECT: INADEQUATE DOCUMENTATION

OTHER

Notes/Explain Reason for Rejection or "Other":

Board Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name United States Post Office, Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania

other names/site number N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 201 North Findley Street not for publication N/A

city or town Punxsutawney vicinity N/A

state Pennsylvania code PA county Jefferson code 065 zip code 15767

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant        nationally        statewide        locally. (       See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signature of commenting official/Title Exec. Dir. Date 6/27/2000

PA Historical and Museum Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:  
       entered in the National Register  
       See continuation sheet.

       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 \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply) in the count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously-listed resource

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/post office

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/not in use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Neo-Classical Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/sandstone

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other STONE/limestone

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Refer to continuation sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- Property is:
A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1914-1950

Significant Dates

1914

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Henry, Edward, builder

Taylor, James Knox, architect

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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

Name of repository:

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	670680	4534400	3			
2				4			

N/A See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title David L. Taylor, Principal

organization Taylor & Taylor Associates, Inc. date March, 2000

street & number 9 Walnut Street telephone 814-849-4900

city or town Brookville state PA zip code 15825

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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***United States Post Office, Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania***  
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The Punxsutawney Post Office is a two-story 1912-1914 Neo-Classical Revival-style institutional building of brick construction, resting on a raised foundation and capped with a flat roof behind a parapet gable (Photo 1). The building is oriented on a north-south axis at the northwest corner of Findley Street and Pine Street (formerly Torrence Street), in the heart of the central business district of this Jefferson County community, which is located in rural north-central Pennsylvania. The dominant feature of the building is a full Ionic octastyle portico of smooth-dressed limestone which occupies fifty-four feet of its approximately sixty-foot three-bay facade. The portico shields the main entrance, which is centered on the facade and is reached by a series of twelve steps which extend the entire length of the portico. The portico is trimmed with dentils and incorporates a coffered ceiling on its under side (Photo 2). Capping the portico is a single-step parapet gable, with the words UNITED STATES POST OFFICE inscribed into a stone centered in the pediment. Original light posts which appear in historic views of the building are no longer extant. The building is intact and retains integrity in all of the seven qualities thereof--location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The Post Office consists of two rectangular wings (Photo 3), the smaller of which is on the front side and is massed in a five-bay by three-bay configuration measuring  $\pm 60' \times 30'$ . It contains the public areas of the Post Office on the first story and offices and service areas above. The larger five-bay by five-bay sorting room wing is located at the rear of the main wing, measuring  $\pm 55 \times 52'$ . A one-story loading bay,  $\pm 13' \times 23'$ , projects from the northwest corner of the building (Photo 4); the exterior walls of this wing are pierced by overhead garage doors. The basement rises approximately ten feet above grade. A limestone water table extends along the sides and rear. All fenestration on the Post Office is flat-topped. The main entrance is centered on the facade, and features a double doorway enframed in a two-story smooth-dressed limestone frontispiece which is flanked by fluted pilasters and trimmed with a Greek key motif (Photo 5). The original doors have been replaced with modern units of aluminum and the transom area is infilled with a patriotic motif. On either side of the main door are large windows on the first story and smaller openings on the second. The five bays of the side elevations of the main wing are pierced by four windows and one blind arch. All windows retain multi-light historic sash. The five-bay rear elevation of the building is architecturally undistinguished and includes on the first story a series of windows, a single door, and a modern concrete handicapped ramp shielded by a corrugated fiberglass roof which is supported by modest metal posts. At the height of the cornice and extending around the perimeter of the building is a limestone beltcourse.

The interior of the Punxsutawney Post Office is in a generally original condition, except for the loss of the post office box assemblies. The primary public room is the lobby (Photo 6) which is located immediately inside the main entrance. It retains much of its original character, including a built-in curvilinear marble-and-mahogany table centered in the room and multi-light windows which open into the sorting room. The c. 15-foot-high ceiling of the lobby appears unaltered when observed through the present suspended ceiling grid. The Postmaster's Office is located at the northeast corner of the main wing, and retains original chair rail and picture frame molding, baseboard, and an impressive entrance door with sidelights and an imposing multi-light transom (Photo 7). Stairs lead to the second story, with Neo-Classical Revival-style fluted newels and simple balustrades (Photo 8). The second story of the main wing includes postal inspectors' offices, restroom facilities, and a locker room for the use of letter carriers. This area also includes small, private security cubicles from which postal inspectors could observe the activities on the sorting floor without being observed by the workers below. The two-story sorting room in the rear wing is modest in its detailing and

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consists of a large unpartitioned room with undistinguished finishes and several small, nondescript adjoining storage rooms along the rear wall (Photo 9). The basement of the building contains no distinguishing architectural features, serving for storage and housing the building's mechanical systems (Photo 10).

The Punxsutawney Post Office sits back approximately twenty feet from the Findley Street sidewalk, and is accessed by the stairs described above. Historic post card views show small grass areas and planting beds between the building and the sidewalk; these have been paved over. The property at both sides and at the rear of the building is asphalt-paved. No historic outbuildings have ever been associated with the Post Office.

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The United States Post Office at Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania is significant under Criterion A, for *politics/government* as the first building erected in this community solely as a federal governmental facility, a role it fulfilled continuously from the time of its 1914 completion until its abandonment by the federal government in 1998. It is also significant under Criterion C, for *architecture*, as the finest Neo-Classical Revival-style institutional building within this community of approximately 6,000. The Period of Significance for the property begins in 1914, when the new facility was opened, and ends in 1950, corresponding to the fifty-year guideline for National Register designation.

The first post office in Punxsutawney was established in 1826. Over the next eighty-five years, the community's postal functions were carried out in a variety of settings including general stores, commercial buildings, and at the Pantall Hotel, where it was located immediately before relocating to the nominated property. With the growth of the community during the coal boom years of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the necessity arose for a federal building befitting Punxsutawney's new-found stature. Under the direction of local Postmaster Henry G. Teagarden, who served from November, 1910 until June, 1915, six different sites were examined for the new building. During the summer of 1912, Congress passed a Sundry (i.e., miscellaneous) Civil Appropriations Bill<sup>1</sup> which, with the strong sponsorship of local Congressman J. H. Langham, contained funding for the Punxsutawney Post Office; it was anticipated that construction would begin during that term of Congress and that the additional \$20,000 needed for the building would be appropriated in subsequent legislation. A property owned by Dr. S. S. Hamilton was ultimately chosen and was acquired for \$20,000. The project was put out for bid in August, 1912, but when bids were opened in early September, all bids exceeded the architect's \$54,000 construction estimate and were rejected. Newspaper accounts suggest that the original specifications called for a building entirely of limestone or sandstone. The *Punxsutawney Spirit* of September 6, 1912, noted, "supplementary proposals will be asked for, with a view to making changes to the specifications that will bring the cost of the proposed building down to the desired figure." It was not until November that the contract was let to Edward Henry, of Ironton, Ohio, at a revised and negotiated figure of \$58,800.

The majority of the construction of the Post Office occurred throughout 1913. On May 28, 1914, the *Spirit* reported that the new building was open for business and included a complete description of its exterior appointments and interior finishes, describing the building as an architectural beauty with "no competitors in this section." The new facility was heralded by the community as a tangible symbol of Punxsutawney's growth and prosperity. The building's sole federal function was the Post Office, which remained in this property continuously until its 1998 relocation to a new building, built especially for the post office. The 1914 building remains under the ownership of the federal government at the time of writing; it is vacant and its future is unclear.

With respect to Criterion C, the Punxsutawney Post Office is significant as a locally-distinctive example of Neo-Classical Revival-style institutional design. Given the chronology of the bidding process, it is likely that the building was designed very late in the career of Department of the Treasury Supervising Architect

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<sup>1</sup>The 1912 Sundry Appropriations Bill followed the annual practice of funding a wide variety of federal projects in a single, sweeping legislative action; some post offices were financed in this manner, although the full extent of reliance on such legislation either by the Post Office Department or by local communities is not known.



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James Knox Taylor (1857-1929), who served in that position from 1897 until he retired to private practice in 1912. The imposing scale and the architectural design of the building also suggests Taylor's influence. During his tenure, he

promoted the concept that government buildings should be monumental and beautiful, and should represent the ideals of democracy and high standards of architectural sophistication in their communities. Taylor preferred styles derived from classical or early American traditions, and, believing that buildings should be built to last, emphasized the use of high quality construction materials.<sup>2</sup>

Taylor's designs were unique to each individual community. "Private architects worked on many of the larger projects, but the Supervising Architect produced most smaller buildings, including many of the post offices. In either case, the buildings were individually designed; Taylor firmly resisted suggestions that designs be standardized."<sup>3</sup>

The Punxsutawney Post Office is a well-preserved example of institutional architecture designed in the Neo-Classical Revival style, incorporating the classical motifs of antiquity with the imposing scale of twentieth-century governmental design. Its integrity is unimpaired, it served as an important center of governmental administration and services in Punxsutawney, and it reflects the community's position as a regional economic center in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The Neo-Classical Revival style is not a common architectural design mode in all of Jefferson County, and the architecture of Punxsutawney itself is derived more from Italianate, Colonial Revival, and vernacular sources. The Punxsutawney facility is clearly the most imposing post office in the region; the 1930s Brookville Post Office, located twenty miles to the north, is much smaller and of a vernacular Colonial Revival derivation. The DuBois Federal Building of 1925, located twenty miles to the northeast, is a Georgian Revival-style building of brick. Both the Brookville and DuBois facilities are contributing properties in registered historic districts; both, after being abandoned by the federal government, were acquired by private-sector individuals and were converted to office use.

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<sup>2</sup>Grosvenor, Beth. National Register Bulletin No. 13, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria to Post Offices*, (Washington: National Park Service, 1984), p. 3

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*,

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Lowry, Bates. **Building a National Image: Architectural Drawings for American Democracy, 1787-1912**.

**Punxsutawney Centennial 1849-1949**. Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, 1949, p. 51

*Punxsutawney Spirit*, May 25, September 6, November 21, 1912, May 28, 1914.

Smith, Darrell H. **The Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury: Its History, Activities, and Organization**. Baltimore,: Johns Hopkins Press, 1923.

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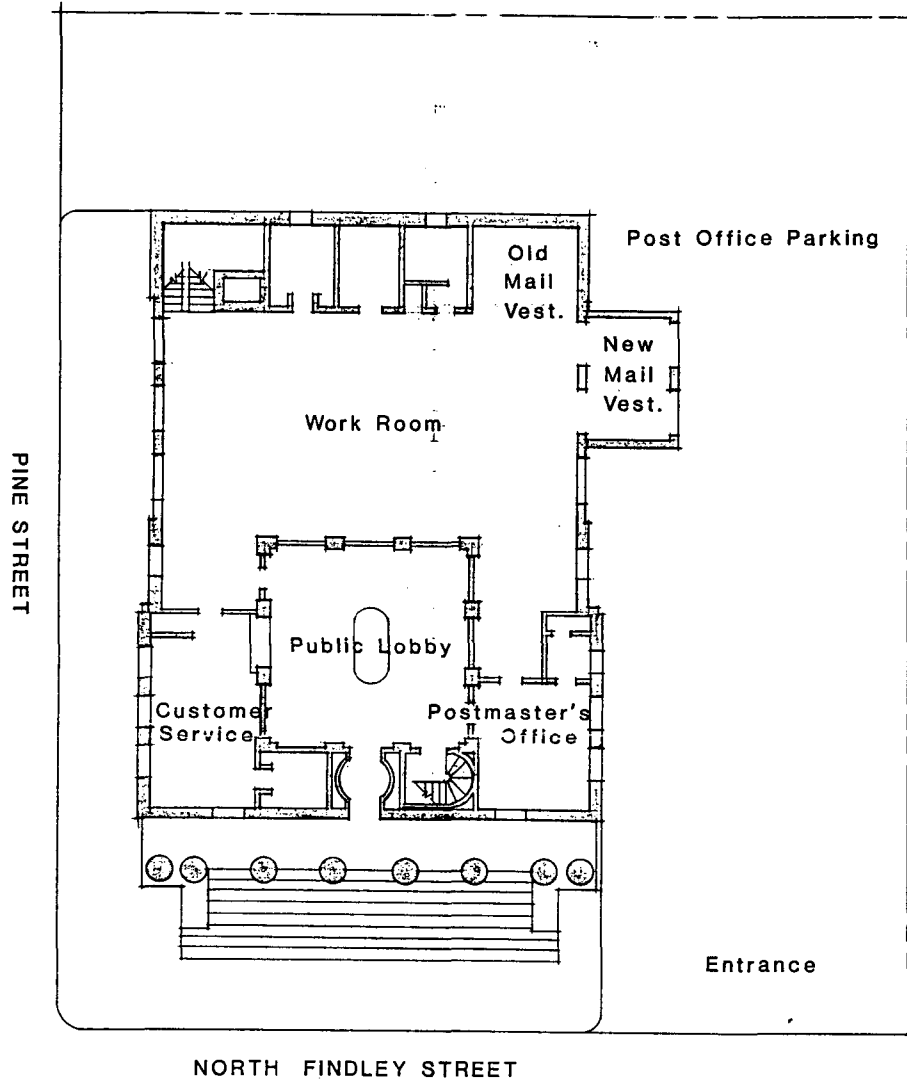
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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Being all of Jefferson County Tax Parcel Number 21-01-625, as recorded in the Assessment Office of the County of Jefferson, Pennsylvania.

**JUSTIFICATION**

This nomination includes only that property historically associated with the nominated resource, including paved driveways and parking areas immediately adjacent to the property at its side and rear, all of which are encompassed within the historic boundary of the tract acquired for the Post Office in 1912.



**SITE/MAIN FLOOR PLAN**  
**POST OFFICE**  
 North Findley Street and Pine Street  
 Punxsutawney, Pa.

SCALE 1/16" : 1'-0"

U.S. Post Office  
Punxsutawney PA  
Jefferson Co. PA  
UTM Reference:  
1760680 / 4534400

