

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

OMB 10240018

EXP 12-31-84

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR  THEMATIC NOMINATION

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

(Former) U. S. Post Office and Federal Building

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

125 S. Hancock Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Rockingham

VICINITY OF  
CODE

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8th

STATE

North Carolina

037

COUNTY

Richmond

CODE

153

**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
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Richmond County

STREET & NUMBER

125 S. Hancock Street

CITY, TOWN

Rockingham

VICINITY OF

North Carolina

STATE

28379

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Richmond County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

114 E. Franklin St.

CITY, TOWN

Rockingham

STATE

North Carolina

28379

**6 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Heather M. Hallenberg

ORGANIZATION

Consultant for

DATE

May 31, 1981

STREET & NUMBER

Archives and History, Survey and Planning Branch

TELEPHONE

(919) 733-6545

CITY OR TOWN

Raleigh

STATE

North Carolina

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The former U. S. Post Office and Federal Building, located at the northeast corner of S. Hancock and E. Franklin streets in the commercial center of Rockingham, is an exceptionally fine example of commercial Art Deco architecture, a popular style in the United States from 1925 until 1940. The post office structure was erected in 1935 in a record seven months at a cost of over \$225,000. The architect was Louis B. Simon, Public Works Branch, Procurement Division of the United States Treasury and the contractor was A. Farnell Blaire.

The yellow, brick veneered building is two stories in height with a mezzanine, shorter third story. Prominent exterior features of the five-bay front facade include unglazed terracotta trim highlighted with stylized floral and geometric motives, metal window encasements, and grill work. The decorative light fixtures with stiletto caps, which flank the now altered front entrance, are of a highly individualized design. The structure's simple cubic forms and linear surface decoration are truly representative of the modernistic expression of the Art Deco Style. Detailed plans of the exterior and interior of the structure are now in the possession of the Richmond County Planning Department. As documented in the plans, decorative metal newel posts on cubic antipodia flanking the entrance stairway were never installed or no longer survive.

Until December of 1977 the first floor interior of the structure was occupied by the Rockingham Post Office. The front lobby is enriched with a mural titled "Human Aspects of the Postal Service," a WPA project completed by Artist Edward Lanning in 1937. A Federal courtroom, judge's office and jury room occupied portions of the second floor, and a U. S. Marshall's office and temporary holding jail were located in sections of the third floor. The courtroom, today utilized as the County Commissioners chambers, retains the original judge's bench and classically derived molding and door detail. Although much of the interior of the structure has been refitted as office space for Richmond County, a substantial amount of the interior decorative scheme remains intact.

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

\_\_\_\_ NATIONAL

\_\_\_\_ STATE

 LOCAL

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1935	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

**SPECIFIC DATES**

1935

**BUILDER/ARCHITECT**

Louis B. Simon, Architect

A. Farnell Blaire, Contractor

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Edward Lanning, Artist (Mural)

The former U. S. Post Office and Federal Building, designed by Louis A. Simon and dedicated in 1936, is a striking example of Art Deco architecture and stands out among its older, red brick neighbors as being stylistically unique in the Rockingham business district. The lobby is enhanced by a WPA mural by Artist Edward Lanning entitled "Human Aspects of the Postal Service", executed in 1937.

**CRITERIA ASSESSMENT**

- A. The former U. S. Post Office and Federal Building is intimately tied with the history of the Rockingham Post Office established on February 28, 1829, over 150 years ago.
- B. The former U. S. Post Office and Federal Building embodies characteristics of the popular mid-twentieth century Art Deco Style exhibited in its cubic form, linear surface decoration, and ornamental metalwork. Although many of the interior rooms of the structure have been remodeled, the changes are not irreversible. A mural entitled "Human Aspect of the Postal Service" by Artist Edward Lanning (1937) is the front lobby and was the result of a WPA project.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Rockingham Post Office was established February 28, 1829, over 150 years ago. Since that time Rockingham has had only twenty-five postmasters; a relatively small number.<sup>1</sup>

The Rockingham Post Office occupied portions of numerous downtown commercial structures over the years. In the spring of 1932 the Federal Government purchased the post office site, a lot at the northeast corner of S. Hancock and E. Franklin streets on which years ago the A. M. Flowers Livery Stable stood. The Rockingham Post Office had been located on this Flowers lot since the early 1920s in a makeshift stucco building erected by Leak Realty. After the lot was purchased in 1932, the post office moved to the former Hinson Building on S. Lee Street, so that the stucco building might be torn down and the new brick and steel building constructed.<sup>2</sup>

The lot remained vacant until the fall of 1934, when the contract was awarded to A. Farnell Blair to build the handsomely detailed Art Deco structure. Work was started January 16, 1935 and completed in August; a record seven months. The formal dedication took place the following March 2, 1936. Though the building was in use by the Post Office by August of 1935, it was not occupied by the Federal Court until March of 1936.<sup>3</sup>

The building was occupied by the Rockingham Post Office until 1977 when it was purchased by Richmond County from the U. S. Postal Service on December 12. Between 1977 and 1979 the interior of the structure was converted into office space for Richmond County without substantially altering the interior architectural fabric of the structure.

On January 1, 1978, the Rockingham Post Office moved into a new pre-stressed concrete and brick structure located at 100 Caroline Street. The Postmaster, E. C. Slack, was appointed to the position on January 17, 1969. Slack was among the last postmasters to be appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the Senate. No postmasters have been appointed since that date because of the restrictions dictated in the Postal Reorganization Act.<sup>5</sup>

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. "A Review of the Post Offices in Rockingham for the past 124 Years February 28, 1829 to 1953," Post-Dispatch (Rockingham), May 21, 1953, hereinafter cited as Post-Dispatch, May 21, 1953.
2. Post-Dispatch, May 21, 1953.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

Lat. 34 56' 10" Long. 79 46' 23"

A	_____	_____	_____	B	_____	_____	_____
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Tract 8, Block F, Map 2, Rockingham Township, consisting of a four sided city lot measuring 150' by 190.4'.

The property being nominated includes the building and the city lot on which it stands.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

OMB 1024-0018

EXP 12-31-84

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

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Footnotes (Continued)

3. Post-Dispatch, May 21, 1953.
4. Richmond County Deed Book 600, p. 483.
5. James E. and Ida C. Huneycutt, A History of Richmond County (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Company), 1976, p. 166.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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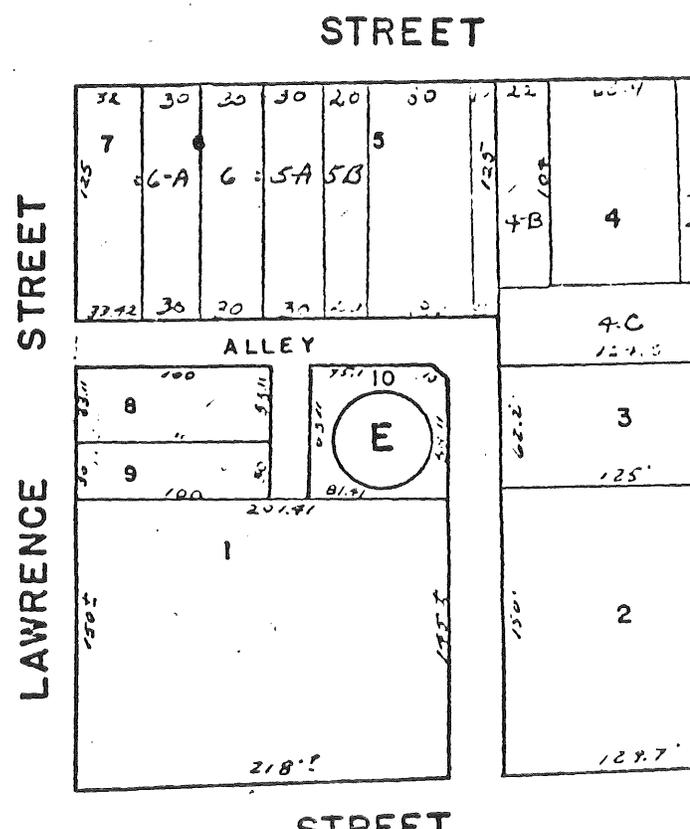
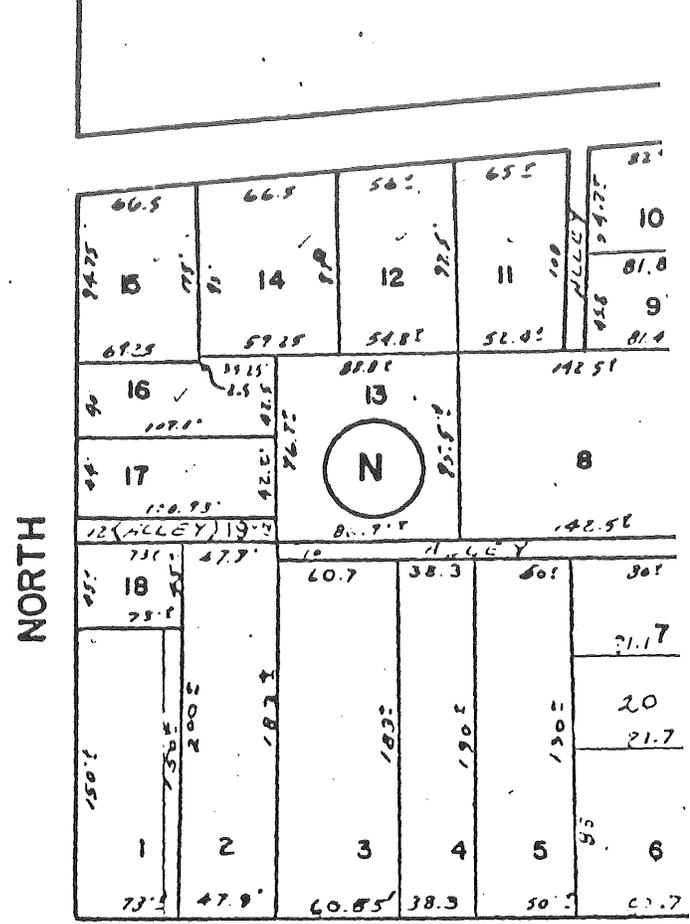
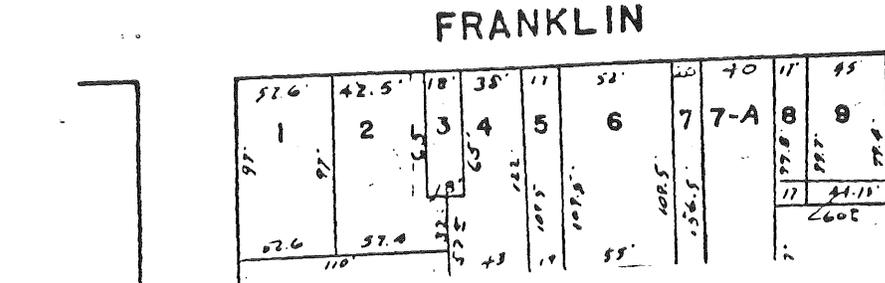
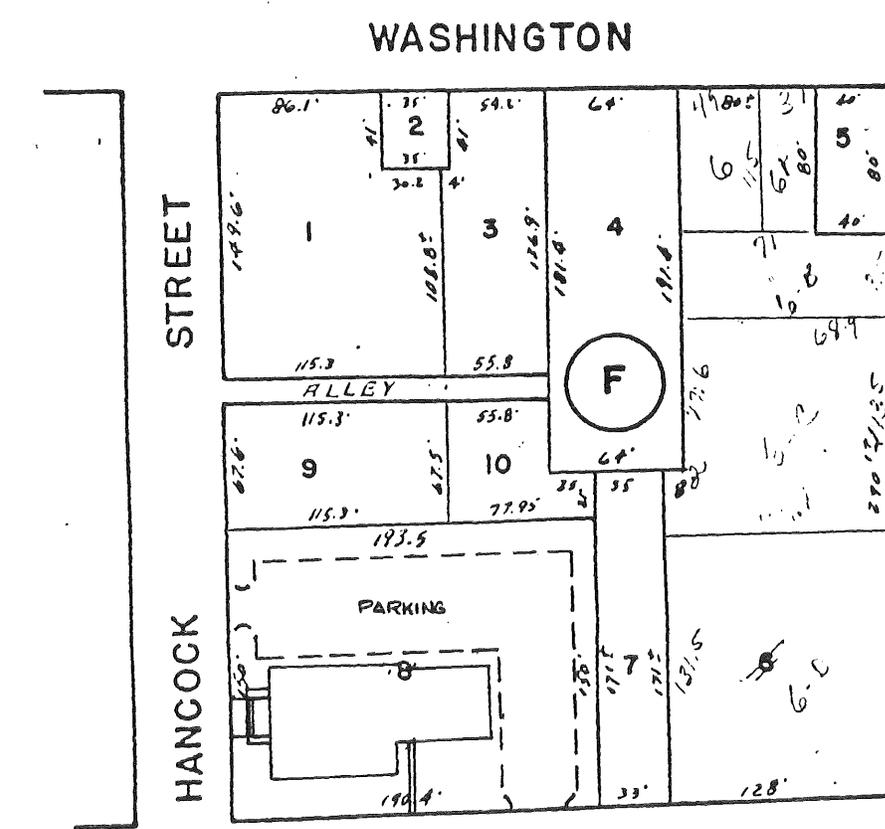
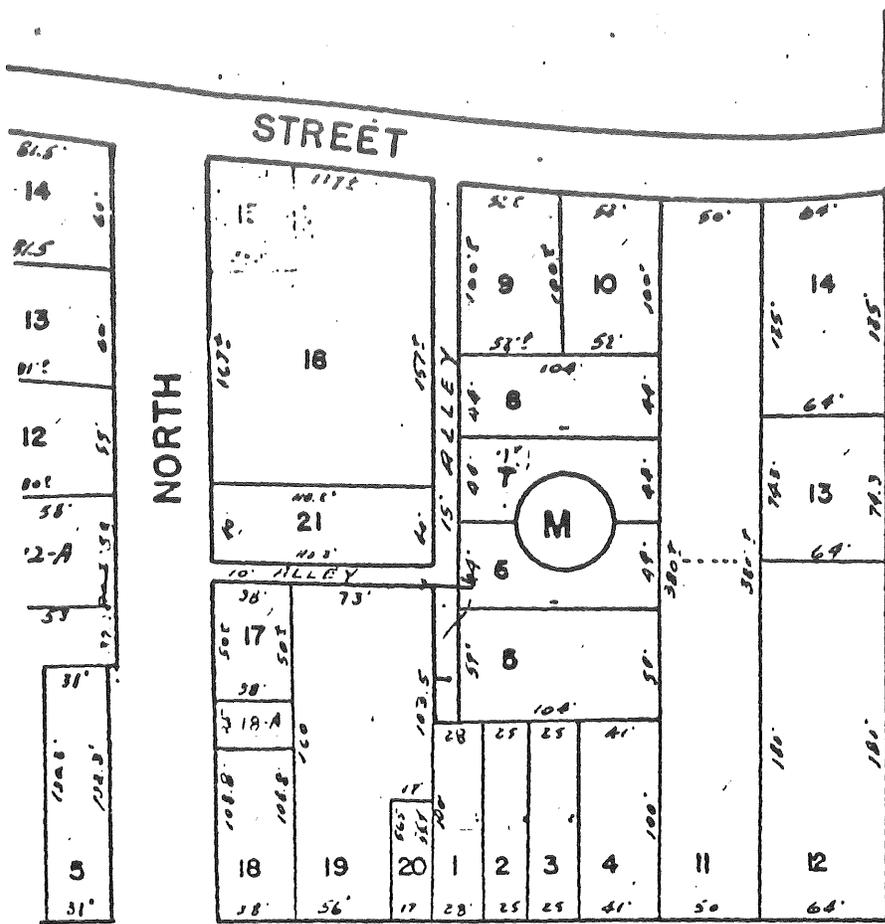
"A Review of the Post Offices in Rockingham for the Past 124 Years February 28, 1829 to 1953." Post-Dispatch (Rockingham), May 21, 1953.

"Federal Building Dedicated Monday," Post-Dispatch (Rockingham), March 5, 1936.

Huneycutt, James E. and Ida C., A History of Richmond County (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Company), 1976.

London, Isaac S., The London Papers are found in three separate collections housed at the North Carolina State Archives, the Richmond County Office of the Superior Court, and the Richmond County Library. Only the notes at the State Archives are loosely indexed according to general subject headings. The other two collections are not indexed.

Richmond County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Richmond County Courthouse, Rockingham, N. C.



FORMER U.S. POST OFFICE  
AND FEDERAL BUILDING

RICHMOND COUNTY, N.C. TAX MAPS  
ROCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP, MAP#2,  
BLOCK F, LOT 8

Rockingham Historic Dis  
 Rockingham Quadrangle  
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24  
 A Lat. 34° 56' 33" L  
 B 34° 56' 46"  
 C 34° 56' 39"  
 D 34° 56' 19"  
 E 34° 56' 08"

Bank of Pee Dee Building  
 Rockingham, N. C.  
 Rockingham Quadrangle  
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000  
 Lat. 34° 56' 24" Long. 79° 46' 22"

(Former) U. S. Post Office and Federal Building  
 Rockingham, N. C.  
 Rockingham Quadrangle  
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000  
 Lat. 34° 56' 10" Long. 79° 46' 19"

H. C. Watson House  
 Rockingham, N. C.  
 Rockingham Quadrangle  
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000  
 Lat. 34° 55' 57" Long. 79° 46' 39"

Hannah Pickett Mill No. 1  
 Rockingham, N. C.  
 Rockingham Quadrangle  
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000  
 Lat. 34° 55' 02" Long. 79

