

Form No. 10-306 (Rev. 10-74)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

UNITED STATES POST OFFICES IN NEW YORK STATE -- 1858-1943 --
THEMATIC

United States Post Office, New York City, Cooper Station, N.Y.

AND/OR COMMON

Cooper Station Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

96 Fourth Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

New York City

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

New York

VICINITY OF

CODE

036

COUNTY

New York

CODE

061

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY**☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☒ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☒ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ COMMERCIAL
☐ EDUCATIONAL
☐ ENTERTAINMENT
☒ GOVERNMENT
☐ INDUSTRIAL
☐ MILITARY
☐ MUSEUM
☐ PARK
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER:**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (if applicable)

United States Postal Service, Northeast Region, F.R.E.B.O.

STREET & NUMBER

90 Church Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

VICINITY OF

STATE

NY

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Clerk, City of New York

STREET & NUMBER

31 Chambers Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

NY

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

United States Post Service Inventory

DATE

1982

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

N.Y.S. Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Albany

STATE

NY

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Cooper Station Post Office is located at 96 Fourth Avenue at the northeast corner of East 11th Street in the East Village section of Manhattan, New York County, New York. The post office is sited in an area with residential buildings (some dating from the early years of the nineteenth century) and industrial buildings (mostly dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries). There are several National Register listed properties in the immediate vicinity including the Grace Episcopal Church Complex, the Astor Library (now Public Theater), Colonnade Row, Cooper Union, and the St. Mark's Historic District. Immediately to the north of the post office is a thirteen-story commercial building; to the east of the post office is a four-story Victorian period residential building that was formerly a school. The post office occupies almost its entire lot. The building retains its integrity to a high degree on both the exterior and interior. The nomination includes one contributing building.

Cooper Station is a three-story building faced with buff-colored brick and limestone trim. The slightly asymmetrical building is massed with a facade which curves around the corner. In the center of the facade is a two-story colonnade with seven attenuated, reeded Doric columns in limestone. This colonnade is flanked by fluted pilasters. Neither the columns nor pilasters are tapered. The columns support a limestone entablature upon which is inscribed "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE." Between the pilasters and the outer columns are the two street level entrances with their original double doors topped by transoms with Art Deco style metal grilles. The transom bar above each pair of doors supports a sculpted eagle. Angled flagpoles are attached to the facade above both entrances. The first floor windows between the columns are set above deep areaways with original iron railings. Each window has a pair of two-over-two double-hung wood sash and a two-light fixed transom. Each is set within a simple limestone enframingent. On Second Avenue are two similar windows and on East 11th Street there are four similar windows, all without areaways. All of the second-floor windows have paired two-over-two double-hung wood sash and simple limestone enframingents. The entablature consists of a molded architrave, plain frieze and denticulated cornice. Above the entablature is a brick parapet with limestone balustraded sections over each of the five principal bays. This parapet/balustrade runs in front of the brick third floor which is set back from the street facade. On East 11th Street is a three-bay-wide recessed wing with a vehicular loading dock on the first floor and three windows and a fire escape door on the second floor.

The entrance doors lead into small outer vestibules which

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(3-82)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
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are glazed from floor to ceiling. Original double doors lead to open inner vestibules where short flights of stairs with original brass railings rise directly to the public lobby. The curved lobby has a series of large outer columns finished with two kinds of red marble and ornamental capitals. The room has a buff-colored marble wainscot, marble pilasters and a floor of red and gray marble. The walls are plaster as is the ceiling with its molded profile following the curve of the room. The original teller screen was partially removed with the installation of a new counter top. The original trim around the opening to the counter is intact.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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-	<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 1936-7

BUILDER/ARCHITECT William Dewey Foster
Consulting Architect

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cooper Station Post Office in New York City's East Village neighborhood is architecturally significant as a sophisticated example of a refined Classical Revival style post office in New York State. The building is further distinguished by its sensitive siting on a corner lot; it is a rare example of a building in New York City that curves with its corner, rather than meeting the corner at a right angle. The siting is enhanced by an elegant two-story colonnade, which demarcates the corner bays of the building, and well-composed decorative details in limestone. The quality of the design and the attention paid to creating a dramatic design combine to make Cooper Station one of the most important post office buildings in New York City. The post office was one of a large number built in New York City during the 1930's as part of the public works projects instituted by the government following the onset of the Great Depression. The majority of these buildings were designed in the Colonial Revival style, which was popular for federal buildings during this period. Built in 1936-7, Cooper Station is one of ten New York State buildings designed by William Dewey Foster, a consulting architect commissioned to design these buildings by the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury. It is one of five postal stations Foster designed for Manhattan in the mid-1930's and one of his finest efforts with its exuberant design, unusual siting and well-crafted architectural details.

Cooper Station, originally named "Station D Annex," serves the East Village section of New York, with its mix of residential and industrial buildings. The post office was one of a group of twelve postal stations erected in Manhattan during the 1930's. These buildings were planned and constructed as part of the extensive federal works projects undertaken in America in response to the unemployment caused by the Great Depression. The majority of these new post offices were designed in the Colonial Revival style, but a few prominent postal stations were designed in a refined Classical Revival style with somewhat austere classical features. Most of the post offices built in New York City during the 1930's were the work of consulting architects commissioned to design the buildings by the Office of the Supervising Architect of

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New York City Post Office, Cooper Station
 New York County, New York

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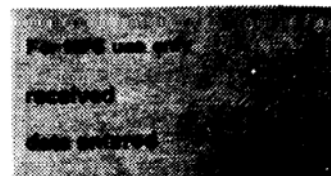
the Treasury, headed during the 1930's by Supervising Architect Louis A. Simon. A 1930 amendment to the Public Buildings Act of 1926 permitted the Supervising Architect to hire outside consultants. This law was passed as an effort to alleviate unemployment among architects. The consulting architects were required to design within a framework established by the Supervising Architect's office.

William Dewey Foster (1890-1958) received his training at M.I.T. and worked as a draftsman for several architectural firms during the nineteen-teens and early twenties before going into private practice. In 1934 Foster and twenty other private architects were hired on a temporary basis by the Office of the Supervising Architect to help with the increased work load of the office. During his eight-year tenure in Washington he designed post offices in the New York City area as well as the Weather Bureau (1940) and new State Department (1942) buildings in Washington, D.C. It has not been determined if he designed post offices in any other states, although it is likely that he did so.

William Dewey Foster is known to have designed ten post offices in New York State, all in New York City or its immediate suburbs. His post offices range from small-scale, rather simple designs such as those at Boulevard Station in the Bronx and Audubon Station in Manhattan, to extremely imposing buildings such as the Great Neck Post Office. Foster designed five Manhattan post offices: Audubon Station (1935-6) in Washington Heights, College Station (1935-7) in Harlem, Knickerbocker Station (1935-7) on the Lower East Side, Cathedral Station (1936) on the Upper West Side, and Cooper Station. He also designed two Bronx post offices -- Boulevard Station in Hunts Point and Morrisania Station (1936) in Morrisania -- as well as the Larchmont Post Office (1937-8) in Westchester County and the Rockville Centre (1937-8) and Great Neck (1940) post offices in Nassau County. All of Foster's post offices are included in this nomination.

Cooper Station is one of Foster's most sophisticated post offices. What is particularly impressive about Cooper Station is the manner in which the building is placed on its corner site. Rather than meeting the corner at a right angle as most buildings do, Foster chose to design the post office with a graceful colonnaded curve. Because of its unusual form, the building attracts the attention of passersby, enticing them to enter the building. The Rochester Post Office (Gordon & Kaebler, 1933-4, not included in thematic nomination) handled its corner site in a similar manner. In New York City, Canal Street Station's wide chamfered corner serves as a similar corner anchor which attracts one's at-

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tention to the building.

Classical Revival post offices of the sophistication of Cooper Station are rare, but include some of the most impressive federal buildings in New York City and State. Related notable New York City post offices are Madison Square Station (Lorimer Rich, 1935-7), Morgan General Mail Facility (1933-4) and Mott Haven Station (attributed to Lorimer Rich, 1936), all of which are included in the thematic nomination. Outside of New York City only a few buildings can be compared to Cooper Station, such as Foster's other major work, the Great Neck Post Office (1940), the former Rochester Post Office and the Troy Post Office (1936-8, included in thematic nomination). All of these buildings illustrate the similar attention to detail and composition evident in Cooper Station and exhibit Classical Revival design at its best.

The interior of the post office follows the curving form of the exterior. The building has the paired entrances with outer vestibules and inner vestibules with stairs that can be found on any contemporary post offices such as Cathedral Station, Planetarium Station, and Lenox Hill Station (all components of thematic nomination). The graceful semi-circular public lobby has simple, but sophisticated, ornamentation including red marble columns, marble wainscoting, pilasters, and floor, and plaster walls and ceiling.

6 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

American Institute of Architects. American Architects Directory. New York:
R. R. Bowker, 1956.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre
UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	5,8,5,2,8,0	4,5,0,9,2,8,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See attached site map

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE NA	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE NA	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

See also continuation sheet

NAME / TITLE	
Larry E. Gobrecht, National Register and Survey Coordinator	
ORGANIZATION	DATE
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation	November 1986
and Historic Preservation, Field Services Bureau	
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
Empire State Plaza, Agency Building One	(518) 474-0479
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
Albany	NY

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES___ NO___ NONE___

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ___National ___State ___Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

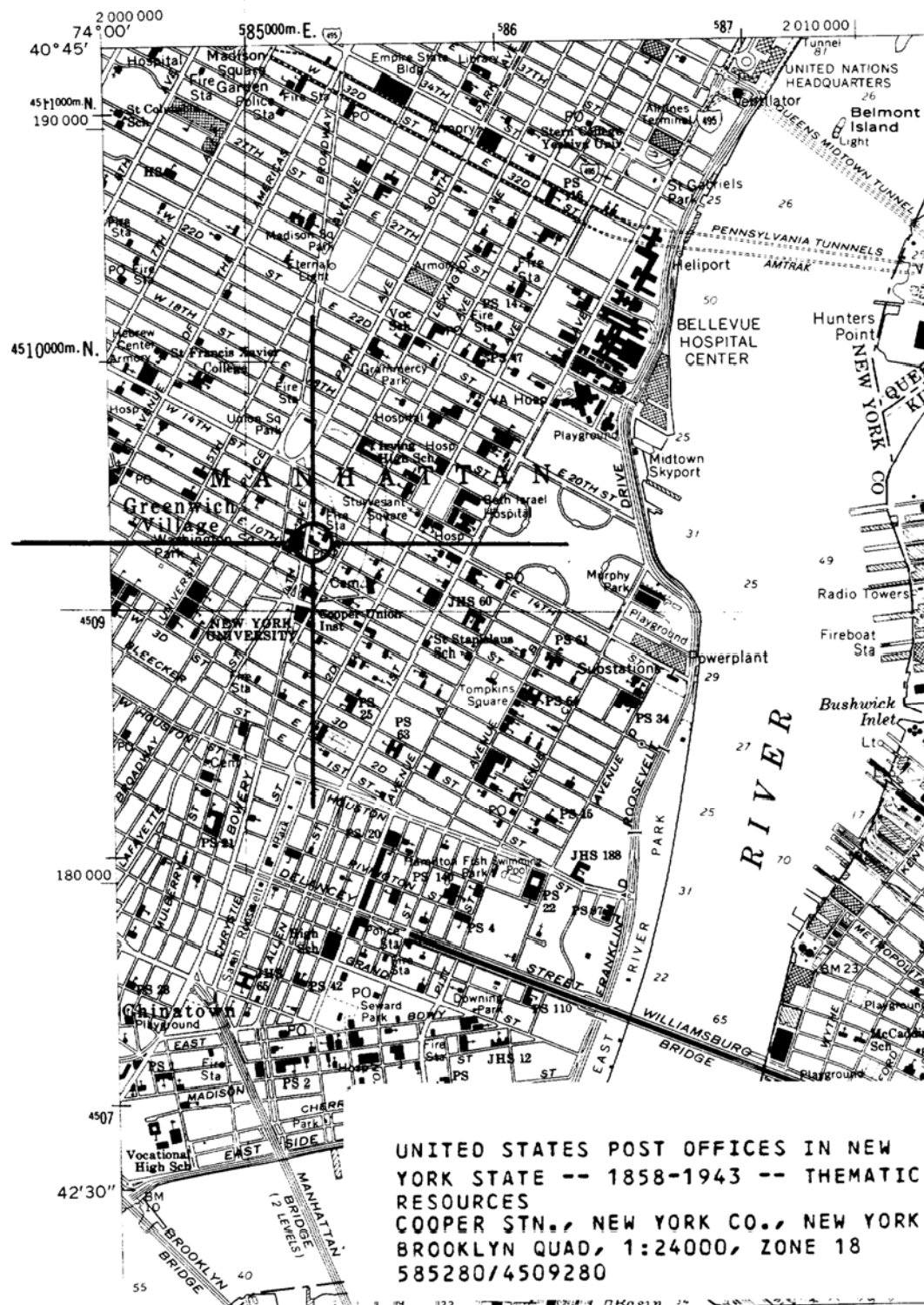
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Post Offices in New
York State -- 1858-1943 -- Thematic
Resources
Cooper Station
New York, New York County, New York
93 4th Avenue
1" = 160'
Manhattan Land Book, plate 30

NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

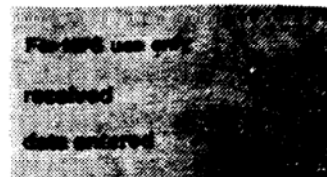


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