

71 U.S. Post Office & Courthouse

Town of Littleton, Grafton County, New Hampshire



Considered by some to be one of the grandest 20th century Federal buildings in New Hampshire, Littleton's U.S. Post Office and Courthouse is located on Main Street in the heart of the business district, due specifically to Littleton's location in the socio-economic center of Northern New Hampshire. The building was designed to convey a sense of government strength and principles at a time when the federal government had expanded their infrastructure program to help ease the staggering unemployment rate during the Great Depression.

Construction of the building began in 1933 under the direction of James A. Wetmore, the Acting Supervising Architect of the U.S. Office of the Supervising Architect, from 1915 to 1933. The U.S. Office of the Supervising Architect designed federal courthouses, post offices, federal office buildings, and other structures in countless communities across the United States. Important to note, however, is that while Wetmore and his associates at V & M Construction may have been the main architects, it was Judge George F. Morris of the first U.S. District Court who insisted on elegant details for the buildings definition.

The chosen site for the three-story building was the formerly demolished mansion of Dr. William J. Beattie, co-founder of Littleton Hospital. Architect Wetmore and his associate's chose to design the building in the Colonial Revival style, second only to the Classical style in popularity of Federal government building styles at the time. Red brick and white marble trim provide visual contrast, while Georgian Revival surface treatments, such as fanlights, keystone arches and wedge shaped lintels, provide visual interest and appeal. In the middle of the building stands an intricately-detailed cupola with arched openings. Granite steps lead the way to the doorway, while large columns stand above the doorway. Inside the building, the floor is composed of multi-colored quarry tile that is surrounded by grey marble. A black marble base outlines the lobby.

For nearly 40 years, U.S. Court was held where New Hampshire District Court now resides, and the U.S. Post Office still operates out of the building, as it has done since 1935. The U.S. Post Office and Courthouse was added to the Federal Register in 1986.

Sources:

National Register of Historic Places. U.S. Post Office & Court House. Town of Littleton. Grafton County. New Hampshire. Reference #86002251. <http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NRHP/Text/86002251.pdf>

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