

= Bristol Customshouse and Post Office =

Bristol Customshouse and Post Office is a historic two @-@ story rectangular Italian palazzo style brick building that was used as a post office and customshouse in Bristol , Rhode Island , United States . The land for the site was acquired for \$ 4 @,@ 400 . The building was designed by Ammi B. Young and completed in 1858 for a cost of \$ 22 @,@ 135 @.@ 75 . The building roughly measures 46 feet (14 m) by 32 feet (9 @.@ 8 m) and is constructed of deep red brick and has three arched openings on each of its sides and stories that are lined with sandstone moldings . The archways protrude from the side of the building and the center archway serves as the first floor with the adjacent archways housing large windows that are barred with iron . As it typical of the style , the second floor is more elaborate with a shallow balcony of iron supported by iron brackets and the paneling of the upper facade 's surmounting entablature is elaborately decorative . The sides and rear are similar to the front facade , but include blind recesses and the molding is of a browner sandstone .

The building was abandoned in 1962 and acquired by the Young Men 's Christian Association (YMCA) in 1964 . The YMCA has an adjacent structure and used the building as an ante @-@ space until 1990 . Currently , the building is used as offices . The Bristol Customshouse and Post Office is historically significant as it is an example of the Italian palazzo mode of architecture . The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 .

= = Design = =

The land for the site was acquired on April 19 , 1856 for \$ 4 @,@ 400 and constructed in 1857 for a cost of \$ 22 @,@ 135 @.@ 75 . Completed in 1858 from the design by Ammi B. Young , the Bristol Customshouse and Post Office is a two @-@ story rectangular Italian palazzo style brick building that rests upon a raised granite base . The building is about 46 feet (14 m) by 32 feet (9 @.@ 8 m) and is heated by steam . The front facade is made of deep red brick that has three large arched openings on both stories and a " greyish sandstone molding outlines the arches on both floors and caps the piers which separate the first @-@ floor arches and a decisive molding of the same material forms a belt between the two stories . " The archways protrude from the side of the building and the center archway serves as the first floor with the adjacent archways housing large windows that are barred with iron . As it typical of the style , the second floor is more elaborate with a shallow balcony of iron supported by iron brackets and the paneling of the upper facade is " understated , but the surmounting entablature is heavy and elaborately decorated . " The cornice as the visual top of the building and conceals the low hipped roof that is only visible from a distance . The sides and rear are similar to the front facade , but include blind recesses and the molding is of a browner sandstone .

Alterations to the building are evident in an old photograph , dated to circa 1860 @-@ 1869 , which shows pedimented dormers in the center of the roof , that is believed to have been an addition that has since been removed , but at an unknown time . According to Bristol , Rhode Island : The Bristol renaissance , a photo of the building dated to circa 1900 shows the pedimented dormers . A postcard that was postmarked in 1920 also shows the dormers and the adjacent YMCA building . Also present in the photograph are two chimneys on the front facade and it is evidenced that the side chimney probably arose near the front , however , only one chimney is extant in the rear . The two front chimneys were absent in a circa 1907 @-@ 1913 post card . The rear chimney was described as " apparently altered " without future explanation in the National Register of Historic Places nomination .

The 1971 nomination form noted that the then @-@ current state of the building was in a state of neglect . After passing through the vestibule , the front area served as the postal sorting rooms , office and mail boxes . In this area , the original iron columns are visible between the wood panels of the clerks ' windows . The tile floors were noted to be an alteration , but the second floor stair landing likely had its original tiling remain . The second floor was accessible via cast iron stairs with iron railings , that lead up the customs quarters that had a large room with " seven sets of iron @-@

framed windows , with heavy iron sills and interior shutters . " This room was described as " impressively large " because of its 17 feet (5 @. @ 2 m) high ceilings and 8 feet (2 @. @ 4 m) paneled door , the floor is made of hard wood and a " very plain marble fireplace is in one corner of the large room . " The supports of the building stem from the cellar where granite piers support horizontal iron beams that hold up iron columns on the first floor .

= = Use = =

The Bristol Customshouse and Post Office was used as a Post Office and Customs House , as its name implies , until it was abandoned in 1962 . Records show that \$ 1 @, @ 071 @. @ 75 in repairs and \$ 68 @. @ 36 for " mechanical equipment " was spent by the United States government between July 1908 and June 1909 . The Young Men 's Christian Association (YMCA) acquired the building in 1964 , the building was attached to a YMCA swimming pool structure and was used as an ante @-@ space until 1990 . It was remodeled and currently is used as offices .

= = Importance = =

The Bristol Customshouse and Post Office is historically significant as " an example of the rediscovery of the Italian palazzo mode of architecture after the long proliferation @-@ of the Greek Revival . " Though Young designed dozens of building for the United States Department of the Treasury , he was a master of the Greek Revival style and his designs varied throughout the years during the popularization of subsequent styles . Young also designed the United States Customshouse in Providence , Rhode Island a year prior , but its design reflected a more " classical , academic theme " in a more Tuscan style . The Bristol Customshouse and Post Office " serves as an excellent example of a style that is little represented in a town which has fine buildings of other styles and periods , and is a reminder of what was once one of the most active seaports in the northeast " .