

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

JAN 30 1989

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Nampa Main Post Office
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 123 11th Avenue South N/A ☐ not for publication
city, town Nampa N/A ☐ vicinity
state Idaho code ID county Canyon code 027 zip code 83651

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☐ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☒ public-Federal

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic U.S. Post Offices in Idaho 1900-1941 Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

United States Postal Service

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

1-15-89

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Idaho State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

12/14/88

5. 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:)

Bruce J. Noble, Jr.3/16/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89000132Date Listed: 3/16/89US Post Office--Nampa Main
Property NameCanyon
CountyID
StateUS Post Offices in Idaho 1900-1941 MPS
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Bruce J. Noble Jr.
Signature of the Keeper

3/16/89
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

The period of significance defined for this property is 1900-1941. This period pre-dates the property's date of construction and also extends into the less-than-fifty-year-old range without addressing criterion exception G. To resolve this issue, this property will be listed with a period of significance defined as 1931-1939. Also, 1913 will not be entered as a significant date because this date corresponds with the acquisition of the site and pre-dates the construction of the property. These changes were discussed with Steven S. Stielstra of the United States Postal Service during a 3/14/89 telephone conversation.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Tar composition

other Sandstone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Nampa Main Post Office is a two-story red brick building on a raised basement platform. Attached to the northeast side is a one-story brick addition (1963). The front facade of the original building is symmetrical and divided into five flat-arched bays: three bays in the slightly projecting central section and one bay in each of the end wings. Projecting from the central section is a triangular pedimented entry portico supported by four unfluted sandstone columns of colossal order (topped with early Greek Corinthian capitals). Aligned with the corresponding elements of the entablature of the portico is a molded sandstone belt course (architrave), brick field (frieze), and projecting molded sandstone cornice. A solid brick parapet with sandstone coping rests above. Sandstone is also used for facing the basement wall, entry surrounds, sills, and inset bas relief panels. The one-story brick addition is flat and contains six single-window bays and one double-window bay (all modern sash). The basement of both the original structure and addition is poured concrete. Quarry block and structural steel support the original building and the addition is concrete block. While sandstone is used for exterior detailing on the original building, concrete is used on the addition. Granite is used for the main entry stairs and landing. Wrought-iron balusters with bronze rails run up the stairs and along the landing. The roof is flat, built-up tar composition.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The front facade (southeast) of the original building is symmetrical with vertical emphasis provided by the colonnaded entry portico. The central section of the building projects slightly from the main facade. Three bays are located within this section. The end wings each contain one window bay.

Sandstone faces the raised basement wall from grade level to the water table. The first and second floors are faced with red brick in English bond. A molded sandstone belt course, aligned with the architrave of the portico,

☒ See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1900-1941

Significant Dates

Site acq.-1913

Const.-1931

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising

Architect/Federal Government

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Nampa Post Office, in its original facade, is an excellent example of federal design in the Neo-Classical tradition. Although the building has received an addition to the northeast side, the integrity of the original portion of the building remains intact. While the addition disrupts its original symmetry, it does not significantly detract from the monumental character of the original building. Distinguished by a triangular pedimented entry portico supported by a colonnade of colossal order, it is one of the most monumental and imposing buildings in the city. Although a Depression-era building, the design is strongly rooted in the Beaux-Arts and Neo-Classical tradition of the early Twentieth Century. The first federally-constructed post office in Nampa, it is a monumental symbol of the federal government and represents the government's response to an era of economic emergency.

ARCHITECTURE

The Nampa Post Office is a well-preserved example of a small-town combined post office and federal office building in the Neo-Classical design style. Characteristic of the post office designs of the early-1930s, the design is one of the final representations of the Beaux-Arts tradition before the transition to the modern design movement which ruled federal architecture in the mid-to late-1930s. In representing this transition as well as being an outstanding example of its design style, the building is locally significant under Criterion C. With the exception of the addition to the side, the building has remained unaltered since its original construction.

The building, as most all small-town post offices, was designed within the Department of the Treasury under the

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Nampa Leader Herald, various articles 1930-1931.
2. Bird, Lori A. My Home Town. Caldwell, ID: Caxton Press, Ltd., 1968.
3. Original Floor Plans, 1930.
4. Addition Floor Plans, 1962.
5. Construction Progress Photographs, August 3, 1930-June 19, 1931.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ 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 # _____

☐ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☒ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository:

USPS Facilities Service Center
San Bruno, CA 94099-0330

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.84

UTM References

A 1 1 5 33 4 60 4 82 50 2 0
Zone Easting Northing

C

B
Zone Easting Northing

D

Quadrangle name: Nampa

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Lots 9, 21 & 23; Southeasterly 80' of Lots 22 & 24; Southwesterly 30' of the Southeasterly 80' of Lot 20; and the vacated Southwesterly 130' of the alley in the block; all in Block 21 of the amended plat of the Nampa Original Townsite. Northeast corner of 11th Avenue and 2nd Street South. Beginning at the southwest corner, thence N300', E130', S172.4', E20', S127.8' and W150' to point of beginning.

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the property originally purchased by the federal government for the post office site.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title H.J. "Jim" Kolva, Project Manager; Steve Franks, Research Assistant
organization Institute for Urban & Local Studies date August 1988
street & number West 705 1st Avenue telephone (509) 458-6219
city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99204

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extends along the end wings. The molded cornice, which is aligned with the cornice of the portico, is also of sandstone and projects slightly. A plain sandstone belt course rests between the cornice and the solid brick parapet wall which is capped with sandstone coping.

The central section of the building, in which the main entry is located, is embellished with four unfluted sandstone columns (set out approximately two feet from the brick facade) which support a triangular pediment. Corinthian capitals (early Greek form) top the columns. Behind the end columns on the main facade are flat pilasters with flat Corinthian capitals. The frieze of the portico contains the incised letters "United States Post Office." The horizontal and raking cornices of the pediment are molded and embellished with dentils. A cartouche and garland in bas relief are centered in the tympanum.

The entry consists of double aluminum-framed glass doors over which is set a single-light aluminum sash transom window (replaced original). The entry is framed in molded sandstone surrounds which support a simple entablature, also of sandstone. Its cornice is embellished with dentils. An 8-over-8 light double-hung wood sash window is located on the second floor, aligned over the entry. Single window bays flank each side of the entry. Those of the first-floor are 12-over-12 light double-hung wood sash. The second-floor windows are identical to the one over the entry. Rectangular sandstone panels with a bas relief garland are located between the first- and second-floor windows which flank the entry.

The end wings each contain a single bay. The first-floor windows are identical to those in the central section. The second-floor windows are also identical to those of the central section. Sandstone bas relief panels are located between the first- and second-floor windows. These panels contain a rosette which is centered in a scroll pattern.

The 1963 wing, which extends to the northeast, is one story in height, flat, and faced with red brick. The facade line extends flush from the front facade of the original structure. Six single-window bays (casement, metal sash, 3-light, smoked glass) and one double-window bay are included in the facade. The basement wall is concrete and extends

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from grade level to a belt course that lies beneath the windows (at sill line). A molded concrete coping tops the wall. A flat brick wall, recessed from the front facade line, extends approximately five feet above the roof along the entire front facade. The roof is flat built-up tar composition.

The southwest facade (side) consists of two sections. The front section carries the character and embellishment of the front facade, while the rear section is lower in elevation and is stripped of detailing (original design). The front portion is divided into three bays which are separated by four flat sandstone pilasters with Corinthian capitals. The pilasters support a molded belt course which extends from the front facade. The cornice and parapet are identical to those of the front facade. The first-floor windows are identical to those of the front facade, as are the second-floor windows. One of the first-floor windows is bricked-in (original construction), yet retains its sandstone sill. Sandstone bas relief panels (identical to end sections of front facade) are set between the first- and second-floor windows.

The rear section is flat and slightly recessed from and lower in elevation than the front section. The facade is faced with red brick and terminated with a molded sandstone cornice which is aligned with the belt course of the front section. Four flat-arched window bays are grouped near the center of the facade. The windows consist of 30-light fixed metal sash.

The northeast facade of the addition is obscured by the adjacent building. The addition, in turn, has covered a major portion of the original facade. The observable portion includes the second-story window bays, belt course, cornice, and parapet.

The rear facade (northwest) is dominated by the mail loading platform. The concrete platform, which is covered with a flat metal roof and enclosed on the sides by brick walls, opens to the rear. The roof extends to a marquee over

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the loading area. The original building facade contained six equally-spaced windows: four have been bricked-in and two remain. The remaining windows are 30-light fixed metal sash. The loading platform extends over a portion of the addition. The remainder of the addition contains three 12-light metal sash windows. It is otherwise unembellished.

Interior materials consist of the following: basement: concrete floors (portions with vinyl asbestos tile), concrete block and poured concrete walls (portions plastered), and concrete ceiling; first floor lobby: terrazzo floors, plaster walls with formica in wood grain pattern paneling, and acoustical tile ceiling (original materials consisted of quarry tile floors, marble wainscotting, and hardwood trim); postmaster's and assistant postmaster's offices: carpeted floors, plaster walls, and acoustical tile ceiling; workroom: asphalt plank floors, plaster walls, and plaster ceiling; second floor halls: quarry tile floors, marble edging, plaster walls, and acoustical tile ceiling; and office and training room: vinyl asbestos tile and carpeted floors, plaster walls, and acoustical tile ceiling.

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direction of the Supervising Architect. While the plans and elevations are patterned from standard designs, the attachment of the Classical entry portico creates a unique architectural entity for the area. The building and design is somewhat transitional in that it was appropriated and constructed in the early stages of the Depression Era, before building design became more stripped and modernized in the interest of construction efficiency. The inclusion of the colonnaded and pedimented entry section is representative of the design philosophy of the early 1900s, and contrasts with the following Depression era buildings with their flat and relatively stripped facades. (The Caldwell Post Office, which was completed in 1932, also represents the early stage of this design transition.)

The building, when coupled with the Nampa Public Library which occupies the opposite corner of the block (11th Avenue South/First Street), provides a monumental character to the streetscape. The Nampa Public Library, also of Classical Design, was constructed in 1919 (as Farmers and Merchants Bank) and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Although it cannot be verified, it appears that the design style selected for the post office may have been influenced by the previously constructed bank building.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The building is a monumental symbol of the federal government. It was the first federally-constructed post office in Nampa and represents many years of lobbying efforts on the part of local citizens. Indeed, two decades elapsed from the date that Congress appropriated \$10,000 for site acquisition in 1913. And, although the site had been owned by Uncle Sam since 1917, nothing but frustration rose from the federal ground. World war and then a reassessment by the federal government of its building programs put off construction to the beginning of the Depression era. Though the construction of the building precedes the public works programs of the New Deal, it does represent the expedited building programs of the Hoover administration to relieve the national unemployment problem. As a legacy of this era and as a symbol of the federal presence, the building is locally significant under Criterion A.

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LOCAL CONTEXT

As with its neighboring city of Caldwell, Nampa owes its founding to the railroad. In October of 1883 the railroad constructed a water tank and pump house in what is now Nampa. The first post office was established by a Mr. Duffes in March of 1887. With the introduction of irrigation to the area by the Boise and Nampa Canal Company in the late 1880s, the agricultural promise of the area attracted thousands of settlers to the Nampa, Boise, and Caldwell areas.

Nampa's initial growth was relatively slow; in 1890 and 1900 it had populations of 347 and 799, respectively. At the turn-of-the-century Nampa's population boomed: in 1910 it reached 4,207. Nampa continued to grow rapidly in the next decade; in 1920 its population was 7,621. It was during these two decades that most of the prominent buildings of the downtown business core were constructed. Growth was moderate in the 1920s; in 1930 the population was 8,206.

The 1980 census counted a population of 25,766 in Nampa, making it the largest city in Canyon County. Nampa is located 19 miles west of Boise, the state capitol. The traditional economic base of Nampa has been agriculture, but its proximity to Boise has resulted in a rapid growth in the manufacturing, processing, and wholesaling sectors.

The Nampa Post Office is located at the northwestern edge of the main downtown core. Surrounding uses on all sides are commercial. Adjacent uses to the northeast include the Mountain Bell offices. To the east is the Nampa Public Library (former Farmers and Merchants Bank, Classical Revival, 1919, listed on the National Register of Historic Places). A service station and parking lot are located across 11th Avenue South to the southeast.

A modern office building is located across 2nd Street to the southwest. The area to the northwest is used for parking. The Nampa Historic District is located two blocks to the southeast. Aside from the Library, there are no buildings of architectural or historic significance in proximity to the post office. The library also fronts on 11th Avenue South on the northeast corner of the block. It is also embellished by a colonnaded portico with triangular

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pediment (in the Ionic Order). The two buildings at opposite ends of the block present a monumental character to the street.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE
NAMPA MAIN POST OFFICE

The construction of the Nampa Post Office was reported in the Nampa Leader Herald between 1930 and 1931. The issue of March 4th, 1930, which was headlined "Post Office Contract Will Be Let," reported that the postmaster had received notice to clear the site within 30 days. The site had been acquired in 1913, but WWI had resulted in a long postponement of the project. A \$110,000 appropriation had been approved some 18 months previously and \$25,000 was available for immediate work. There had been hope the previous spring that the project would begin, but it was displaced by higher priority projects in larger cities.

An article of June 6th announced that bids would be opened on July 11th. With President Hoover's plan for immediate construction of public works where appropriated, it was believed that work would begin soon. On July 25th the Herald reported that J. O. Jordan & Son of Boise had received the post office construction contract with a low bid of \$88,773. They had submitted the lowest of 11 bids. On August 12th, F. M. Beaudreau, a U.S. government engineer, inspected the site and stated that the building should be completed well ahead of its 420-day completion period. An article of September 5th reported rapid construction progress and that excavation had been completed several days previously. The forms (for concrete) were almost complete and pouring would begin soon.

The cornerstone laying was reported on October 30th, 1930. While this is normally an important community event and accompanied by ceremony, this was not the case in Nampa. The only speech was a workman's oath and the article was somewhat cynical:

After wasting and battling for years for a federal building, the cornerstone was laid Saturday without ceremony ... The bang of a sledge, chipping away the concrete that the stone might be fitted into place, was the only applause ... In the cornerstone was a hole in which might be placed present day history in

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order that future generations might know how their great grand dads lived, when the building is torn down. The receptacle is empty.

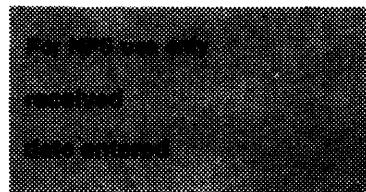
According to J. O. Jordan, building contractor, the informal laying proceeded as follows:

Ordinarily, I see a dozen politicians and lawyers every day. On Saturday I looked everywhere for a politician or a lawyer but could find neither. We laid the cornerstone according to specifications, but in doing so we had to chip away the concrete with a sledge hammer. A workman hit his finger. The resultant language was the only speech made. It is unprintable.

The post office was completed in June of 1931. Articles of the 17th and 19th in the Idaho Free Press reported the completion of the "attractively arranged two-story brick structure" and the open house held on Friday June 19th. Ned Jenness, postmaster, conducted the open house event.

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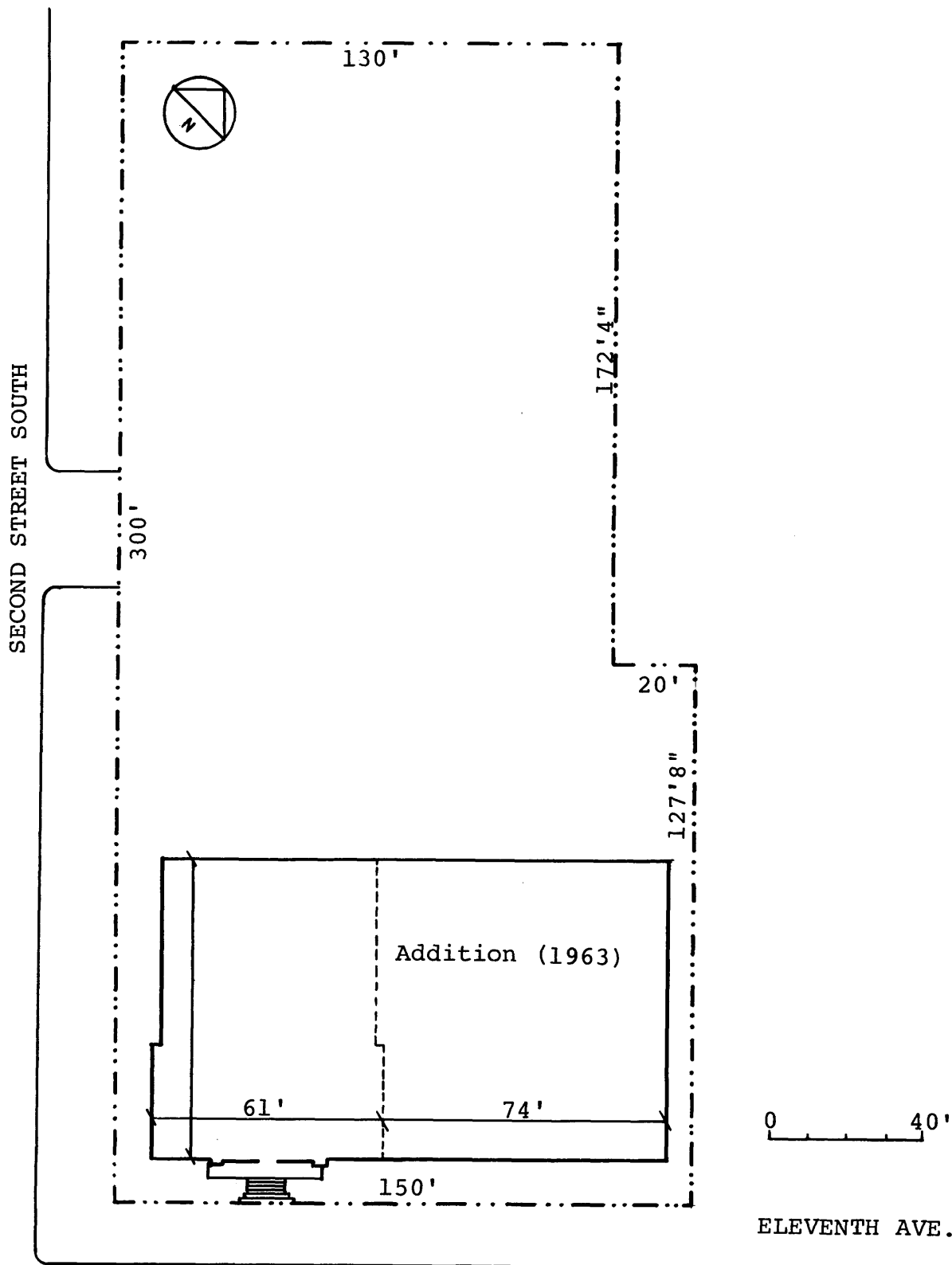


Continuation sheet

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The following information is the same for all the
photographs listed:

1. Nampa MPO
2. Nampa, Idaho
3. Jim Kolva
4. July 1984
5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center,
San Bruno, CA.

Photo No. 1 (negative #6)

6. View to north

Photo No. 2 (negative #4)

6. View to northwest

Photo No. 3 (negative #2)

6. View to southwest



USPS - IDAHO

NAMPA MPO

PHOTO NO. 1

CHAYAN COUNTRY



USPS - IDAHO
NAMPA MPO
PHOTO NO. 2

CANYON COUNTY



USPS - IDAHO

NAMPA MPO

PHOTO NO. 3

CANYON COUNTY