

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National 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 Payette Main Post Office  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 915 Center Avenue  not for publication  
city, town Payette  vicinity  
state Idaho code ID county Payette code 075 zip code 83661

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>    </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<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] 1-18-89  
Signature of certifying official Date  
United States Postal Service  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

[Signature] 12/14/88  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
Idaho State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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 G. Noble, Jr. 3/16/89

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89000134 Date Listed: 3/16/89

Property Name	County	ID State
US Post Office--Payette Main	Payette	ID

US Post Offices in Idaho 1900-1941 MPS  
Multiple Name

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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 1937-1939. Also, 1935 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.

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DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Brick

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roof Tar compositionother Cast concrete

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Payette Main Post Office is a single-story red brick building on a raised concrete basement. The building consists of the original construction and an addition to the west side (1964). The facade of the original building is flat, symmetrical, divided into five bays, and devoid of significant detailing. A centered entry bay with two window bays (all flat-arched) on either side break the otherwise plain facade. Granite steps and landing, flanked by square concrete buttresses capped with limestone, provide access to the double-door entry. The window bays immediately flanking the entry are of the same size as the entry bay. Plain concrete panels are inset beneath the sill and bas relief decorative limestone panels are inset above the sash. These two panels and one above the entry transom depict the three modes of transportation: locomotive, ship, and airplane. Narrower than the interior windows, the end windows are framed by flat cast concrete lintels and sills with a plain concrete panel beneath. A narrow belt course marking the tops of the three central bays extends along the entire front facade (including addition). The addition (west side), which is slightly recessed, is identical in use of materials and detailing to the original building. Two windows bays configured identically to the original end windows divide the plain brick wall of the addition. The entire facade is completed by a plain brick parapet, topped with cast-concrete coping. Behind the parapet is a flat roof of built-up tar composition.

**PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The original facade is divided into five bays. The entry bay is centered and flanked by a window bay of equal size on each side. These bays are recessed slightly and extend from the entry platform to the belt course. The entry consists of double metal doors with a single glass panel in each. A plain transom bar is above the doors with a single glass panel above (smoked glass, replacing original). Narrow concrete surrounds flank the doors and transom window and extend to a limestone panel, in low relief, of an airplane.

**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)

Politics/Government

Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1900-1941

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

Site acq.-1935

Const.-1937

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect/Federal Government

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

The Payette Main Post Office is locally significant in its symbolism of the federal presence and the massive public works programs that were initiated to aid communities during the Depression. It also represents the link between the federal government and the local community as well as the successful lobbying efforts of local citizens through their elected officials in Washington to obtain their first and only federal building. As an example of a small-town single-purpose post office in the Starved Classical mode, the building is also architecturally significant on the local level. The building, though developed from standardized plans and typical of numerous other small town post offices in the West, is the only example of its design type in the city. Though the building received an addition to its west side in the 1960s, the addition is consistent with the original building and with the original design, which provided for a future addition should one be warranted.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

As Payette's first and only federally-constructed post office, the building is locally significant under Criterion A. It represents the link between the federal government and the local community, and functions as both a symbol and as an agency of the federal government. The building also represents recognition by the federal government of the community's importance and permanence as well as the successful lobbying efforts of local citizens through their elected officials in Washington to obtain their first and only federal building. The evolution of the building was closely followed by Payette's newspaper, which wrote "Payette is extremely fortunate ... the new building will afford a valuable asset to the city" and described it as "a modern

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

- 1. Payette Independent and Independent-Enterprise (Payette), various articles 1930-1937.
- 2. Mills, Nellie Ireton. All Along the River. Montreal: Payette Radio Limited, 1963.
- 3. Original Floor Plans, 1936.
- 4. Addition Floor Plans, 1963.

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**

Acreeage of property 0.50

UTM References

A 

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5	0	5	4	3	0
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4	8	8	0	0	1	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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Quadrangle name: Payette  
Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lots 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5, Block 15 of Gorrie Addition to Payette, Idaho Northeast corner of Center Avenue and Ninth Street. Beginning at the Southwest corner, thence N150', E145', S150' and W145' to point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the site 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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The immediately flanking window bays are configured similarly to the entry bay. The panels above the windows depict a locomotive and an ocean steamer. Beneath the flat sills are plain concrete panels. The sash is double-hung wood with three-over-three lights (wide center light with narrow side-lights).

Extending across the front of the three center bays are the main entry stairs flanked by square concrete buttresses. The seven steps and landing are granite. A limestone slab caps the buttresses; affixed to them are free-standing bronze lanterns (painted) in a torch motif. Four aluminum railings ascend the stairs (original wrought iron and bronze railings replaced).

The end window bays extend from the water table to a line extending from the top of the sash of the interior bays. Narrower than the center bays, the sash is also double-hung wood with three-over-three lights (equally-sized and vertically-oriented). Flat concrete lintels and sills with plain concrete panels beneath provide detailing.

The materials and detailing of the original building carry to the addition. Definition between the original building and the addition is made by recessing the addition one brick width. The two windows of the addition are configured identically to the original end windows.

The west facade (addition) is flat, red brick with a concrete basement wall and concrete water table, belt course (extended from front), and coping course. Five flat-arched window bays divide the front half of the facade. The rear half is solid brick, a portion of which extends beyond the parapet of the main building. Rising only to the belt course, this portion corresponds to the west side of the loading platform. The window bay nearest the front corner is configured identically to those of the front of the addition. The other four bays are reduced in vertical dimension with the lintels aligned with the corner window. Flat sills lie beneath the windows. The sash is double-hung wood with three-over-three lights.

The east facade (original) contains five equally-spaced window bays. A rearward addition (on same plane as original

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wall) is solid brick except for a metal door near the junction of the addition and original walls. The belt course and coping course are extended from the original wall. Although the sash of these side bays are identical to each other (and the end windows of the front), the outside bays contain concrete panels beneath the sills. The three interior bays omit the recessed panels.

The rear facade (all addition) consists of the same materials and detailing as the front and sides. Five equally-spaced window bays (identical to rear windows of west facade) and a loading platform at the west end define the facade. The loading dock consists of a concrete platform enclosed on the north and west sides and opening to the east, covered by a tar composition roof with projecting marquee.

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postoffice building ... which would do credit to a city many times the size [of Payette] ... and is of a most artistic design." The building further symbolizes the massive public building programs of the 1930s which were intended to assist communities during a period of national economic emergency.

ARCHITECTURE

Although it has been altered by an addition to its west side, the Payette Post Office maintains its original design integrity. It appears, from local news articles of the day, that the addition was contemplated in the original design and would be constructed when the postal business was of sufficient volume to warrant expansion. The building was designed from standardized plans developed by the Office of the Supervising Architect to provide economies and to expedite the construction of the vast number of federal projects during the Depression. Though there are similar examples, this particular facade treatment is the only one of its type in the state. Based on a Classical box, the building is stripped of significant historical architectural detailing; its design can be termed Starved Classical. The citizens of Payette were proud of their beautiful modern building and its special limestone decorations upon its completion in the fall of 1937. The decorations lauded in the press were also standard and consist of bas relief images of an airplane, a locomotive, and an ocean liner--the three modes of mail transport. As an embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a mid- to late-1930s post office design type, the building is locally significant under Criterion C.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Payette is at the confluence of the Snake and Payette Rivers near the Oregon border. Boise is approximately 60 miles southeast. The seat of Payette County, Payette is a retail and service center for the surrounding agricultural area. In 1980 Payette's population was 5,448.

In the 1860s, a ferry and trading post, later known as Boomerang, was established on the south side of the Payette River near its confluence with the Snake River. In 1871 irrigation began and a post office, the only one between Baker, Oregon and Boise, Idaho, was established. Boomerang,



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which was almost entirely a tent town, became a trade center for a vast area (its horse racing drew entries from as far as 200 miles).

In 1883 Boomerang became the headquarters for the Union Pacific Railroad builders for two years when 250,000 ties were floated down the Payette River and taken ashore there. The name Boomerang was derived from the boom that was stretched across the river to catch the floating ties. In 1884 the railroad crossed the river and a new townsite was established on the north side around the depot. The new town was named Payette, for Francis Payette, a storekeeper for the Hudson Bay Company who was one of the first white men to settle in the territory, back in 1815. On July 20, 1883, the new town's first post office was established. By 1890 Payette's population was 591; a year later the town was incorporated.

The importance of agriculture to the region was firmly established in 1890 when an additional 10,000 acres was irrigated and experimentation with fruit, row, and field crops began. From 1900 to 1910 Payette's population grew from 614 to 1,948. With agriculture the mainstay of the economy, growth since then has been moderate and stable. From 1920 to 1930 it grew from 2,433 to 2,618; between 1940 and 1950 it grew from 3,322 to 4,032. In 1960 Payette's population was 4,451; from 1970 to 1980 it grew from 4,521 to 5,448.

On the northeast corner of S. 9th Street and Center Avenue, facing south, the Payette Post Office is one block east of the city's principal business district street. Adjacent to the north is a modern apartment complex; to the east are single-family residences. The city park is across Central to the south. The 1950s Public Library is along the east side of the park. A former gas station occupies the northwest corner of the intersection with single-family houses to its north and one-story commercial buildings to its west. A one-story brick office building is on the southwest corner of the intersection. None of the immediately surrounding buildings appear to be of historic interest.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3 Payette MPOLOCAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE  
PAYETTE MAIN POST OFFICE

"Boise Newspaper Boosts Payette & Payette Valley" reported the Payette Independent on October 24th, 1930. A Boise paper had recently reported that Payette was "the principal distribution center for all the vast tributary country," had prosperous farming and dairy industries, was a prosperous and progressive "optimistic" community of 2,000 people, and was a city "of smiling merchants." A year later the Payette Independent reported "U.S. Gov. To Spend Liberally in Idaho": "The federal department of agriculture will spend \$8,051,565 in Idaho in 1931 and \$5,928,494 in 1932 ... to improve agriculture, livestock, forestry and road conditions" (April 9th, 1931 article).

On June 2nd, 1932 the paper reported "Payette May Get Federal Building," observing that if the current public works bill passed "Payette will have an excellent start on the way for a new Post Office." In 1933 and 1934 headlines in the Independent continued to report encouraging news for the town: "Building Boom Hits Payette As Faith in Future Returns" (April 20th, 1933); "Big Apple Harvest Starts in Payette Valley Section" (September 21st); "Federal Work To Start in Payette County At Once"--125 men were to work under a new CWA program doing street and road work, drainage work, and Payette River control work (November 23rd); "Many Men Get Work Under ERA"--150 men were working under the Emergency Relief Administration doing road and flood control work and cleaning the cemetery, earning 50 cents an hour (May 10th, 1934). An article of March 29th, 1934 noted "Payette is in some measure an industrial city with fruit driers, packing plants, cannery and other industries which can only give seasonal employment. This leaves a considerable number of people who must have employment during the slack season and an energetic effort will be made to secure federal work for these people."

"Solicit Bids for Postoffice Site" read an Independent headline of August 22nd, 1935. Bids for the new federal building were requested to be turned in to Postmaster Albert White by September 5th. (No previous mention of the federal building could be found in the Payette Independent, except for the June 2nd, 1932 article, though some early issues are missing.) The building's cost was estimated at \$72,000. Nine

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bids, ranging from \$1,250 to \$11,500, were received (September 5th article); on September 19th it was reported that P.O. Site Inspector Fitzgerald was in Payette inspecting the sites and interviewing the owners and local businessmen "asking their opinion of the various sites." On October 17th the Independent announced that a site across from the city park had been selected. The site was occupied by the Evergreen Service Station and the residence of Jennie Wilson and Bert Venable; "consideration is given at \$7,000" the paper reported. According to an article of October 24th, the post office department engineer was expected "about October 28 to start the plans for the new building, as the government officials desired to start the work as soon as possible, to furnish work and assist in relieving the unemployed situation."

In January 1936 the two Payette papers consolidated and the Payette Independent became the Independent-Enterprise. On February 20th the paper reported a new WPA project to construct a new school gym and auditorium in Payette. The paper also reported post office plans were being prepared (March 19th article) and that Congressman Compton White was expediting the final purchase of the property (April 23rd article). On April 30th construction bids were requested and the paper commented: "Payette is extremely fortunate ... the new building will afford a valuable asset to the city." Another article the same day reported that Postmaster White had received the building plans and "from all indications Payette is to be favored with a modern postoffice building of concrete, stone and brick construction which would do credit to a city many times the size. The new structure will cost approximately \$75,000 and is of a most artistic design."

Before long the construction contract was awarded to the Fred R. Comb Company of Minneapolis for \$58,525 and crews were removing structures from the site (June 4th article). But it was soon reported that new bids were being requested. The previous bids were in excess of the amount available for construction; the \$72,000 appropriation had to cover site purchase, equipping of the building, cost of plans, and landscaping (articles of June 25th and July 9th). The subsequent delay was reported on August 27th, with the paper noting "Payette residents are most anxious that this work be started as soon as possible and further delay ... is not meeting with general public approval."

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Finally, on October 22nd new bids were requested (with the paper observing "the new postoffice building for Payette has been exceptionally slow in maturing"). An article of November 5th described the revised building and reported that "the building is so designed that an annex might be built on to the postoffice if an increase in the population of Payette should require it a few years from now." On November 19th the construction contract was awarded to the Comb Company with a low bid of \$53,525 (November 26th article).

On March 4th, 1937 the paper could finally report that excavation had begun and construction would start the next Monday, with the building to be ready for occupancy by October. It was also reported that the original appropriation was \$72,000 but an additional allowance of \$9,000 had been made, for a total appropriation of \$81,000, and that "extensive plans for landscaping are provided."

"Federal Building Most Attractive" read a Independent-Enterprise headline of July 8th; the shell was nearly completed and the building was predicted "To Be Show Place Of The City." The "special limestone decorations" featuring the three principal means of mail transportation were described and the paper noted "Payette residents are assured of having one of the most beautiful post office buildings in this section. Although smaller than some, the design and location will add much to its beauty."

On September 23rd it was reported work was progressing and that the building would be ready for occupancy November 1st. The basement was excavated but left unfinished; postal authorities were considering finishing the space for the County Agent's office. "Postoffice Will Move on Sunday" was the news of November 4th. Payette's new postmaster Logan Bowman was quoted as saying that patrons would receive their Sunday mail in the new building; the paper concluded its coverage of construction by predicting "Patron's ... will literally step into another world when they enter the new structure for the first time."

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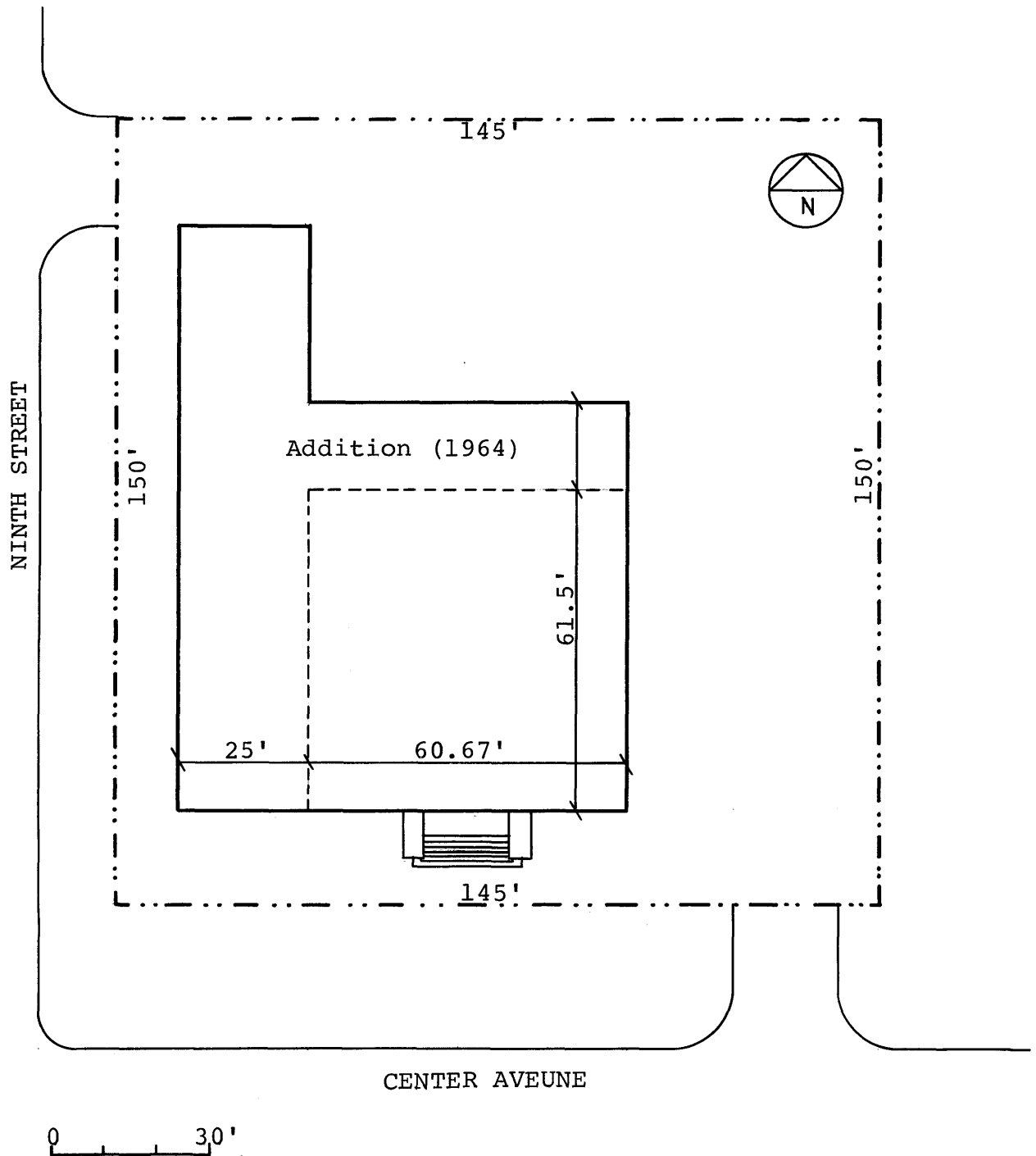
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Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received  
date entered

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

1. Payette MPO
2. Payette, Idaho
3. Jim Kolva
4. August 1986
5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center, San Bruno, CA.

Photo No. 1 (negative #8)  
6. View to northeast

Photo No. 2 (negative #7)  
6. View to north

Photo No. 3 (negative #5)  
6. View to northwest



USPS - IDAHO

PAYETTE MPO

PHOTO NO. 1

*Payette County*



UNITED STATES POST OFFICE  
FAYETTE 19480



USPS-IDAHO

PAYETTE MPO

PHOTO NO. 2

Payette County



USPS-IDAHO

PAYETTE MPO

PHOTO NO. 3

*Payette County*