

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 30 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration FormNATIONAL
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 Preston Main Post Officeother names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 55 East Oneida StreetN/A ☐ not for publicationcity, town PrestonN/A ☐ vicinitystate Idaho code ID county Franklin code 041zip code 83263

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>2</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 1900-1941Number 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

1-18-89

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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Curtis Shull3-16-89

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Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89000135 Date Listed: 3/16/89

<u>US Post Office--Preston Main</u>	<u>Franklin</u>	<u>ID</u>
<u>Property Name</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>State</u>

US 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.


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. However, this period pre-dates the property's date of construction. To resolve this issue, this property will be listed with a period of significance defined as 1940-1941. Also, 1937 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 Copper

other Cast stone, Limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Preston Main Post Office is a one-story building which rests upon a raised basement platform. The front elevation is flat, symmetrical, and Classically-proportioned. Five flat-arched bays divide the front facade: two window bays flanking a centered entry bay. The building's structure consists of concrete footings and floors, brick walls, and steel framing. The exterior, including the basement, is faced with red brick in American bond. Cast stone, limestone, and wood are used for facade detailing, which is nominal. The entry approach is formed by concrete steps and landing, flanked by wrought-iron railings and bronze lanterns. The front portion of the roof is hipped and clad with copper and the rear is flat, built-up tar composition.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The front facade (south) is horizontal in orientation and symmetrically-arranged. Five bays divide the facade: a centered entry bay with two window bays on each side. Mid-way between the tops of the bays and the cast-stone coping of the parapet is a flat, cast-stone belt course. The centered entry bay contains two wooden doors with single glass panels in each. A transom bar with two recessed panels rests atop the doors. Set above is a seven-light transom window (horizontally-oriented). The entry bay is framed by flat, fluted wooden pilasters which support a simple wooden entablature. Bronze lanterns are affixed to the facade on either side of the entry. The entry is approached by nine concrete steps and a concrete landing which are flanked by wrought-iron balusters.

Two window bays flank each side of the entry. Framed with flat cast-stone sills and wide cast-stone lintels, the sash is double-hung wood with eight-over-twelve-lights. Slightly recessed brick panels (same bond as rest of wall) lie beneath each of the window sills. Raised brass letters "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE", "PRESTON IDAHO" are affixed to the facade above and below the belt course and centered over the entry.

☒ 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)

Politics/Government

Art

Period of Significance

1900-1941

Significant Dates

Site acq.-1937

Const.-1940

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.

Though not yet fifty years old, the Preston Post Office is exceptionally significant on the state level for art and on the local level for politics/government. An unaltered example of a small-town single-purpose post office, the building's design, based on standardized plans, is typical of a number of other small town post office constructed in Idaho, the Northwest, and the nation during the Depression era. The Post Office and the mural it contains represent the efforts of the federal government, through its public works and art programs, to assist communities during a period of economic emergency. The mural is one of six post office murals completed in Idaho during this era. It represents a significant type, period, and style of artistic expression which relates to the history of its locality. Finally, the building is the city's first federal building and symbolizes the linkage between the federal government and the local citizens.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

As an example of the effort of the Federal government to aid small communities during the Depression era through its massive public works programs, the building is locally significant under Criterion A. Other Depression-era public buildings in Preston include the PWA Moderne Franklin County Courthouse and the High School (both 1939 under the WPA). While not the grandest of the three, the Post Office, in its traditional American Colonial form, does represent the link with the federal government and the successful lobbying efforts of local citizens in obtaining their first, and only, Federal building. An editorial of September 1, 1937 in the Franklin County Citizen summed up the appreciation felt in Preston for its federal gift:

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Franklin County Citizen (Preston), various articles 1937-1940.
2. "James Edmond Fitzgerald." Who Was Who in American Art. Madison, CT: Sound View Press, 1985, p. 204.
3. Hart, Newell, ed. Hometown Album: A Pictorial History of Franklin County, Idaho - Horse and Buggy Days and Early Auto Era. Preston, ID: Cache Valley Newsletter Publishing Co., n.d.
4. Original Floor Plans, 1938.

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 0.65

UTM References

A 1 2 4 2 7 6 8 0 4 6 6 0 6 4 0
Zone Easting Northing

C

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

B
Zone Easting Northing

D

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

From the Southwest corner of Sec. 23, Twn. 15S, R.39E of the Boise Meridian 278' due East, then 49.5' due North to Southwest corner of site, thence N132', E52', N48', E118', S180', and W170' to point of beginning. North side of Oneida Street, approximately mid-block between State Street and 1st East Street.

☒ 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 east facade contains four window bays: two in the front portion and two in the rear. They are detailed identically to those of the front facade. Only slight articulation delineates the front and rear portions: the front projects one brick-width from the rear and is covered by the hipped roof while the rear is covered by the flat roof. With the exception of the belt and coping courses, the facade is faced entirely in red brick

With a couple of minor exceptions, the west and east facades are identical. In the west facade two of the window bays have been filled-in with brick (original construction) to form niches. One of the niches (rear bay of front portion) is flanked on each side by one small vertically-oriented window, consisting of fixed four-light wooden sash. The other niche (rear bay of rear portion) is inset with a fixed eight-light wooden sash window.

The rear facade is faced with red brick and consists of a centered, rearward projecting loading platform with two window bays flanking either side. The windows are detailed identically to those of the south facade, with the addition of a single four-light casement window set near the west corner of the wall. A square brick chimney, which projects several feet above the building, is at the juncture of the loading platform and main building (eastern corner). The platform is concrete and enclosed on the north and east sides by red brick walls. The west side of the platform contains the open loading bay and a single pedestrian door. A flat metal roof with projecting marquee covers the platform.

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Every heart in northern Cache valley was thrilled this week when the unexpected news was released that its center would receive a new federal structure.

Whether the heart belongs to a rugged rancher in the rolling hills about us, or to an nergetic [sic] city merchant, it went deep into a feeling of appreciation for the center city.

ART

The Preston Post Office is significant on the local level under Criterion A for its association with the federal government's New Deal public arts programs. The mural, through its visual presentation, relates the history of the locality and represents a significant period and type of American artistic expression. Thus, as an integral part of the building, it is also significant under Criterion C.

The mural, "The Battle of Bear River," is located in the lobby over the postmaster's door. It was painted by Edmond J. Fitzgerald in 1941. Approximately 5' by 12', the mural is oil on canvas and attached to the wall. The mural vividly depicts calvary soldiers raiding an Indian village and setting teepees ablaze.

Edmond J. Fitzgerald, born in Seattle in 1912, studied at the California School of Fine Arts and with E. P. Ziegler. A member of the National Society of Mural Painters, Fitzgerald exhibited at major shows throughout the 1930s and 1940s, winning several major awards. Other major mural works include post offices in Ontario, Oregon and Colville, Washington, and the White House in Washington, D.C.

The mural was completed under the auspices of the Federal Works Agency Section of Fine Arts. Federal sponsorship of visual arts programs began in 1933 when President Roosevelt authorized the development of the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). This and subsequent programs were intended to provide work-relief for artists. After the demise of the PWAP program in June 1934, the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP) was established in July 1935. The Section of Painting and Sculpture, later the Section of Fine Arts, was established in October of 1934 by the Treasury Department. This was the program primarily responsible for murals and sculp-

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ture found in post offices throughout the country. Commissions were awarded on the basis of anonymous competitions without reference to artists need. In July of 1939, after reorganization of the Executive Branch, the entire building program of the Treasury Department and the Section were transferred to the new Federal Works Agency. The Section of Fine Arts-Federal Works Agency operated the program until June of 1943 when the activities of WWII shifted priorities. It was under this program that the Preston mural and murals in Buhl, Burley, Blackfoot, Kellogg, and St. Anthony were completed.

The Section, which was administered in Washington, dealt directly with artists, and selected artists through national and regional design competition. The Section sought the best decorative art that it could find for designated federal buildings. The intent of the program's administrators was that the work would reflect the themes and styles of the American scene, with a hope that it would strike a responsive chord in the general public. Although the program is attributed with having fostered an American Regionalism, art critics could never find a coherent body of work that was truly Regionalist or representative of particular sections of the American scene in the form of localized subject matter. Further, the work resulting from the programs tended to pursue an inoffensive middle ground of style and content which was sometimes viewed as producing limp platitudes rather than strong statements. This resulted from the requirement for final approval from Washington as well as compliance with local preferences. The strife or dark side of the Depression was not portrayed, but instead the nostalgic and positive events of the American Scene were depicted.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Preston, the Franklin County seat, is in southeast Idaho's historic "Pioneer Country." Approximately 65 miles south of Pocatello and 27 miles north of Logan, Utah, Preston provides business and governmental services for the local area. Agriculture, with some tourism, is the mainstay of the local economy. In 1980 Preston had a population of 3,759.

The settlement of the flats that were to become Preston began with the arrival of the first Mormon pioneers in the

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1860s. In 1866 William Head built the first home, a two-room log house. Settlement was accelerated by the northward push of the Utah & Northern Railroad; the selection of the west side of the Worm Creek as the route for the railroad's northward expansion in 1880 attracted many settlers to the area. The early 1880s also brought the first irrigation systems to southeast Idaho. In 1881 the Worm Creek ward's name was changed to Preston (after Mormon leaders objected to the word "worm"), honoring Bishop William B. Preston of Logan. In 1881 William Chapman and James Bosworth opened a general store south of the U & N tracks. Chapman was named Preston's first postmaster and the post office was established on August 28, 1882. (For a short while Chapman handled the mail in a section house near the U & N tracks; later he handled the mail in connection with his store.)

In 1888 the townsite of Preston was surveyed and platted. When Idaho became the 43rd state in 1890, what began as Worm Creek, Idaho Territory officially became Preston, Idaho, an unincorporated town in Oneida county, administered from Malad City. 1890 proved to be a big year for Preston: the town became a terminal point on the U & N Railroad, the Oneida Stake Academy moved from Franklin to Preston, and for the first time Preston surpassed Franklin in population (1,504 to 1,330). Preston's first newspaper ("The Republican") was established in 1892 and in 1894 William H. Gibbons succeeded John C. Greaves as Postmaster. In 1900 Preston was incorporated into a village. Telephones came to Preston in 1903; four years later the first electric service arrived.

1913 was another landmark year for Preston. That year Preston became a Second Class city (with J. N. Larsen as the first mayor) and it was named the temporary seat of the new Franklin county (divided from Oneida county). The first official election in 1914 confirmed Preston as county seat. In 1914 Preston experienced a building boom with the construction of a new church, jail, school, ten miles of new sidewalks, and other structures. A year later the Public Park was bought by the city and construction of the Carnegie Library began. By 1920 Preston had a population of 3,235 (approximately the same as in 1970) and, as an important stop on an interstate freight road, was firmly established as Franklin county's largest and most prosperous community.

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The 1930s brought a new high school, post office, courthouse, and Franklin stake tabernacle to Preston--the first time these institutions had new buildings put up for their specific use. WPA projects in Preston included a bandstand in the city park and improvements to the city sewer system. In 1940 Preston's population was 4,236, which would prove to be its peak. From 1950 to 1960 the population dropped from 4,045 to 3,640. Preston's population fell to a low of 3,310 in 1970 before climbing to 3,759 in 1980.

The Preston Main Post Office is on the north side of Oneida Street, mid-block between State Street, the primary business and through street, and 1st East Street. On the north side of the street, the building faces the south. Adjacent to the north of the Post Office is a parking lot and metal sheds; to the west is a one-story building (red brick, Neo-Classical) with one- and two-story terra-cotta and brick buildings to its west; and to the east is a parking lot and modern bank building. Across Oneida Street to the south is the city park and Carnegie Library (one-and-one-half story, red brick, Neo-Classical, 1915). The WPA-constructed Franklin County Courthouse (two-and-one-half story, concrete, PWA Moderne, 1939) is on the south side of Oneida Street, one block west of the Post Office. Two blocks south, at East 1st Street and 2nd South Street is the WPA-constructed Preston Senior High School (two story, red brick, 1939). On the same grounds is the 1914 Jefferson School.

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

"Postal Business Increase Gets New Building Here" reported Preston's Franklin County Citizen on September 1st, 1937. Cong. D. Worth Clark had telegraphed Postmaster Halo Hart that as a result of "a well organized series of political and civic efforts extending over the past 2 years" Preston would receive a new post office building. Credit was also given to a steady increase in postal business and the fact that the County had donated a suitable site. It was noted that the original application for the federal building had been drawn up in January 1935 by the Franklin County Democratic Central Committee with the support of the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, County Commissioners, and the Mayor. In 1936 the County Commissioners had passed a resolution wherein

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a site approved by the Treasury and the Postal Department was donated by the County. In the 1937 civic clubs and the Democratic Central Committee had again united in the effort to obtain a federal building. (The Franklin County Citizen is not available for the years 1935 and 1936; thus, this is the first mention of the post office available.) In an editorial the same the day the paper wrote:

Every heart in northern Cache valley was thrilled this week when the unexpected news was released that its center would receive a new federal structure.

Whether the heart belongs to a rugged rancher in the rolling hills about us, or to an nergetic [sic] city merchant, it went deep into a feeling of appreciation for the center city.

Other articles of the time noted that plans were being submitted for a WPA project to construct a new Preston City Reservoir (June 30th, 1937), the city had received a \$46,767 government grant to help replace the city's wood water mains with steel (August 25th), and the beet harvest was starting early (September 22nd). On September 22nd it was reported that, in accordance with regulations, a request for the post office site must be advertised and a formal offer submitted to the U.S. government. An ad appeared in that day's paper, requesting a corner lot 170 feet deep by 120 feet along the front.

On May 18th, 1938 Preston celebrated the first air mail flight out of Cache Valley (May 18th article). A crowd of 500 watched as Ralph Knapp and Floyd Hansen connected the Idaho and Utah routes at Preston's municipal airport. Also in 1938 the citizens of Preston considered building a new \$100,000 courthouse and a new \$200,000 high school (June 8th article). PWA applications were made for both projects. On June 29th the Citizen reported that a bond issue for the court house had been approved by a 5-1 majority. On August 17th it reported a \$99,000 bond issue to construct the school had passed and an \$81,000 PWA grant had been received. Another PWA grant (of \$15,750) was received in November for details on the courthouse (November 6th article). Preston also experienced a record beet yield in 1938, with factory pay in the town reaching \$127,000 (November 30th article).

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1939 brought news of more construction for Preston. A new \$85,000 Ward-Stake House was planned for Preston and the construction contract was let for the high school (March 8th, 1939 article). On May 17th a Citizen headline read "Bids Are Called On Post Office"; bids were to be opened on June 16th in Washington, D.C. The paper noted the building was to be of colonial design, made of brick, and would have a full basement. On August 2nd it was reported that work had begun on the post office; L. F. Dow of Los Angeles had received the contract with a bid of \$53,000 (the total allotment was \$80,000). Soon there was also a cornerstone laying ceremony for the Ward-Stake House (August 9th article), the new courthouse was completed (with 45 percent of the cost being paid for by a PWA grant; November 1st article) and the new high school was dedicated (February 21st, 1940 article).

On March 20th, 1940 plans were announced for a post office open house, to be held March 29th. The Chamber of Commerce was sponsoring the event, U.S. Attorney John A. Carver of Boise would give the address, and the high school band would play. On March 27th the Citizen published a photograph of the new structure with the caption "Preston's New \$80,000 Post Office." A week later the paper reported that hundreds of visitors had participated in the post office festivities; the band gave a preliminary parade and the Boy Scouts had conducted a flag ceremony (April 3rd article). In his address Mr. Carver had noted that Franklin County's diversified industry had helped it to largely escape the depression. It was also reported that under the authority of the Emergency Construction program, \$80,000 had been allotted for the project on July 28, 1939. The newspaper noted that the "... Colonial designed building with brick exterior walls has a pitched metal roof cover and generally is fire proof."

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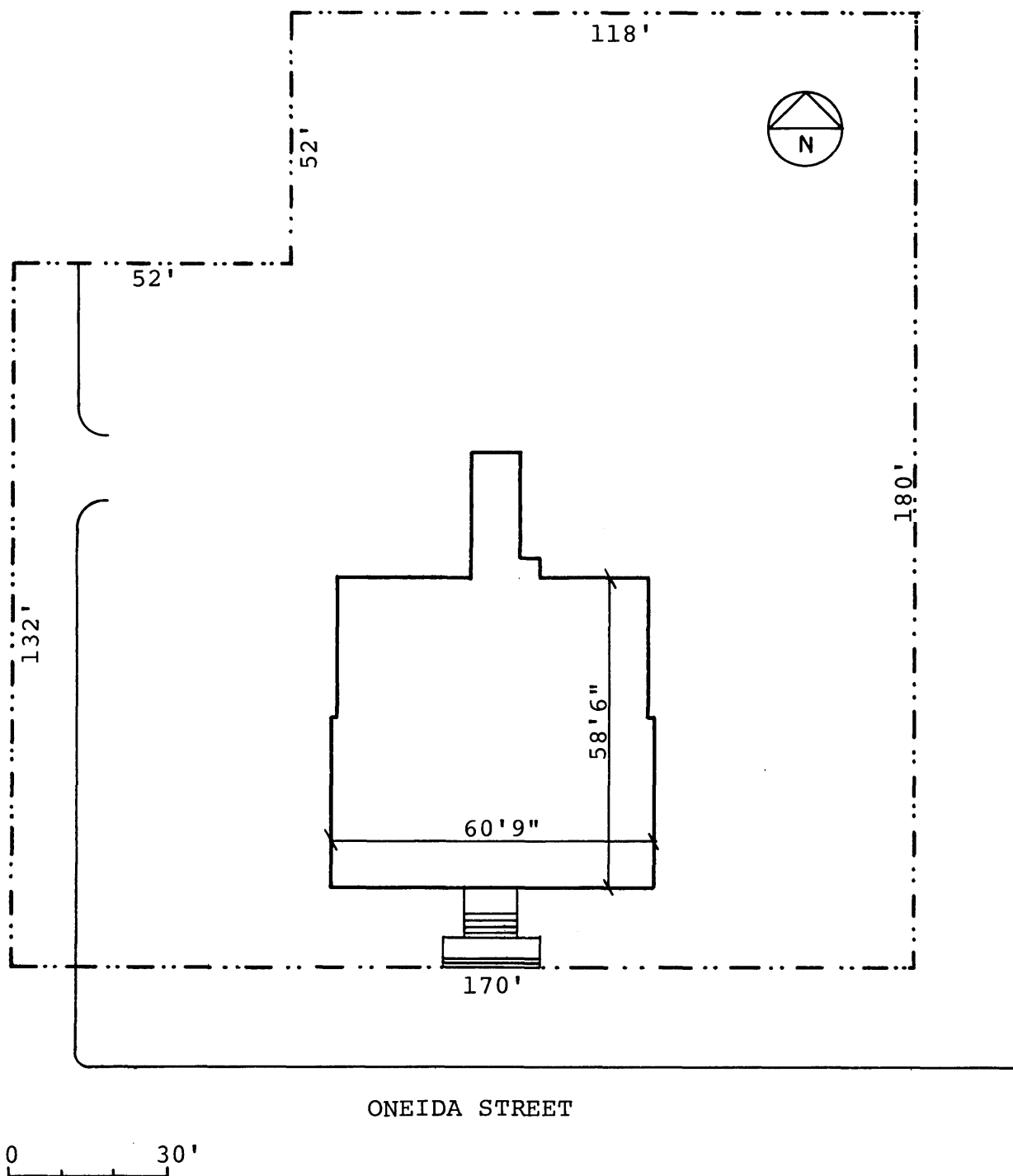
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet PRESTON MPO

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

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

Photo No. 1 (negative #2)
6. View to northeast

Photo No. 2 (negative #1)
6. View to north

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

Photo No. 4 (negative #4)
6. Lobby mural



USPS-IDAHO
PRESTON MPO
PHOTO NO. 1
FRANKLIN COUNTY



USPS - IDAHO

PRESTON MPO

PHOTO NO. 2

FRANKLIN COUNTY



USPS-IDAHO

PRESTON MPO

PHOTO NO. 3

FRANKLIN County



USPS - IDAHO

PRESTON MPO

PHOTO NO. 4

FRANKLIN COUNTY