

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89000131 Date Listed: 3/16/89

US Post Office--Caldwell Main	Canyon	ID
Property Name	County	State

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.

Bruce J. Noble, Jr.
for 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 1932-1939. Also, 1915 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)

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 Caldwell Main Post Office
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 823 Arthur Street N/A not for publication
city, town Caldwell N/A vicinity
state Idaho code ID county Canyon code 027 zip code 83605

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>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ 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] _____ 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.

Thomas J. Green _____ 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. Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 3/16/89
 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] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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 Concretewalls Brick

roof Tar compositionother Terra cotta, clay tile,
marble

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Caldwell Main Post Office, a one-story building on a raised basement platform, consists of the original building and an addition. The five-bay original facade is essentially flat and symmetrically-arranged. The slightly projecting central entry section is strongly defined by paired flat terra-cotta pilasters which rise above the parapet of the flanking wings and support a terra-cotta entablature upon which rests a triangular pediment. A semi-circular arched bay, in which is set a Classical order architrave which surrounds the doors, further defines the entry. Two semi-circular arched window bays are set in each of the flanking wings. Originally symmetrical in elevation, an addition to the side elongated the building horizontally. The addition is slightly recessed from and lower in elevation than the original building, is flat, and contains five flat-arched window bays. The basement walls, floor slabs, and footings are reinforced concrete and the framing is structural steel. Red brick faces the building; terra cotta and marble are used for detailing. The basement is faced with sandstone, granite is used for the entry stairs, and wrought-iron railings run along the edges of the stairs, landing, and ramp. The roof is flat, built-up tar composition, except for the gable roof behind the pediment which is clad with flat, red clay tile.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The front facade (southwest) is essentially flat with a slightly projecting central entry section. The original building was symmetrical in elevation, but an addition to the northwest side in 1965 elongated the building horizontally. The building rests on a sandstone-faced raised basement. Lateral runs, with seven granite steps on the south and north sides and a concrete ramp on the north side, access the landing to the main entry. Wrought-iron railings run along the edges of the stairs, landing, and ramp.

The main entry is emphasized vertically with paired flat terra-cotta pilasters flanking each side. The pilasters are topped with flat Corinthian capitals which support a

 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.-1915

Const.-1932

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 Caldwell Post Office is a well-preserved example of a small-town single-purpose post office designed in the Neo-Classical tradition. Constructed in the early years of the Depression era, it represents a stage in the evolution of federal design from the Beaux-Arts tradition of the early 1900s to the modern influence of the latter stages of the Depression. The exterior facade, in spite of the addition to the northwest side, is well preserved and maintains good design integrity. With its monumental, pedimented entry, the building clearly states the formality and sophistication of the federal government. Constructed at the beginning of the Depression and a legacy of President Hoover's accelerated building programs which were intended for economic relief, the building was the first federally-constructed post office in Caldwell. The building symbolizes the federal presence, its aid during economic upheaval, and the link between local citizens and the federal government in Washington.

ARCHITECTURE

The Caldwell Post Office, in its original facade, is a well-preserved example of federal design in the Classical tradition. Although the building has received an addition and handicapped ramp to the northwest side, the integrity of the original portion of the building is intact. While the addition disrupts the original symmetry of the building, it might be added that it was designed in harmony with the character of the primary structure. The building, with its pedimented central section and use of terra cotta and marble to articulate Classical design elements against a red brick field, presents a design character unique to the city. As such, the building is locally significant under Criterion C.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Caldwell News Tribune, various articles 1930-1932.
2. Attebery, Jennifer E. "Domestic and Commercial Architecture in Caldwell." Idaho Yesterdays. The Quarterly Journal of the Idaho Historical Society. Winter 1980, pp. 2-11.
3. Original Floor Plans, 1930.
4. Addition Floor Plans, 1964.

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 0.88

UTM References

A 111 525320 4834540
 Zone Easting Northing

B
 Zone Easting Northing

C

D

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

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 13-18 inclusive and 1/2 adjacent vacated alley, Block 5, Caldwell Original Townsite. Northwest corner of Arthur Street and Ninth Avenue. Beginning at the Southeast corner, thence N256', W150', S256', E150' 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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terra-cotta entablature. "United States Post Office" in script lettering is incised in the frieze. Rosettes, centered over the pilasters, flank the inscription. Dentils lie beneath the horizontal and raking cornices of the triangular pediment. Red brick fills the tympanum.

The entry consists of double aluminum-framed glass doors with a single-light transom window (original doors have been replaced). The entry doors and transom window are framed by half-round fluted marble pilasters with Doric capitals which support a full entablature, also of marble. The dentil band beneath the cornice is detailed in a corbel motif on a fluted field. The frieze is plain except for single rosettes centered over each of the pilasters. A leaded-glass fan window within a semi-circular brick arch is located above the marble entablature. A pronounced marble scrolled keystone and marble springers in a rosette motif provide embellishment to the arch. Milk-glass globe lanterns, affixed to the wall, flank the entryway. Two semi-circular-arched Palladian window bays flank each side of the central entry section.

The end wings of the original building each contain two window bays. The basement wall is faced with sandstone from grade level to the water table. Two windows (8-over-8 light, double-hung wood sash) are located in the basement level of each of the wings and are visible behind the wrought-iron railing surrounding the window wells. The main floor is faced with red brick. The main floor is terminated by a narrow terra-cotta frieze and cornice upon which rests a solid brick parapet. The frieze is embellished with a bull's-eye pattern on a fluted field. A terra-cotta belt course divides the cornice and parapet. Terra cotta is also used as coping atop the parapet and as plain decorative panels along the parapet aligned over the window bays.

The windows are set in semi-circular brick arches. A pronounced scrolled keystone of marble completes the arches. The bottoms of the windows are framed with terra-cotta sills; beneath the sills are molded terra-cotta panels. The window sash is wood with a fixed upper section and hung 15-light lower section. The upper section consists of 10 square lights and 15 arched lights formed by extending the muntins in interlocking arches (Palladian motif).

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The 1965 addition to the northwest side is slightly recessed from the original facade and flat. The facade is finished in red brick and topped with a molded concrete cornice which carries the same design as the cornice of the original facade. Five flat-arched window bays are set in the facade. The windows consist of 8-over-12 light, double-hung wood sash. Molded concrete sills and panels, identical to those of the original facade, are set beneath the windows. It might be added that although the addition upsets the symmetry of the original design, it has been sensitively executed and does not significantly detract from the original design.

The side facade (southeast) is flat and faced with red brick. As with the front facade, sandstone faces the exposed basement wall and terra cotta is used for the frieze and cornice which terminate the main floor and for the coping and decorative panels along the brick parapet. The panels are plain and aligned over the window bays. A single semi-circular arched window bay identical to those of the front facade is located in the front section of the facade.

Five equally-spaced window bays are located in the main section of the facade, and the rear section is windowless. These window bays are flat-arched and contain 30-light metal sash. Vertically-aligned brick defines the arches and the sills are terra cotta. The rearward extension of the mail loading platform is faced with red brick and contains a pedestrian door (metal) and loading door (wood panel). The roof is flat with a metal marquee that extends rearward over the loading area. The roof line is also lower than the wall of the main facade.

The rear facade consists of the loading platform in the eastern half and a flat brick wall with five window bays in the western half. The frieze, cornice, and parapet of the front and side facades also extends along the rear facade. The windows are fixed 10-light metal sash.

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As with most small town post offices, the Caldwell building was designed within the Department of the Treasury under the direction of the Supervising Architect. The plans and elevations are patterned from standard designs. 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 pedimented entry section is reminiscent Beaux-Arts design philosophy of the early 1900s, while the remainder of the building is more typical of the future Depression era buildings with its flat, relatively stripped facade. (The Nampa Post office, which was completed in 1931, also represents the early stage of this design transition.)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

As Caldwell's first and only federally-constructed post office and a legacy of the efforts of the Hoover administration to relieve unemployment during the early-Depression era, the building is locally significant under Criterion A. The building serves as a monumental symbol of the federal government and its recognition of the community's regional importance. Though preceding the massive public works programs of the New Deal, it, nonetheless, is an example of the 1930s relief programs which were intended to assist communities during a period of national economic emergency. Construction of the building was actually allocated prior to the onset of the Depression as part of an extensive public building program that had been approved in 1926. The Depression, however, resulted in the acceleration of the program's implementation.

Although the Depression may have resulted in the acceleration of the Caldwell building in the mind of the federal government, the citizens of Caldwell had waited nearly two decades for its transition from words to brick. A site had been appropriated in 1913 and owned by Uncle Sam since 1915, but World War I and the reassessment of federal building programs prior to the 1926 Act had withheld a building. It was not until 1930 that the work of city boosters seemed to bear fruit, when the appropriation for the building was announced. Finally, in 1932, when the "beautiful new post office" was completed, the worth of the city in the eyes of the federal government was fully recognized and the work

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begun two decades before actually rewarded.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Caldwell, the county seat of Canyon County, is located 26 miles west of Boise, the Idaho state capitol. The estimated 1983 population for Caldwell was 18,595, with 86,829 in Canyon County. Caldwell is the home of the College of Idaho and provides services to the surrounding rich agricultural area.

Caldwell was settled in 1883 on a town site established by the Oregon Land Improvement Company, which had foreseen the growth potential of a town located on the Oregon Short Line Company railroad route. Caldwell became a supply center for the surrounding towns, farms, ranches, and mining camps.

In 1883 the first Caldwell post office was established, replacing the Dixie Post Office, located two miles west. T. W. Danielson was the first postmaster. Upon the creation of Canyon County in 1891, Caldwell was designated as county seat. The 1890 census counted 779 residents in the city. The growth during the next decade was modest; the 1900 population increased to only 997. The development of local irrigation projects and the expanding agricultural base, however, then set the stage for a tremendous period of growth for the city. Many of Caldwell's significant downtown buildings were constructed in the first two decades of the century. Caldwell's population boomed, to 3,543 in 1910 and to 5,106 in 1920. Growth leveled in the 1920s; the 1930 census showed that the city's population had declined slightly, to 4,974.

The Caldwell Post Office is located on Arthur Street, one block off the main shopping district of the city. The surrounding land uses are commercial. Trolley Square, a collection of specialty shops, and a used car lot are located in the block to the southeast across 9th Avenue. Commercial uses, including a sporting goods shop, parking lot, and bank building, are located across Arthur Street to the southwest. The buildings adjacent to the northwest side of the post office include the Elks Building (1930, two-story brick), Braun Studio, and Duke's Pawn Shop which is housed in the two-story Union Block (1907). A parking lot is located to the northeast of the post office, with commercial uses across Main Street.

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The post office is located one-half block from the Caldwell Historic District which includes the previously mentioned Union Block. The post office and adjacent Elks Building were inventoried and included within the original district boundaries, which were subsequently reduced.

LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CALDWELL MAIN POST OFFICE

The construction of the Caldwell Post Office was reported in the Caldwell News Tribune between 1930 and 1932. An article of January 16th, 1930 reported the growth of the local post office and that the 1929 postal receipts had increased over those of 1928 by 4%. The Caldwell Post Office had obtained first class status in 1927. The article also raised the possibility of a federally-constructed post office in Caldwell in conjunction with President Hoover's request for increased federal building programs. On February 3rd, 1930, the opening of the new \$55,000 Elks Building was reported (located adjacent to the existing post office).

An article of April 24th reported that the Budget Bureau had recommended the appropriation of \$110,000 for a new post office as related in a telegram from Congressman Burton French. Thus, construction of a new post office seemed a certainty. In addition, the federal government already owned a site next to the new Elks Building. The article also indicated that the federal building program was intended to stimulate local economies as an antidote for the economic disturbance growing out of the Wall Street collapse of 1929.

On June 12th the Tribune reported that the construction of Caldwell's new post office was growing more certain. The Caldwell project was included in the \$66,200,000 Deficiency Appropriation Bill. The purpose of the bill was to meet deficiencies and to provide additional appropriations for the fiscal years ending June 30, 1930 and June 30, 1931. "Increase in government appropriations for this year come about through President Hoover's program of government building, inaugurated with the idea of furnishing employment to many men that might be out of work." An article of December 15th reported that the drawings for the new building were

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almost ready. It was expected that bids would be called in March. Delays had resulted from the enormous volume of work that had swamped the Supervising Architect's staff.

An article of January 8th, 1931 reported that post office receipts had again grown, and for the first time exceeded \$50,000. On January 26th it was reported that the post office construction bids would be opened on March 6th. The arrival of the building's plan was announced on January 29th. The article described the fine building with its "Classic" entrance of two Corinthian columns and the free use of marble. As reported on March 9th, an Omaha contractor, Walter Peterson, had submitted a low bid of \$76,719 to receive the contract. Work would start shortly.

On April 9th, it was reported that the contractor had received notice to begin construction. Peterson arrived in Caldwell during the week of April 23rd to gather materials and survey the site. An article of April 30th reported that the site had been fenced and that its use as a "favored" local downtown parking spot was ended. Work began in earnest in July, after a delay in the steel shipment from Seattle caused a temporary halt in construction. On August 10th an article reported that the brick masons were commencing work on the walls.

The Tribune reported on March 31, 1932 that the post office was projected to be completed by May. Postmaster J. B. Gowen was of the opinion that it would be opened by the middle of the month. The plastering was almost completed and the marble wainscoting and tile floors were next on the schedule for completion. It was reported on May 2nd that W. A. Newman, district engineer for the federal government, had inspected and accepted "Caldwell's beautiful new post office." The article further stated that it was one of the most beautiful buildings in the city. Articles of May 16th and May 23rd announced the dedication ceremonies planned to take place on Friday, May 27th.

The dedication ceremonies were reported on May 30th in an article captioned "Development of City Basis of Post Office." Thousands of area citizens viewed the new building. City Attorney Stewart S. Maxey stated in his address "New buildings such as this, are not erected by the federal gov-

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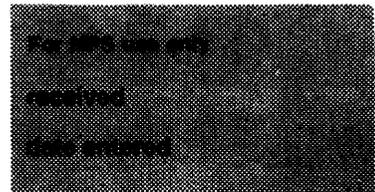
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ernment unless and until the town has proven itself worthy thereof and until the postal service has reached a high state of perfection." Mayor Fred Lilly acted as chairman for the ceremonies. "America" was sung by those present with music provided by the local band. Postmaster Gowen provided a brief history of the Caldwell post office. Harold Peterson, the building contractor, stated that \$30,000 had been spent on local labor and materials. He further stated that material from 21 states was incorporated in the construction--from Connecticut on the east to California on the west. A dance at the adjacent Elks Building followed.

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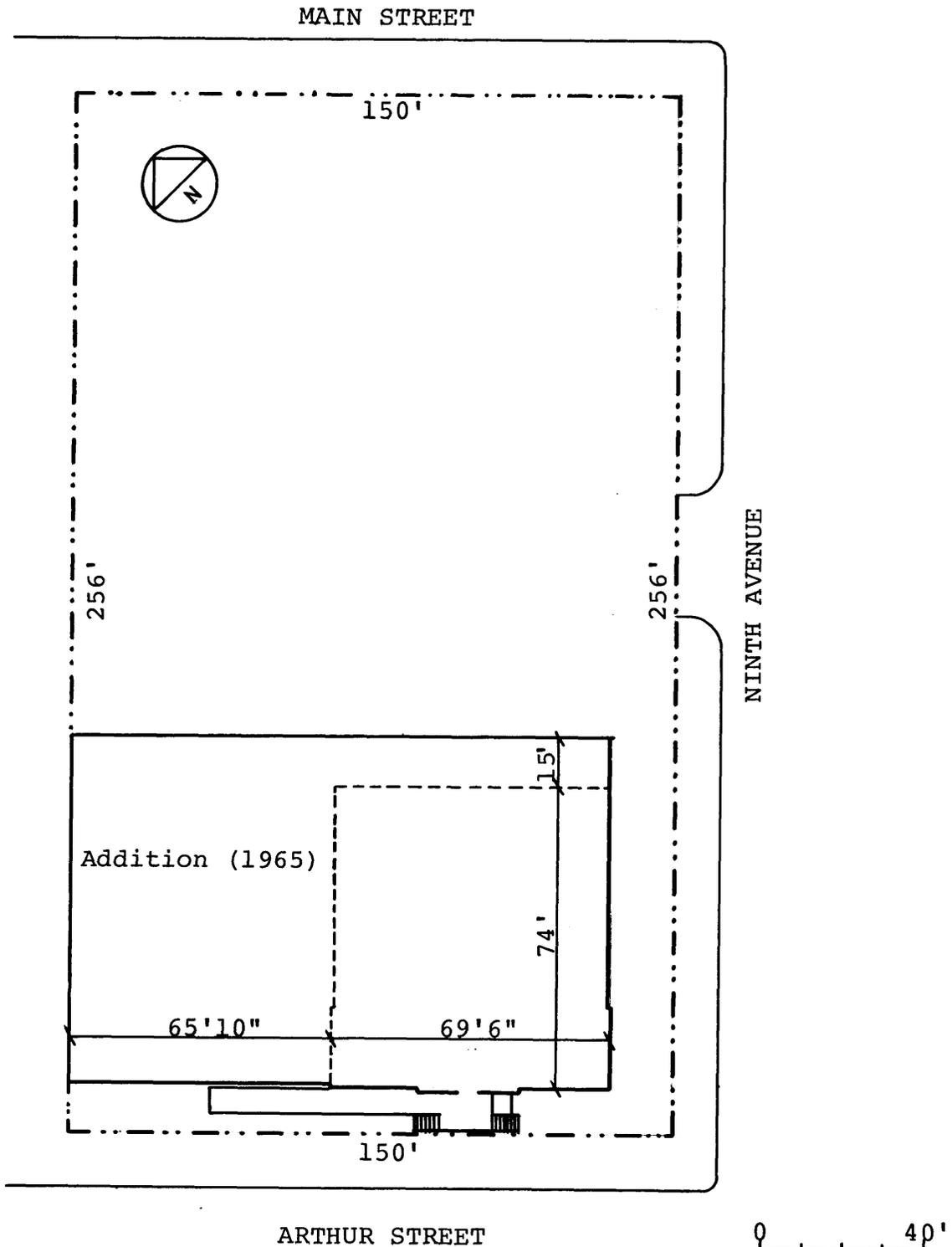
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The following information is the same for all the photographs listed:

1. Caldwell MPO
2. Caldwell, 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 east

Photo No. 2 (negative #4)

6. View to northeast

Photo No. 3 (negative #3)

6. View to north