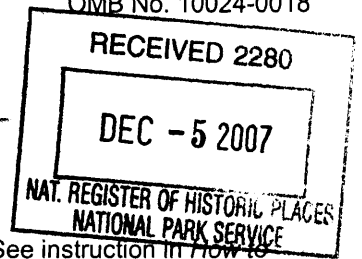


# United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1392



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Las Animas Post Office

other names/site number 5BN.591

### 2. Location

street & number 513 6<sup>th</sup> Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Las Animas [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Bent code 11 zip code 81054

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Georgiana Cortezgalea State Historic Preservation Officer 10/4/07  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Debra Workman FPO 11/20/07  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE, FACILITIES HEADQUARTERS  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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  See continuation sheet.

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper 1.16.08 Date of Action

Las Animas Post Office  
Name of Property

Bent County/ Colorado  
County/State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/ Post Office  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/ Post Office  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENTS  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Metal  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Las Animas Post Office  
Name of Property

Bent County/ Colorado  
County/State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

#### Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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
- # \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/ GOVERNMENT  
ARCHITECTURE

### Periods of Significance

1937-1957

### Significant Dates

1937

### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

U.S. Treasury Department, Office of the Supervising Architect

#### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society

Las Animas Post Office  
Name of Property

Bent County/ Colorado  
County/State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 655927 4214431 (NAD 27)  
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

The UTMS were derived from heads up digitization on Digital Raster Graphic (DRG) maps provided to OAHP by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

[ ] See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Abbey Christman (for property owner)

organization Colorado Preservation Inc. date 2/23/07

street & number 333 W. Colfax Ave. Suite 300 telephone 303-893-4260

city or town Denver state CO zip code 80204

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name U.S. Postal Service Western Facilities Service Office [contact: Mike Ward]

street & number 160 Inverness Drive West Suite 400 telephone 303-220-6557

city or town Englewood state CO zip code 80112-5005

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Las Animas Post Office  
Bent County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 1

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

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## DESCRIPTION

The Las Animas Post Office is situated at the southwest corner of the intersection of Elm and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets in a residential area of Las Animas, the seat of Bent County in southeastern Colorado. There are green lawns on the north, east, and west sides of the post office. A paved drive and parking area are on the south. Large mature trees grow at the northeast and northwest corners of the lot. Shrubby is also scattered around the building. According to the *Bent County Democrat*, the planting of a lawn with shrubs was part of the original project. A flagpole is located at the northeast corner of the building.

The Las Animas Post Office is a one-story plus basement, square plan building measuring 60' x 60'. Resting on a concrete foundation, the building is constructed of buff brick laid in a variation of common bond (with one row of headers between every two rows of stretchers). Eight granite steps, framed by low brick walls, lead up to the building entrance (photo #2). Double, wood doors with six-lights in the upper portion are located at the entrance. A hipped metal roof supported by two, square wooden posts shelters the stairs and the main entry. The windows are 8-over-8, wood-framed sash windows. Brick pilasters separate the windows on the north facade. The other sides do not have pilasters but have recessed panels beneath the windows. The window openings have limestone slip sills. A limestone lintel course runs above the windows, and there is a plain limestone cornice at the top of the wall. A hipped, metal roof covers the front third of the building and a flat roof covers the remainder. Construction plans and historic photograph shows that this is the original roof configuration. The plans describe the original roofing material as "standing seam metal roof."

On the north facade there are 4 windows. On the east side there are four large window openings, one of which is blank (photo #3). The blank opening is filled with rows of header bricks; the building plans show that this is an original feature. There are also two small, narrow 2-over-2 sash windows. On the south side there are four window openings, one of which is infilled with vents at the top and bottom (photograph #5). This infill is not original. Centered on the south wall is an enclosed, flat-roofed, brick loading dock extending south from the rear. An exterior brick chimney is adjacent to the loading dock. On the west side there are four window openings. The northernmost opening has been converted to a door, which is located at the top of a handicap ramp that has been added on this side (photo #6).

On the interior a wood and glass vestibule is located at the entrance (photo #8). The lobby area has multi-hued brown tiled floors and wainscoting. Dark stained woodwork and molding accent the tile work. An original wood relief artwork is located on the east above the door to the Postmaster's office (photo #9). Titled "Kiowa Travois," the image depicts three Kiowa Indians on horseback pulling travois. In the rear workspace, there is a wood floor and columns with wood wainscoting.

### *Integrity*

The post office retains a high degree of integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association despite some alterations. The hipped metal roof covering the entry was installed by 1983. A handicap ramp was added on the west side with a window converted to a door in 1983-84. All historic post offices added handicap ramps in order to meet ADA requirements. The construction of this one on the west side of the building has greatly reduced its visual impact. The glass in one window opening on the south side has been removed, and the opening filled with two vents and brick infill. The integrity of the interior design and materials is exceptional with all the original finishes, many of the furnishings, and the original artwork intact.

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Las Animas Post Office  
Bent County, Colorado

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## SIGNIFICANCE

The Las Animas Post Office, constructed between 1936 and 1938 by the Treasury Department, is being nominated under the *New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains* Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF). The Las Animas Post Office meets the registration requirements of one property type delineated in the MPDF—*Civic and Government Buildings (subtype: Post Offices)*.

The Las Animas Post Office meets Criterion A for its significance in the area of Politics/Government for its association with President Roosevelt's New Deal legislative agenda and the efforts of the federal government to bring America out of the Great Depression. The post office was not a project of a New Deal construction agency, but a direct relief project of the Treasury Department. The construction of new post offices was a way for the federal government to assist communities by helping the economy through the purchase of materials and creation of construction jobs. The relief project also provided Las Animas with its first purpose-built post office. It has been the only post office in Las Animas since it opened in 1938.

The Las Animas Post Office meets Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an example of small federal building designed by the Office of the Supervising Architect under the direction of Louis A. Simon. The style is simple, traditional, and restrained with high quality materials, a good example of a federal building constructed during the Depression. The symmetry, massing, and formal appearance of the building clearly identify it as a federal building. It was the first federal building in Las Animas. The standardized federal design sets the post office apart from New Deal projects constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in southeastern Colorado. These work relief projects were predominantly designed in the Rustic Style and emphasized masonry craftsmanship. The interior of the post office retains an exceptionally high degree of integrity, with its original finishes and layout intact. The interior is an outstanding example of the standard interior plan of a 1930s era post office.

The period of significance begins in 1937 when construction started and ends in 1957. Although the post office remains in use, the period of significance ends in 1957 in order to comply with the National Register's fifty year rule.

### *Historical Background*

In the spring of 1936, the Las Animas Postmaster W.H. Harkrader met with several local businessmen to discuss the possibility of getting a new federal post office building for the town. At this time, the government was renting space in the Odd Fellows lodge for the post office. Postal authorities criticized this office as the poorest second class post office in a four-state district and threatened condemnation. Las Animas residents sent a letter to Congressman John A. Martin asking for his assistance in securing a new post office. He replied that he would be glad to make the application for Las Animas. Just 34 days after receiving the letter from Las Animas, Congressman Martin was able to get the post office project included in the Post Office Department's list of recommended building locations.

The new post office was a project of the Treasury Department. Like other federal agencies during the Depression, the Treasury Department was involved in relief projects. One of the simplest ways for the Treasury Department to provide a boost to the economy was through the construction of new public buildings, mostly post offices. During the 1930s, the government built approximately three times as many post offices as had been built in the previous 50 years. Though various federal programs,

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Las Animas Post Office  
Bent County, Colorado

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including the Public Works Administration (PWA), funded this construction, all post offices were under the control of the Treasury Department.

The Treasury Department's Office of the Supervising Architect designed the post office. The Office of the Supervising Architect designed most federal buildings from the mid-1800s to the end of the 1930s. The office's work ranged from grand courthouses in urban settings to small post offices in communities across the United States. The office had a staff of mostly anonymous architects working under the direction of a Supervising Architect. During the 1920s and 1930s, the American Institute of Architects (AIA), opposed the office, arguing that private architects could design superior buildings. While the government hired private architects to consult on some larger buildings, smaller buildings continued to be designed by the office, which was seen as more economical. During the 1930s, the federal government sought to boost the economy and provide employment through the construction of federal buildings. This increase in federal construction encouraged the production of standardized plans to speed the design process. Louis A. Simon became Supervising Architect in 1934 after almost four decades working with the office. Considering the large number of building plans produced by the Office of the Supervising Architect, there is no way that Simon personally designed all the federal buildings constructed under his direction. However, most of the small post offices constructed during this period share a common layout, and Simon may have provided a basic plan that staff architects could modify for individual buildings. Though Simon was likely not directly involved with the most of the designs produced by the office, he does seem to have set the general character of the works produced. A contemporary architect described Simon's work as "characterized by an effort toward simplicity and restraint and the attainment of pleasing results, by a studied consideration of mass and proportion, rather than by excess of elaboration or non-functional expression."<sup>1</sup> Henry Morganthau, the Secretary of the Treasury under President Franklin Roosevelt, believed that during mid-1930s "there has resulted a real evolution in the architecture of federal buildings, in that extravagance in design, waste in space, unusual individualistic idealism, and delays in the prosecution of the work, have been largely avoided."<sup>2</sup> He described the work of the Office of the Supervising Architect as having "dignity and originality, economy in design, with strict adherence to the utilitarian purpose for which the building is to be used."<sup>3</sup>

Congress appropriated \$75,000 for constructing and equipping the building. Bids on possible sites for the post office opened on July 13, 1936. Plans and specifications for the building arrived in June 1937. The cornerstone was laid on November 1, 1937 in a ceremony organized by the Las Animas Chamber of Commerce. The cornerstone material was quarried in Marble, CO. The Bent County High School Band performed and U.S. Representative John A. Martin gave an address. Martin told the crowd, "When Uncle Sam builds a post office building it is the best that can be built."

The post office was completed in March 1938. The post office held an open house during which between five and six hundred residents came to inspect the new building. The contractors said that the post office was the finest they had built. According to the *Bent County Democrat*, the post office was "equipped with the 'spy' or 'peep' system which permits the postal inspectors to enter the building and observe the activities of the employees without their knowledge." Everything was modern, including Venetian blinds, correct time furnished by the Postal Telegraph Company, and an electrically cooled drinking fountain.

<sup>1</sup> Lee, Antoinette J., *Architects to the Nation* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2000), 260.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 268

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 268

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Las Animas Post Office  
Bent County, Colorado

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With the Great Depression, fewer people could afford to patronize the arts, severely impacting the careers of artists. The Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts provided employment by sponsoring artwork in federal buildings. Many of the post offices constructed during the Depression were decorated with murals or other artworks commissioned by the Section of Fine Arts. Funds for artwork were based on 1% of the total appropriation for the building's construction. Artists were typically chosen through competitions. The judges did not know the sex of the entrants, providing equal opportunity to female artists. Federal art projects provided a boost to many women artists. One was sculptor Gladys Caldwell Fisher who designed the carved wood relief for the Las Animas post office. She was paid \$750 for the piece. Some of Fisher's other federal work included a pair of stone grizzly bears framing the entrance to the Yellowstone National Park post office and a pair of Rocky Mountain sheep framing an entrance to the U.S. Courthouse in Denver. Born in Loveland, Colorado, Fisher began to study under Colorado sculpture Robert Garrison at age 16. She continued her studies in New York and in 1930 was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art. In 1932 she returned to Denver and began teaching at Chappell House, where the Denver Art Museum was then located.



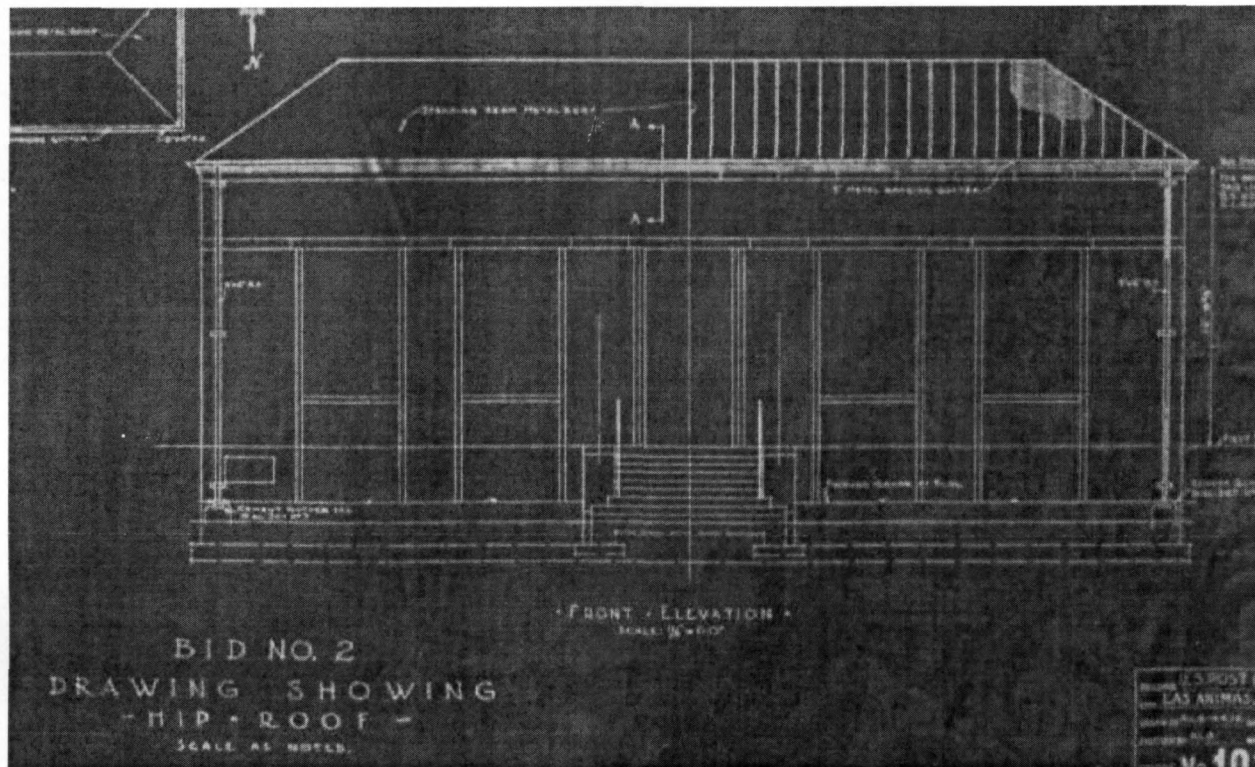
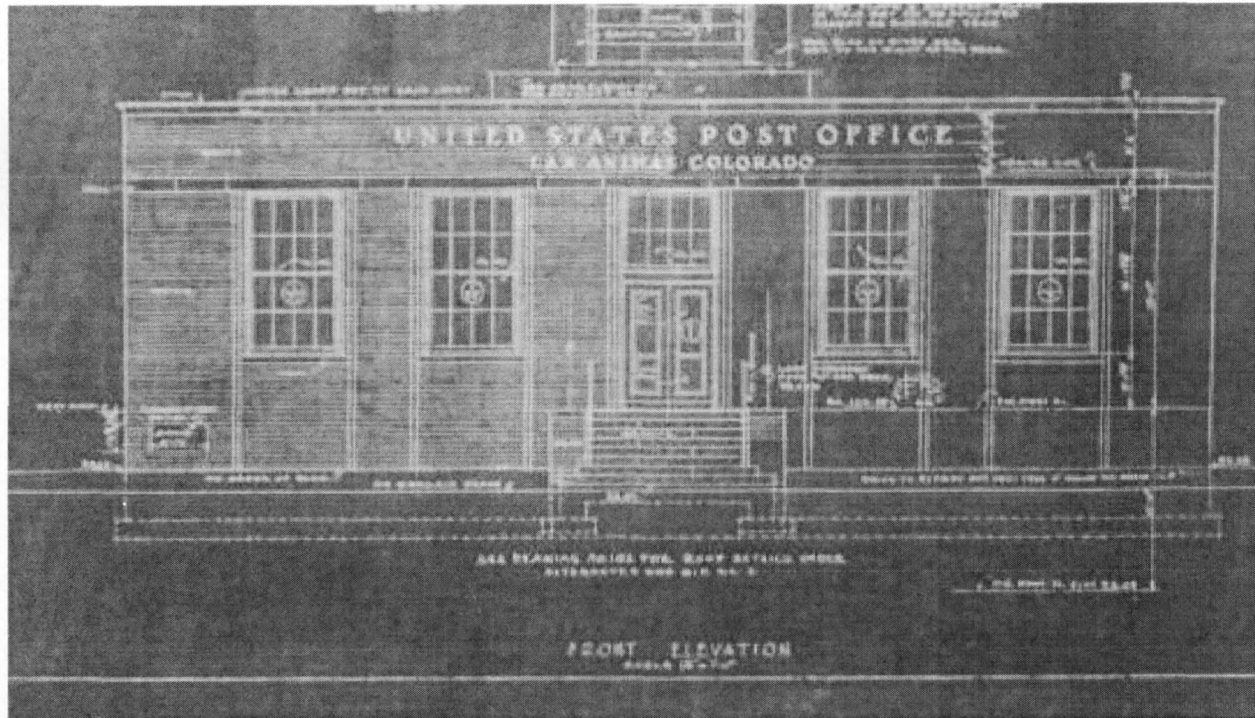
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Las Animas Post Office  
Bent County, Colorado

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(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

Front elevation with façade details and hipped roof



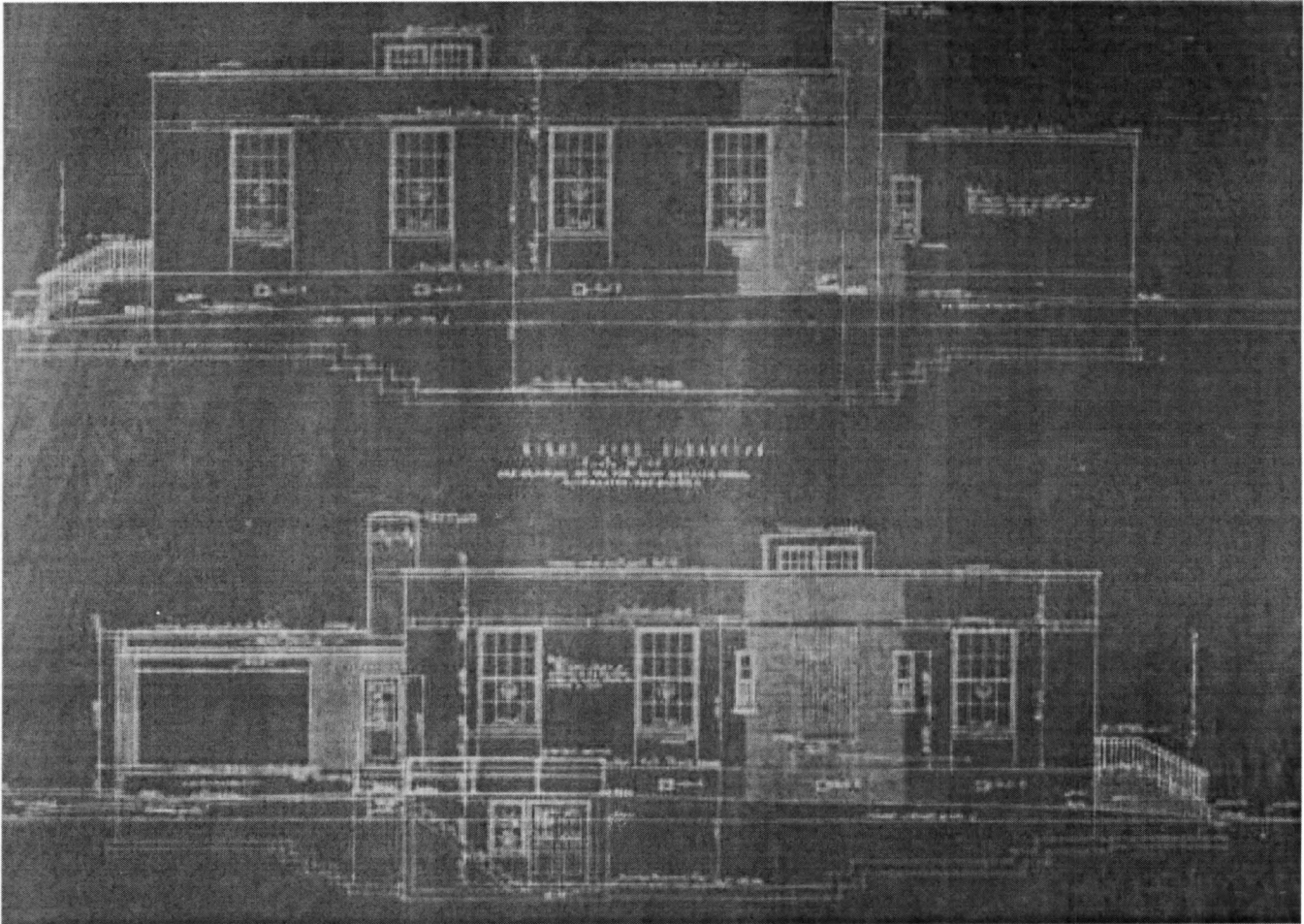
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Las Animas Post Office  
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Side Elevations



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Bent County, Colorado

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"Program Announced for Ceremonies at Post Office Building." *Bent County Democrat*, October 33, 1937.

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Las Animas Post Office  
Bent County, Colorado

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Block 100, lots 1-6, City of Las Animas

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

This includes all the land historically associated with the post office.

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Aerial photograph showing Lots 1-12 of Block 100. The post office building and associated landscaping occupies lots 1-6.

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Bent County, Colorado

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### PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Name of Property: Las Animas Post Office

Location: Las Animas, Bent County, Colorado

Photographer: Abbey Christman

Date of Photographs: June 1, 2006

Negatives: Digital files submitted to National Register, Washington, D.C.

Photographs printed on HP Premium Photo Paper with HP 100 gray photo cartridge

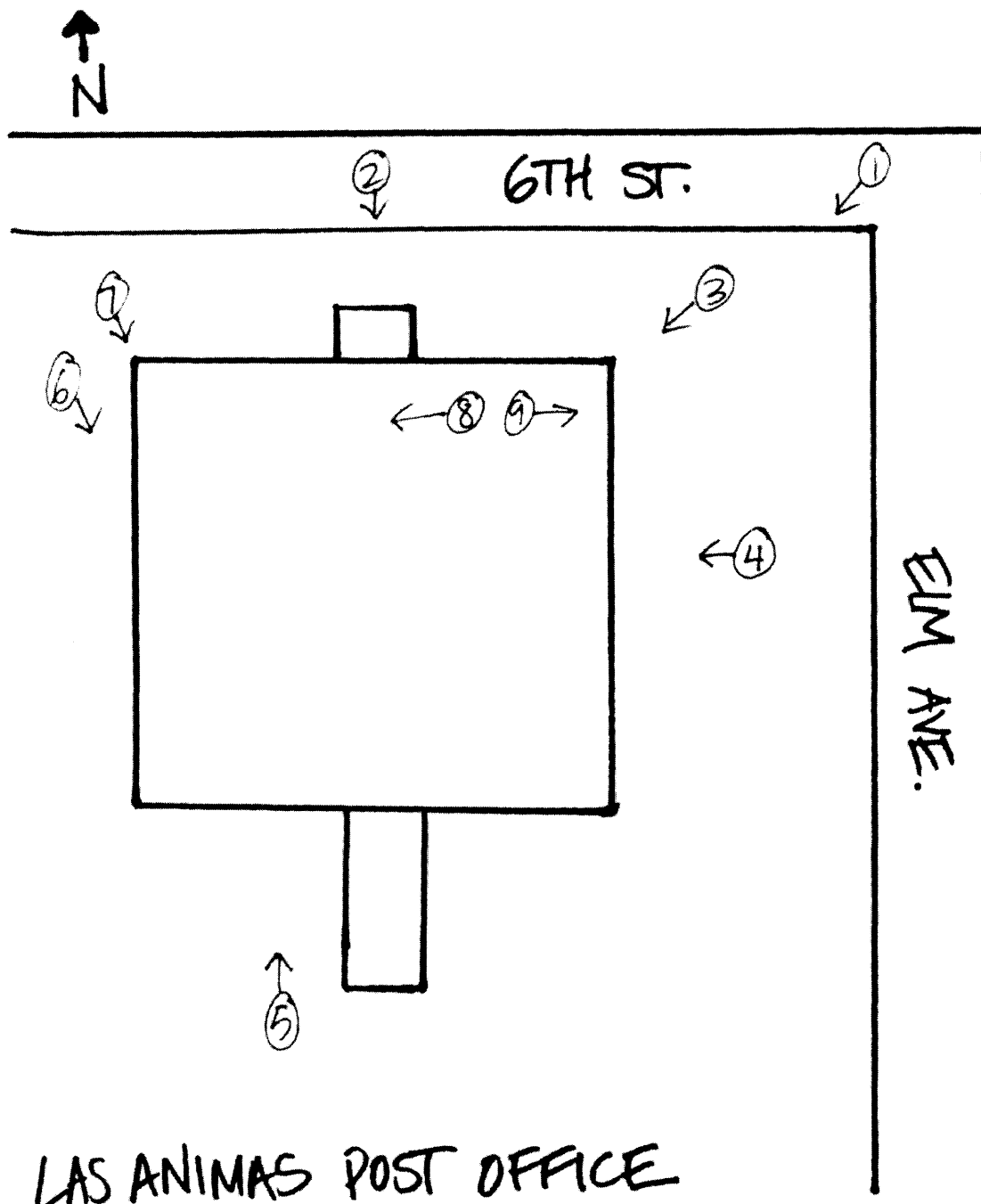
Photo No.	Photographic Information
1	North (front) and east sides of Las Animas Post Office. Facing southwest.
2	North (front) side of post office. Facing south.
3	Northeast corner of post office. Facing southwest.
4	East side of post office. Facing west.
5	South side of post office. Facing north.
6	West side of post office showing handicap ramp. Facing southeast.
7	Northwest corner of post office. Facing southeast.
8	Interior showing the wooden vestibule, tile floor, and tile wainscoting. Facing west.
9	Kiowa Travois by Gladys Caldwell Fisher. Facing east.

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LAS ANIMAS POST OFFICE

PHOTO KEY

→ PHOTO # & DIRECTION

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**USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP**  
Las Animas Quadrangle, Colorado  
7.5 Minute Series

UTM: Zone 13 / 655927 / 4214431 (NAD27)  
PLSS: 6<sup>th</sup> PM, T23S, R52W, NE NW SW NE Sec. 10  
Elevation: 3895

