

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)

Moderne

Other: Starved Classical

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Tar composition

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Lovelock Main Post Office is a one-story buff-colored brick building on a raised concrete basement platform. Symmetrically-arranged and Classically-proportioned, the flat front facade is divided into five bays. The entry bay and immediately flanking window bays are recessed and defined by inward-stepping brick courses. The smaller end bays are defined by only a soldier course arch. A flat built-up tar composition roof tops the building.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Reinforced concrete is used for the footings, basement walls, and floor slabs. Steel framing provides structural support. Terra-cotta tile and brick are used for interior walls and buff-colored pressed brick in Common bond faces the exterior walls. The flat roof is tar and gravel composition.

The five-bay front facade (facing south on Main Street) is flat and sparingly detailed. Resting on a platform of the painted concrete basement walls, the main floor is buff-color brick which terminates in a simple coping course clad with metal flashing. The only adornment of the simple facade is that defining the centered entry bay and the window bays immediately flanking each side. Even that detailing is limited to only brick coursing rather than contrasting wood, stone or terra cotta. A vertical frame of three progressively receding brick courses and a raised brick panel between the flat brick arches and the door and window openings define these three bays. Forming the arches is a belt course consisting of five rows of brick headers. Beneath the window sash and painted concrete sills are plain brick panels. The smaller end bays, which extend to the height of the interior bay sash, are defined by only flat brick soldier course arches. The window sash is double-hung wood: three-over-three lights for the interior (one large light with narrow side lights), and one-over-one for the exterior.

The entry bay contains double, aluminum-framed glass panel doors (originals replaced). A wooden transom bar, with 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

Art

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1938-1941

Significant Dates

Site Acq.-1936

Const.-1938

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Simon, Louis A., Supervising Architect/
Federal Government; Lundberg-Richter,
Inc., Fredericksburg, VA, Contractor

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

The Lovelock Main Post Office is a well-preserved and essentially unaltered example of a small-town, single-purpose post office. Of standardized design, the building represents the final phase in the progression of early Twentieth Century federal architecture. The city's first and only federally-constructed post office, the building symbolizes not only the federal government's recognition of Lovelock's regional importance, but also the link between the local citizens and their elected representatives in Washington D.C. The building and the mural in its lobby are also significant as legacies of the massive public works programs undertaken by the federal government to bolster the economy during the Depression.

ARCHITECTURE

While the Lovelock Post Office was patterned from standardized plans developed by the Office of Supervising Architect to expedite construction and reduce costs of federal post offices, its type is relatively rare in the State of Nevada. Only seven post offices were constructed in Nevada during the Depression with only four during the late stages when the simplified "Starved Classical" buildings predominated. While the Lovelock building retains Classical roots in its proportion and symmetry, the historical elements that were used for ornamentation through the early-to mid-1930s have been reduced or omitted entirely. Lovelock received its first government building in 1920 when the DeLongchamps-designed Pershing County Courthouse (NHR) was completed. The federal architects brought a simpler, but sophisticated modern building to serve as its working symbol of government. The building is locally significant under Criterion C.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Review-Miner (Lovelock), various articles 1931-1940.
2. McDonald, Russell. "The Development of Lovelock." Nevada Historical Society Quarterly (Winter 1976): 261-175.
3. Gottschalk, A.L., Postmaster, Lovelock, NV. May 16, 1939; January 16 and July 24, 1940. Correspondence.
4. Hansen, Ejnar. May 13, 1939. Correspondence.
5. Original Architectural Drawings, 1936.
6. Construction Progress Photographs, July 30, 1937 - February 21, 1938.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

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 0.43

UTM References

A 1 1 37 4 48 0 44 48 6 50
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

Quadrangle name: Lovelock

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

South 30' of the West 105' of Lot 3, West 105' of Lots 4, 5 & 6, Block 3, Original Townsite. The property is on the Northeast corner of Main Street and Dartmouth Street and is described as follows: beginning at the southwest corner, thence north 180', east 105', south 180', and west 105' to point of beginning

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

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

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title H.J. "Jim" Kolva, Project Manager; Steve Franks, Research Assistant
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 street & number West 705 1st Avenue telephone (509) 458-6219
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a horizontal reeding pattern, separates the doors and a fixed four-light transom window (two vertical lights flanked by narrow sidelights). Resting on the transom bar and in front of the window is, perched on a bundle of reeds in aluminum bas relief, a stylized American eagle. Access to the entry consists of three brick steps to an intermediate landing then six brick steps to the entry landing (originally granite). Square concrete buttresses, upon which rest free-standing bronze lanterns in a torch motif, flank the upper stairs.

The west facade (Dartmouth Street) is divided into five equally-spaced bays. The middle bay was converted from a window to a door when a handicap ramp was added in the 1970s. The only definition given the bays are the brick soldier courses forming the flat arches and painted concrete sills. The sash is one-over-one light, double-hung wood. The brick header belt course continues from the front along the sides.

The east facade also consists of five equally-spaced bays. The forward three are identical to those of the west. The two rear bays consist of first floor and mezzanine level windows (corresponding to the interior plan) which are approximately half the height of the forward bays. The sash is double-hung wood with one-over-one lights. Painted concrete sills provide the only detailing of these bays.

The rear (north) facade contains the rearward projecting mailing vestibule and concrete loading dock. On either side of the vestibule is a single window bay. The west side bay is defined and configured identically to the bays of the west facade. The east side bay, with first floor and mezzanine levels, is defined and configured identically to the rear portion of the east facade. A square brick chimney rises above the building at the juncture of the main building and vestibule. Each side of the vestibule contains a double-hung wood sash window with one-over-one lights. Double metal doors, each with one small light, provide access to the dock. On top of the flat roof of the vestibule is a stucco-faced mechanical room (not original). A flat metal marquee extends from the platform over the loading area.

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Lovelock's position as a local governmental center began two decades prior to the completion of the Post Office when Pershing County was formed and Lovelock named its seat. The federal post office then added another level of governmental representation. As the city's first and only federal building, it is important to the community as a symbol of the federal government and of that government's recognition of Lovelock as an regional center. It is also a legacy of the federal government's Depression era recovery program as manifested by its massive public works programs. Finally, the acquisition of the building involved the lobbying efforts of local citizens through their elected representatives in Washington D.C. The ceremonies associated with the building's construction gave the community the opportunity to see and hear these representatives. At the cornerstone laying ceremony on November 10, 1937, for example, Congressman James G. Scrugham spoke of how the new building was "a symbol of the faith of the government and people of the United States in Lovelock." Then on June 12, 1938, Senator Pat McCarran delivered the main address at the dedication of the completed building (McCarran's theme shifted the mood from the fun of the Alumni Jubilee Fete to the seriousness of America's role in preserving democracy). The building is thus locally significant under Criterion A.

ART

A mural, "Uncovering of the Comstock Lode," is on the lobby wall over the Postmaster's door. It was executed by Ejnar Hansen in 1940. Approximately 5' X 12', oil on canvas, the mural depicts a group of three prospectors examining the findings from a rickety wooden sluice while another seeks gold with a metal pan. An equipment-laden mule searches the barren rocks for green rather than gold.

Ejnar Hansen was born in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1884 and studied there at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. His shows and exhibitions included the Art Institute of Chicago in 1918 and 1945, the 1939 New Work World Fair, the 1939 Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco, the Corcoran Gallery, the Los Angeles Museum of Art, and numerous other locations, primarily in California where he resided.

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On May 13th, 1939, before painting the mural, Hansen wrote to the Lovelock postmaster, stating he had been asked:

to communicate with you in regard to historical background or local life activities, which might be useful to me in choosing the subject matter for the painting. I would much prefer though to travel to Lovelock myself, have a personal talk with you, and familiarize myself with the building and the sitting [sic] for the mural.

Hansen's mural for Lovelock was evidently very popular, as indicated by comments written by Lovelock postmaster Art Gottschalk to the Federal Works Agency, on July 24th, 1940:

Of interest to you will be the many, many splendid expressions of praise and admiration that we have received, not only from the local residents, but from residents thru out the entire state and from persons from the entire country who have stopped at this office to post mail. Mr. Hansen, in his portrayal, has caught the spirit of the prospector and of the desert in a manner such as few have witnessed, and should be complimented highly on his work.

In his letter to the FWA the postmaster also advised that a light hanging in front of the mural needed to be replaced with one suspended closer to the ceiling, "as the mural is too beautiful a piece of work to be allowed to be hidden, or have the effect marred."

Postmaster Gottschalk also wrote to artist Ejnar Hansen (on July 24th, 1940), expressing the positive reception the mural was receiving, and adding:

To many of these people [admirers of the mural] we have given your name and address at their request, and undoubtedly you will receive calls from them.

To me personally, who having lived in a mining community thru out my entire life, and I believe that to you it will be felt in the same manner, the finest and noblest comments of all, have come from the old

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prospectors and miners of this state, who as a class are about the hardest people in the world to please, but whose praise at viewing your mural has been nothing but their heartfelt admiration for the spirit of the desert that you have so splendidly portrayed in your mural. I believe that this alone, should more than compensate you for your efforts.

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 sculpture 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. Again, it was under this program that the Lovelock mural and post office murals in Yerington and Winnemucca were completed.

The Section, which was administered in Washington, dealt directly with the 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 country. The work that was created did, however, portray the American Scene in the form of localized subject matter. Further, the work resulting from the programs tended to pur-

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sue 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

Lovelock, on the Humboldt River in northwestern Nevada, is approximately 90 miles northeast of Reno. It is the seat of Pershing County, and contains nearly half of the county's population. Ranching and farming form the primary base of the local economy, though there is some mining in the area, and the city also provides services to Interstate 80 travelers. In 1985 Lovelock had an estimated population of 1,730.

The site of Lovelock was established by the wagon trains that followed the Humboldt River's path as they headed west. The lush meadows and fresh water found in the valley of the lower Humboldt River were the last California-bound settlers would encounter before starting across 40 miles of desert to the west. In April of 1861 James Blake and his brother became the first permanent settlers of the area known as "Big Meadows." They were soon followed by the Englishman George Lovelock, who was instrumental in the development of the area, engaging in farming, ranching, mining, and real estate.

Permanent settling of the valley and farming increased with the arrival of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1867. George Lovelock donated 80 acres to the railroad for a town-site. The town, named Lovelock by the railroad, became a distribution point for the Trinity mining district (early gold and silver mining would later give way to lead, iron and antimony). In the early 1870s P.N. Marker arrived in the valley and introduced both cattle and the large-scale cultivation of alfalfa to the valley. In 1875 a U.S. post office was established, with George Lovelock as postmaster. Two years later Lovelock was platted by the railroad. By 1881 Lovelock had a population of approximately 60 (with 400 living in the valley around the town) and featured four stores, three hotels, two saloons, a livery stable, blacksmith, and schoolhouse.

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Lovelock continued to develop as the distribution center for Humboldt County. By 1912 Lovelock had a population of approximately 1,000, electricity, and a few telephones. In 1916 a \$90,000 bond issue was passed for improvement of the town's water system. A year later Lovelock was incorporated as a city, 3rd class. (The first years of incorporation, however, were not easy: to save on electricity bills the City considered turning off street lights when there was sufficient moonlight to do without them.) When Pershing County was created out of Humboldt County in 1919 (after bitter debate) Lovelock became the new county's seat. By 1920 it had a population of 1,164. The construction of Rye Patch dam in the 1930s largely overcame the problem of Lovelock Valley's not-always-dependable water supply. Lovelock's population continued to grow slowly but steadily, to a peak of 1,948 in 1960. It fell to 1,571 in 1970 and then increased slightly, to 1,680 in 1980. Lovelock remains today the commercial center for the fertile Lovelock Valley.

The Lovelock Main Post Office is on the intersection of Main and Dartmouth Streets, fronting on Main Street. The city's primary business street is one block east of the Post Office on the I-80 Business Loop. Adjacent to the east of the Post Office are one-story brick commercial buildings which date primarily from the 1920s and 1930s. Across Main Street to the south is a two-story masonry auto parts and appliance store (pre-dates post office). A parking lot and the one-story Sprouse-Reitz store (concrete, Moderne) are west of the Post Office, across Dartmouth Street. The one-story brick, Neo-Classical Pershing County Courthouse (National Register, Frederick DeLongchamps, 1920) is one block west of the Post Office at the end of Main Street.

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

In the early 1930s the Lovelock-Review-Miner reported a great deal of local mining news. The paper reported that "Pershing County's reputation as one of the richest mineralized areas in the world has been greatly enhanced by exploration work in copper" (November 13th, 1931 article).

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The paper also urged the community to "boost" mining in the Dawes Mine area, since mining there would bring about a "boom" that would benefit Lovelock (September 23rd, 1932).

"New Federal Building for Lovelock Appears Certain" reported the Review-Miner on November 4th, 1932. The paper wrote that for the past month it had heard rumors about a new Federal building, and cited a request for sites in that day's issue as evidence. It was also noted that construction "would give work to a great many people and be of wonderful benefit to the whole city and community." The paper explained that it was a long process and much needed to be done. On December 16th it was reported that the State would extend the Victory Highway through Lovelock, at a cost estimated at \$80,000.

An article of February 17th reported that postal inspector George G. Rolfe would be in town the following week to examine the approximately eleven sites that had been offered. Gold made the news on February 24th: the Raggold Six mining group intended to recover gold from their ore mill works and the Noble Gold mines were incorporated.

In March site agent George Rolfe was reported as indicating that a post office for Lovelock was a certainty. The Garner-Wagner Bill of July 31, 1932 had appropriated \$67,000 for the Lovelock land and structure. The original amount had been \$75,000 but a 10 percent cut on all such projects was made at the last minute. Rolfe also noted that the projects were designed to relieve distress and offer employment during the depression. It was explained that a total amount of \$322,000,000 had been appropriated, of which \$100,000,000 was for the areas where leases were about to expire. Lovelock was the only city in Nevada under these provisions. Construction was expected to start in four to five months.

On June 30th it was reported that Lovelock's post office had been cut to third class as a result of an economy measure. But at the end of the year it was reported that "Pershing County goes into the year 1934 with confidence in the future": developments in mining and agriculture were promising, government aid was felt in new Civil Works Projects (including a \$10,000 swimming pool), and a PWA

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Humboldt River water storage project (Rye Patch dam) would improve agricultural interests (December 29th article).

In 1934 voters approved bonds to support a federal public works bureau pipe line project (May 11th) as well as the Humboldt River water storage project (June 15th). On August 16th it was announced that 200 New Yorkers would arrive in the area to man Lovelock's CCC camp; within a month they were improving irrigation systems and tackling the noxious weed problem (articles of September 6th and 13th).

On October 11th it was reported that the post office was moving to a better facility in the Big Meadow Hotel. On November 29th news that government engineer E. L. Wiener was surveying the post office site on the corner of Dartmouth and Main was reported. Photos of local buildings were taken since, the paper reported, "All post offices constructed under the 2nd deficiency appropriation bill will be built according to local architectural styles ... the procurement division hopes to avoid disputes which have arisen in the past regarding the architecture of post offices." Wiener was also getting a list of local materials and their prices. 1935 ended with the news that a \$70,000 national guard armory had been approved for Lovelock (December 20th article).

On May 29, 1936 it was announced that Arthur Gottschalk was Lovelock's new postmaster. The post office was now class "B"--business was up 118 percent, with much of the increase due to the building of Rye Patch dam. The government had also purchased the lot on Main and Dartmouth and it was hoped construction would begin within the year. On June 5th advertising for construction bids began, and it was reported that the site (the site of the old Orpheum theatre) had recently been purchased from C. H. Jones and E. K. Hansen. An article of July 3rd described the building and revealed that R. E. Campbell of Los Angeles was the low bidder at \$79,450, but on July 17th it was reported that all bids had been turned down as excessive.

An article of January 22, 1937 reported that construction bids were again being called (to be opened March 2nd) and that the plans had been redesigned to lower the cost. "Postal Building Construction To Begin Soon" declared the Review-Miner on May 14th; the \$60,700 bid of Lundberg-

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Richter, Inc. of Fredericksburg, Virginia had been accepted. Work was to begin within five weeks and 270 calendar days had been allotted for construction. Congressman J. G. Scrugham soon sent confirmation of the contract (May 21st article).

On July 16th it was reported that the building superintendent and government engineer had arrived to begin preliminary work, but just one week later a headline reported "High Water Level Stops Federal Work." It was reported that "contractors ... were amazed this week to find that the water level on the site was four and one-half feet below the surface of the ground" (in 1935 the level was 16 feet down). Word was being awaited from Washington, D.C. as to what to do next. On August 20th it was reported that the building would be raised two feet; reinforcing steel had arrived and concrete work could begin. The footings would be below water. A week later it was reported that seventeen men were constantly pumping the footings to keep them free of water. An article of September 24th described the building in detail and noted that the forms had been removed. In October the bricklayers began their work (October 22nd article).

Cornerstone laying plans were revealed on October 29th. Participants would include the Winnemucca Grand Master of Masons, the Lions Club President, and the school band. On November 5th it was announced that Congressman Scrugham would be the principal speaker and that schools and businesses would be closed for the ceremony. One week later it was reported that the cornerstone had been laid "in a grand way"; "a large throng, seated, standing and in cars was present to watch the events of the day." Scrugham spoke of how the new building was "a symbol of the faith of the government and people of the United States in Lovelock," and of how the federal government was spending millions in Nevada-- especially on the highway system.

News of the post office and its progression appeared frequently in the following weeks. By February 11th, 1938 the paper could report the building was a "beehive of workmen" doing finishing work (including a Texan painter named Fowler, who "is noted for his rapid painting ability and his skill in seldom losing a drop of paint"). News of the post office continued to appear in almost every issue of the paper. (An article of March 25th also described the

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"immense amount of work" Lovelock's CCC camp had done in the district, including Rye Patch Dam and irrigation improvements.) Finally, on the first of April, it was reported that a final clean-up was underway. A week later a government inspector accepted the building, and the post office was scheduled to open that Saturday. A photo and complete description of the new building was also published.

On June 17th it was reported that Senator Pat McCarran had been the main speaker at the building's dedication the previous Sunday. The event took place during the Alumni Jubilee Fete weekend--which featured a banquet, parade, dance, and the dedication.

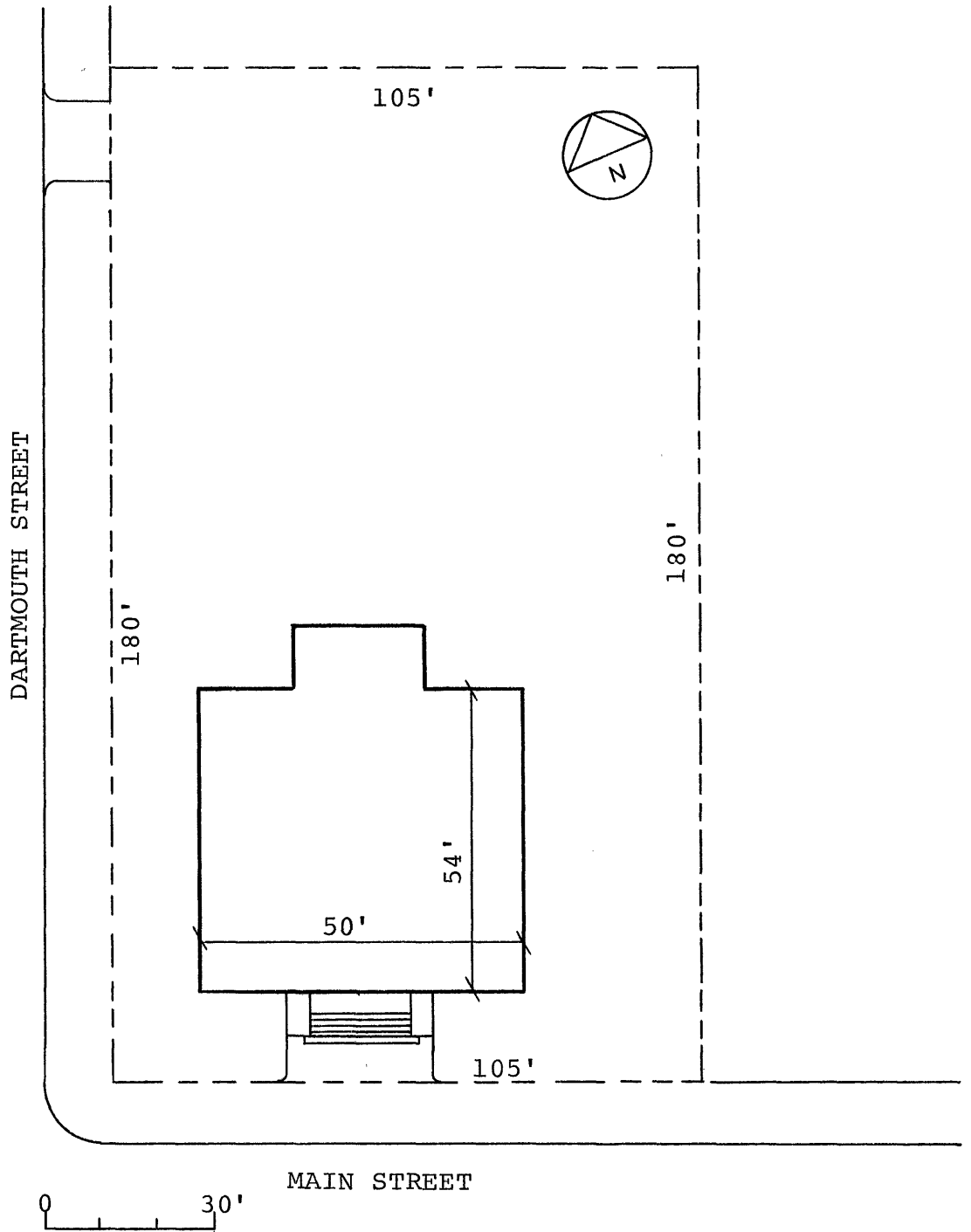
Lovelock's mural was described in an article on June 22nd, 1940, under the headline "Mural Painting Adds Beauty to Postal Building." The artist, Ejnar Hansen of Pasadena, California, had put up the mural the previous Tuesday, after having visited Lovelock a year before to study the post office and make sketches of mountain scenery. The painting, "Discovery of the Comstock Lode," was described as portraying the Gosh Brothers, who are given credit for discovering the Virginia City Lode. Handing them blue ore is "Old Frank," a Mexican who lived a long time in the vicinity. In the background is an old prospector panning ore; nearby is a pack mule.

In addition to serving as Lovelock's main post office, the building has housed governmental offices in its basement. When appropriated, the building was designated as a post office and agricultural building. The four basement offices were originally allocated to the department of agriculture. The Pershing County Water Conservation District presently has offices in the basement.

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

1. Lovelock MPO
2. Lovelock, Nevada
3. Jim Kolva
4. June 1988
5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center, San Bruno, CA.

Photo No. 1 (negative #13)

6. View to north

Photo No. 2 (negative #14)

6. View to northwest

Photo No. 3 (no negative #)

6. View to northeast (historical view, circa 1938)

Photo No. 4 (negative #18)

6. Lobby mural