

56-2269

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



1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Houston Post
Other name/site number: N/A
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 2410 Polk Street
City or town: Houston State: Texas County: Harris
Not for publication: Vicinity:

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 at the following levels of significance:
 national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer Date 2/12/18
Signature of certifying official / Title
Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain: _____

[Signature] Date of Action 4/2/2018
Signature of the Keeper

Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

Category of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: COMMERCE/TRADE: Office building; INDUSTRY: Communications facility / printing plant

Current Functions: VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification: MODERN MOVEMENT: Modern

Principal Exterior Materials: BRICK, STONE

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-9)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations: N/A

Areas of Significance: COMMUNICATIONS

Period of Significance: 1954-1969

Significant Dates: 1954

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): N/A

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): N/A

Architect/Builder: Herbert Voelcker & Associates; Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 10-19)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets 20-21)

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 3.3 acres

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (use decimal degree format)

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

1. Latitude: 29.746949° N Longitude: -95.354569° W

Verbal Boundary Description: Lots 1-12 and Tracts 18A, 18B, 18C Block 472 and Lots 1-12 and Tract 13 Block 473 South Side Buffalo Bayou, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Boundary Justification: This description constitutes the legal parcel associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Hannah Curry-Shearouse, Catherine Gabb, and Anna Mod
Organization: SWCA Environmental Consultants
Address: 10245 W. Little York, Suite 600
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Date: June 2017

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheet 22-24)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 25-45)

Photographs (see continuation sheet 5-6, 46-59)

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Photographs

Name of Property: Houston Post
City, County, State: Houston, Harris County, Texas
Photographers: Hannah Curry-Shearouse and Ben Hill
Date Photographed: January and February 2017

East elevation and north façade, view southwest
Photo 1
Photographer: Hannah Curry-Shearouse

North façade and west elevation, view southeast
Photo 2
Photographer: Hannah Curry-Shearouse

West and south elevations, view northeast
Photo 3
Photographer: Hannah Curry-Shearouse

South and east elevations, view northwest
Photo 4
Photographer: Hannah Curry-Shearouse

East elevation, view northwest
Photo 5
Photographer: Hannah Curry-Shearouse

Entrance detail on primary facade, view south
Photo 6
Photographer: Hannah Curry-Shearouse

Interior, press room printing bay, view south
Photo 7
Photographer: Ben Hill

Interior, cartridge storage with press room in rear, view southeast. Roller tracks for moving paper rolls visible in floor
Photo 8
Photographer: Ben Hill

Interior, press room, view south with press room addition in rear
Photo 9
Photographer: Ben Hill

Interior, 1972 metal warehouse addition, view northeast.
Photo 10
Photographer: Ben Hill

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Interior, first floor in original public space, view southeast. Tiled wall separating publically accessible commercial space from industrial printing area visible at center

Photo 11

Photographer: Ben Hill

Interior, second floor executive offices, view northwest

Photo 12

Photographer: Ben Hill

Interior, second floor newsroom, view southeast

Photo 13

Photographer: Ben Hill

Interior, second floor newsroom, view east. Original ribbon windows intact.

Photo 14

Photographer: Ben Hill

Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Narrative Description

The Houston Post building is located at 2410 Polk Street in Houston, Texas. It is a two- and three-story reinforced concrete frame brick and metal-clad Modern building that served as the administrative and professional headquarters for the *Houston Post* newspaper from 1954 to 1969. The newspaper's printing and shipping functions continued in the building until 1983. Facing north onto Polk Street, the building was completed in 1954 with additions constructed in the 1960s and 1970s. The building occupies much of the city block bordered by Polk Street on the north, St. Charles Street on the east, Bell Street to the south, and Emancipation Avenue on the west. The building's primary (north) elevation is a brick clad, two-story mono-facade featuring a second story horizontal ribbon strip of metal framed, single light fixed windows with a cast stone surround that wraps around to the east and west elevations. The primary entrance is marked by a prominent stone panel configuration. Historically, a frieze and inscription were located just above the entrance but have since been removed. The two and three-story industrial components of the building are concentrated at the rear of the property. Despite some alteration, the building retains integrity of location, design, materials, feeling, and association.

The Houston Post building is located on the southeast corner of Polk Street and Emancipation Avenue (formerly Dowling) in the East Downtown neighborhood of Houston, Texas, an area characterized by mixed residential and light industrial development. There is a surface parking lot and utility equipment on the southern quarter of the block. Trees line the north and west elevations and a chain link fence surrounds the property in the rear.

The commercial and industrial building was completed in 1954 and can be classified as a conservative example of Modern architecture in Houston, or a "Modern Box" particularly in terms of form and materials.¹ It is characterized by clean lines, rectangular massing, and uninterrupted planes of uniform materials. It was designed as a T-plan, with the crossbar of the "T" shape fronting Polk serving the administrative and professional staff, and the stem in the rear housing the industrial printing and shipping operations. The building was remodeled several times, with additions constructed in 1961 that added two additional printing bays adjacent to the single bay that was part of the 1954 design. In 1970, a small, rectangular shaped addition was added along the west elevation to infill a gap between the administrative building and the printing bays. A fire occurred nine months after the completion of the 1970 addition leading to a subsequent remodel. Two years later in 1972, a large, open volume warehouse was added to the rear. The building served as the headquarters for the *Houston Post* from 1954 to 1969 and the printing plant from 1954 to 1983 when new printing presses began operations at the company's then headquarters at 4747 Southwest Freeway (Figures 4-7).

Primary (North) Elevation

The primary elevation of the two-story administrative and professional portion is symmetrical, with both a horizontal emphasis and vertical centralized massing. It has a reinforced concrete structural frame and is clad with elongated red brick laid up in a stretcher bond (the east and west elevations are also clad with red brick only a more traditional size and red color). This shift in the brick dimensions and color emphasizes the importance of the main facade. The outer bays have a granite base with grey stone panels that read as solid or infilled storefront windows. These stone panels are original and the building never had ground floor storefronts. Some of the stone panels are painted over (to cover graffiti). The ground floor panels are topped with a cast stone belt course that turns 90 degrees to enframe the central bay. A slightly smaller projecting cast stone belt course also defines the second-floor continuous aluminum framed ribbon windows. The second-floor windows are interrupted only by the central bay (Figures 11-13, 17-18).

¹ Peter C. Papademetriou, Doldrums in the 'Forties: Houston Building Design in Transition," *Texas Architect*, November-December 1979, 28-35.

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The central bay functioned as the main entrance and features the same granite base as the outer bays – the only decorative elements in the design. The entrance is framed by stone panels and curved sidewalls. While the entrance is bricked-in, the original metal entrance frame is intact on the interior. Historically, there was an engraving with “The Houston Post” in a sans serif font (the same as their 1954 newspaper masthead) followed by the quote beneath: “LET THE FACTS BE SUBMITTED TO A CANDID WORLD.”² The removal date of the logo and quote is unknown. However, it remains in Houston, installed at a mixed-use office complex at 2000 Edwards Street owned by Governor Hobby’s grandson.³

East Elevation

The east elevation of the administrative portion is an asymmetrical three bay composition with one large vehicular opening and two solid pedestrian doors on the ground level. The second floor continues the ribbon windows from the main elevation which stretch approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of this elevation. The windows are currently covered with corrugated metal.

Part of the original 1954 design, the warehouse and printing portion is set back from the administrative section approximately 25 feet. This transition is also visible in the change in materials to a more common red brick type. The printing bay warehouse is a three-story square plan and encroaches approximately 20 feet onto the roof of the administrative portion. The east elevation has two large ground floor openings and a hoist opening on the third floor. Scattered along this elevation are numerous scars of former small openings. These were for the shoots that ejected newspaper bundles onto the sidewalk and vendors collected them for distribution. On the southeast corner is a projecting canopy shielding a small, inset concrete loading dock.

The largest of the utilitarian additions is the metal clad warehouse that dates to 1972. Setback an additional 70 feet from the printing warehouse is a metal clad warehouse with a single interior volume. Its height is just below the adjacent printing bay warehouse. This warehouse has a large opening for rail cars on the east elevation.

West Elevation

The second-floor ribbon windows span the entire brick west elevation of the administrative portion. Unlike the east elevation, the ground floor solid stone panels extend along this entire elevation. In addition, there are no entrances on the west elevation of the administrative portion of the building.

A small brick clad 1970 addition begins at the southern wall of the administrative portion. This small two-story rectangular plan addition modified the original T-plan to a square plan by filling the gap behind the administration building. The rear printing bay is clad with tan colored brick distinguishing it as a later alteration. One entrance and several enclosed openings are visible along this elevation. Partially obscured by trees, the earlier red brick west elevation of the three-story printing warehouse appears above this two-story addition.

Moving south along the west elevation, the 1972 warehouse addition is visible. The west elevation of this warehouse is clad in both red brick and metal. This elevation features a large recessed area on the ground level equipped with bays for loading trucks.

² There is a similar mono façade with inscription on the façade of the *Dallas Morning News* building: “BUILD THE NEWS UPON THE ROCK OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS CONDUCT IT ALWAYS UPON THE LINES OF FAIRNESS AND INTEGRITY ACKNOWLEDGE THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO GET FROM THE NEWSPAPER BOTH SIDES OF EVERY IMPORTANT QUESTION.

³ Allyn West, “The Writing is Coming from Inside the Building!” *OffCite*, June 12, 2014.

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South Elevation

The south elevation is dominated by the metal clad warehouse addition which does not feature any openings. The only breaks in its massing are three symmetrically arranged downspouts. The south elevation of the 1954 printing bay warehouse has a loading dock on the first floor in the southeast corner of the building, which was used for rail shipments. There are remnants of the rail tracks on the concrete pad in front. There is a second smaller opening to the south that housed truck loading and unloading. The second and third floors of the 1954 warehouse portion are punctuated by scars from former openings. There are two openings remaining that have been enclosed from the interior. A third opening has been fitted with a ventilation dome.

Interior

The interior is divided into three distinct spaces: the administrative offices, the central connector/circulation space, and the rear printing bay warehouse with additions. In the administrative office portion, there are remnants of terrazzo flooring on the ground floor that lead from the Polk Street entry to the stairwell and elevator. The second floor of the administrative portion retains finished surfaces on the perimeter walls, however, the floor and ceiling have been taken back to the concrete. The open space of the second floor is punctuated by regularly spaced square concrete columns. Some non-original executive office walls remain in the northwest corner. The ribbon band of windows is still visible on the interior.

Four of the original staircases and two elevator shafts remain. In the central connector space which bridged the floor level change between the office building and the industrial printing bays, some glazed clay tile walls remain in the southern portion. The interior of the three-story printing warehouse is an open industrial space with concrete floors, open ceilings, and exposed electrical and plumbing systems. All of the printing presses have been removed. There are visible tracks remaining in the floors. These tracks were used to move industrial sized paper rolls and ink drums around the printing area. Additional catwalks (since removed) were connected to the presses and to currently inaccessible levels of the three-story printing warehouse. The rear metal clad warehouse is an open volume with an exposed metal framed structure and no interior walls.

Integrity

The *Houston Post* building retains its integrity of location, design, materials, feeling, and association. The building, situated in its original location, retains its overall form and design. The stylistic distinction between the administrative portion and the industrial printing areas is clear. The symmetrical primary elevation's design and materials remain including ground floor stone panels and the second-floor ribbon windows and their cast stone surround. Though the printing presses themselves have been removed, the original and 1960s expanded printing bays remain intact. Despite the construction of the small rectangular shaped addition on the west side and the large warehouse addition in the 1970s, the removal of the primary façade inscriptions, and vandalism, the building conveys its significance as a mid-twentieth century administrative and industrial property that functioned as the *Houston Post* headquarters and printing plant.

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Statement of Significance

Coinciding with other business and physical growth across the city after World War II, the Houston Post building at 2410 Polk Street served as the headquarters for the *Houston Post* newspaper from 1954 to 1969 and housed the printing plant from 1954 to 1983. During this period, the paper was managed by Houston journalist and former Texas governor, William P. Hobby and his wife, cabinet member and philanthropist, Oveta Culp Hobby, both of whom contributed to its tremendous success. The modern brick building was designed by Herbert Voelcker & Associates with modifications completed by Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson. The property is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Communications for its association with the prominent role the *Houston Post* played in the newspaper industry of 20th Century Houston. The period of significance spans between 1954 and 1969, just shy of the 50-year threshold. The building continuously served as the headquarters of the *Houston Post* for 15 years, which justifies extending the period of significance to 1969 without claiming Criteria Consideration G for exceptional significance.

History of East Downtown

Following the founding of the City of Houston in 1836, the city was divided into geographic and political sectors called wards. A total of six wards were added before the end of the nineteenth century. The politically subdivided wards were abandoned in the early 1900s, but geographically and culturally the names remain to this day. The area now known as East Downtown (EaDo) was originally part of the Third Ward. Throughout the nineteenth century, the area featured Victorian era mansions populated by the city's fashionable upper class.⁴ By the late nineteenth century, however, Houston's elite largely abandoned the neighborhood in favor of the burgeoning suburbs. The arrival of the railroad in East Downtown at the end of the nineteenth century further fostered the transition of the neighborhood from residential to a predominantly commercial and light industrial area.⁵ During the first half of the twentieth century, the area was gradually redeveloped as a light industrial center with commercial properties and large warehouses interspersed with some remaining worker housing.⁶

The *Houston Post* first established itself in the East Downtown neighborhood in 1924. Texas governor and businessman Ross Sterling erected a three-story fireproof brick veneer printing facility (see Figure 9) at the southwest corner of Polk and Dowling (Block 468) during his brief stint as owner of the *Post*.⁷ This facility appears on the 1925 and 1925-1951 Sanborn Maps (see Figures 1 and 2). The 1954 *Houston Post* building would eventually be constructed across Dowling Street from the printing facility on Blocks 472 and 473. The 1925 Sanborn map indicates that 21 small one-story residences occupied the Block 472 at the time. This was one of a few similar residential blocks around the 4th Missionary Baptist Church at the corner of Lamar and Dowling, labeled as "colored" on the map.⁸ The San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railway, which had arrived in Houston in 1888, ran north-south a block and a half to the east of Dowling.⁹

By 1951 the neighborhood began to change and the small houses on Block 472 were removed. The remaining buildings on the block facing Polk were a two-story office building and three small stores, one with an attached garage and one with a detached garage. The southern half of the block was a large parking lot. Some of the small one-story houses in the

⁴ Chris Lane, "The Changing Face of Houston-East Downtown," *Houston Press*, December 15, 2014.

⁵ Lane, "The Changing Face of Houston-East Downtown."

⁶ Sanborn maps prior to 1925 do not exist for this part of Houston.

⁷ 1925 Houston Sanborn Map.

⁸ 1925 Houston Sanborn Map.

⁹ Hugh Hemphill, "San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad." *Texas Transportation Museum*. Accessed January 9, 2017, <http://www.txtransportationmuseum.org/history-rr-sa-aransas-pass.php>; 1925 Houston Sanborn Map

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surrounding area remained but much of the area was commercial and light industrial warehousing by the 1950s as evidenced by the two plumbing and heating supply companies, a rubber parts warehouse, and a hardware warehouse in the neighborhood.¹⁰ The same Sanborn map also shows multiple garages, an auto body shop, a gas station with a car wash and a Chevrolet dealership in the neighborhood.¹¹

In the 1930s Cantonese Chinese immigrants relocated from downtown to East Downtown in search of cheaper land. They opened restaurants, grocery stores and other businesses, and the area came to be known as “Chinatown.” Vietnamese and other Asian immigrants joined them in subsequent decades.¹² By the 1980s and 90s, most of the Asian population abandoned the area for southwest Houston and the suburbs, and the area began another downturn and transition. In 2002 a *Houston Press* article described the area as a “silent, godforsaken stretch of no-mans-land.”¹³

Like many urban warehouse districts in cities across the country, East Downtown (known to locally as “EaDo” since 2008) has very recently experienced a renaissance as a gentrified haven for young professionals. Scattered townhouses began to appear in the last decade of the twentieth century yet the major catalyst for its transformation was the 2012 construction of the \$95.5 million BBVA Compass Stadium for the Houston Dynamo major league soccer (MLS) team in the “formerly desolate,” “gritty” area east of downtown Houston.¹⁴ The neighborhood’s prime location – including proximity to the 2015 Metro light rail line extension that runs along Texas Avenue connecting the stadium to downtown, and reasonable real estate prices, helped to foster substantial retail and residential development.

While the neighborhood witnessed the demolition of several older buildings in favor of mixed-use, townhouse and condo residential development, interest in historic character and sustainability encouraged the adaptive reuse of many warehouses and commercial buildings of “old Houston.”¹⁵ Developer, David Denenburg and his partners purchased the 1917 Cheek-Neal Coffee building (NRHP 2016) designed by Joseph Finger and James Ruskin Bailey and are working on its redevelopment utilizing the historic tax credits.¹⁶ The 1913 Waddell Furniture warehouse, a city landmark, was converted into 94 loft apartments with pristine skyline views in 2017.¹⁷ Other adaptive reuse projects in the area include office and retail spaces, art galleries, bars, restaurants, and a brewery.

The Houston Post (1880-1995)

Gail Borden Johnson founded the *Houston Post* on February 19, 1880. By merging the *Post* with the *Houston Telegraph* and *Texas Register* (founded 1835), Johnson bestowed the honor on the *Post* of being a descendant of the Republic’s first newspaper.¹⁸ The paper faced financial troubles and folded in 1884. In 1885, Rienzi M. Johnston, the paper’s political correspondent in Austin, revived the *Houston Post*. With the introduction of state-of-the-art linotype, the *Post* became the first modern newspaper west of the Mississippi, one of three in the country along with the New Orleans *Times-Democrat* and the Louisville *Courier-Journal*.¹⁹ The *Post* headquarters was originally located in the *Houston Telegraph* and *Texas*

¹⁰ 1951 Houston Sanborn Map.

¹¹ 1951 Houston Sanborn Map.

¹² Jenalia Moreno, “Chinatown no longer; Call it EaDo, as in ‘east downtown.’” *Houston Chronicle*, Saturday, October 17, 2009.

¹³ John Nova Lomax, “Glamorous Youth.” *Houston Press*, November 28, 2002.

¹⁴ Catherine Meredith, “Eado’s Big Changes.” *Bisnow London*, March 2, 2016. Accessed January 9, 2017, <https://www.bisnow.com/houston/news/neighborhood/how-houston-is-making-eado-happen-56787>.

¹⁵ Meredith, “Eado’s Big Changes.”

¹⁶ Catie Dixon, “Historic Eado Building to be Redeveloped.” *Bisnow*, July 24, 2015.

¹⁷ Nancy Sarnoff, “Imagine a vacant East End furniture building as lofts.” *Houston Chronicle*, January 4, 2016.

¹⁸ Marguerite Johnston, *Houston: The Unknown City 1836-1946* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1991), 92.

¹⁹ Johnston, *Houston: The Unknown City 1836-1946*, 93.

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Register's former offices in the Larendon Building at 111 Congress Avenue and moved to the McIlhenny Building at Franklin and Fannin in 1896.²⁰

The paper's business manager in these early years was Julius Watson. Watson died of tuberculosis in 1897, leaving the paper in a trust to his six-year-old son, Roy Watson. The trustees of Watson's estate, Rienzi Johnston, G. J. Palmer and Henry F. MacGregor ran the paper until Roy Watson was 25 years old.²¹ Under their authority, the *Post* moved again in 1903 to the southwest corner of Texas and Travis (Figure 8).²² Upon taking control in 1918, Roy Watson overhauled the *Post*, breaking ties with Johnston and dismissing many of the senior editors. Watson disapproved of the *Post's* editorial and business policies and in keeping with his staunch Christian Scientist beliefs, banned all advertisements not only for patent medicines but also for wildcat oil stock, liquor, wine, beer, and yeast.²³ The paper suffered greatly because of the significant loss of advertising revenue.

Hoping to avoid disaster, successful oilman Ross S. Sterling made several attempts to purchase the *Post*. William Randolph Hearst made an offer of \$1.15 million for the paper.²⁴ Watson announced publicly "The *Post* is not for sale, has never been for sale, and never will be for sale."²⁵ Watson eventually caved and sold the *Post* to Sterling for \$1 million in 1924. Sterling immediately merged the paper with the *Houston Dispatch* to form the *Houston Post-Dispatch*.²⁶ In 1926 Sterling contracted with Sanguinet, Staats and Hedrick to design a 22-story Beaux-Arts style skyscraper at 609 Fannin for the *Post-Dispatch* headquarters and his radio station, KPRC (AM) (Figure 10).²⁷ The *Houston Post-Dispatch* building (NRHP 2001) is now the Magnolia Hotel.²⁸ In 1925, the publishing facilities for the *Post-Dispatch*, which included new presses and intertype machines, moved to a reinforced concrete and brick veneer warehouse at the southwest corner of Polk and Dowling Street built a year earlier (Figure 9).²⁹ Jesse H. Jones purchased the *Post-Dispatch* in the name of J. E. Josey, board chairman of the National Standard Life Insurance Company in 1931. The paper once again came to be known simply as the *Houston Post*, with Josey as chairman of the board.³⁰

Former Texas Governor William P. Hobby acquired a controlling interest in the *Post* in 1939. Under Hobby, the *Post* continued to grow in success and prestige. In 1940 the paper sold 93,956 copies daily and 107,945 on Sundays. By 1950, the circulation rose to 168,573 daily and 183,886 on Sundays.³¹ In 1950, the *Post* acquired the television station, KPRC-TV the NBC affiliate, and in 1954, began moving to its new \$4 million headquarters at 2410 Polk Street. During this

²⁰ James A. Clark, "The Post," *Houston Post*, January 30, 1955, Some Post Milestones: Dates, Data from 75 Years of Publishing." *Houston Post*, undated clipping from Houston Metropolitan Research Center, "H-Houston-Newspapers-Houston Post-History" vertical file.

²¹ Katherine Shepherd Hause, "An Historical Study of the First Forty-Five Years of The Houston Post" (MA Thesis, Stephen F. Austin State University, 1978), 36.

²² Clark, "The Post," 2-L.

²³ Johnston, *Houston: The Unknown City 1836-1946*, 196.

²⁴ Clark, "The Post," 4-L.

²⁵ Johnston, *Houston: The Unknown City 1836-1946*, 208.

²⁶ Jenny Deam, "Born in 1880, Houston Post was a Feisty, Daily Diary of City," *Houston Chronicle*, September 21, 2016.

²⁷ Johnston, *Houston: The Unknown City 1836-1946*, 288.

²⁸ Scot A. Cameron, Sue Winton Moss, "Houston Post-Dispatch Building," National Register of Historic Places, 2002. Available at <https://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/Details/2002000072>

²⁹ 1924 Houston Sanborn Map; Hause, "An Historical Study of the First Forty-Five Years of The Houston Post" (MA Thesis, Stephen F. Austin State University, 1978), 44.

³⁰ Johnston, *Houston: The Unknown City 1836-1946*, 288.

³¹ "Some Post Milestones: Dates, Data from 75 Years of Publishing." *Houston Post*, undated clipping from Houston Metropolitan Research Center, "H-Houston-Newspapers-Houston Post-History" vertical file.

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move, the Fannin skyscraper and the printing facility across the street at the southwest corner of Polk and Dowling were vacated.³²

At the time of the move, Houston had three daily papers: *The Press*, the *Chronicle*, and the *Post*. The *Press* had a circulation of 102,000, the *Chronicle*'s circulation was approximately 205,000, and the *Post* was the largest with a circulation of 218,000.³³ Of the three papers, the *Post* was the best regarded by its peers nationwide as well as the only morning paper in Houston. In 1966, the paper was described by *The Atlantic*, a national magazine, as "staid, occasionally enterprising, but never as vigorous as one would expect from the only morning paper in the country's sixth largest and remarkably rich city."³⁴ This description practically glows in comparison to the *Atlantic*'s remarks on the *Press* ("wretched [...] flamboyant, superficial") and the *Chronicle* ("reactionary and stingy").³⁵

In 1963, the *Post* purchased News Publishing Company, a transaction that brought the *Galveston News*, the *Galveston Tribune*, and the *Texas City Sun* under its auspices.³⁶ Hobby died in 1964, leaving his wife Oveta Culp Hobby as managing director and his son, William P. Hobby, Jr. as executive editor and executive vice president.³⁷ The *Post* sold the Galveston papers in 1967.

In the fall of 1969, the *Post* relocated its administrative and professional personnel to a new Brutalist style office complex at 4747 Southwest Freeway, designed by Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson.³⁸ The paper continued to be printed and distributed from the Polk Street location. During the 1970s, William H. Gardener, then chief editorial writer and editor, revolutionized the paper with the introduction of computer-set type.³⁹ Once again the *Houston Post* was a pioneer in journalism. The *Houston Chronicle*'s transition from an afternoon daily to a morning paper in 1979 brought it into close competition with the *Post*.⁴⁰ Within a few years, the *Chronicle* pulled ahead in circulation totals and in 1983, the same year the paper moved its printing to the Southwest Freeway location, Oveta Hobby sold the *Post* to the Toronto Sun Publishing Co. for \$100 million. Soon after, the collapse of the oil industry decimated Houston's economy the *Post* was sold once more in 1987, this time to MediaNews Group for \$150 million, and the helm was relinquished to William Dean Singleton of Graham, Texas.⁴¹ The final edition of the *Post* was printed on April 18, 1995. The presses, offices, subscriber list and other assets were taken over by the *Houston Chronicle*. The *Chronicle* is now headquartered in the former *Houston Post* building on the Southwest Freeway having sold their downtown building in 2016.

William Pettus Hobby (1878-1964) and Oveta Culp Hobby (1905-1995)

William Pettus Hobby, son of Eudora Adeline Hobby (née Pettus) and Edwin E. Hobby, was born on March 26, 1878 in Moscow, Polk County, Texas.⁴² One of six children, Hobby was raised in Livingston, Texas.⁴³ His family moved to

³² Johnston, *Houston: The Unknown City 1836-1946*, 288.

³³ Ben H. Bagdikian, "Houston's Shackled Press," *The Atlantic*, August 1966. Accessed June 5, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1966/08/houstons-shackled-press/306926/>

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Handbook of Texas Online, Diana J. Kleiner, "Houston Post," accessed January 05, 2017, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ech04>.

³⁷ Handbook of Texas Online, Diana J. Kleiner, "Houston Post."

³⁸ Some Post Milestones: Dates, Data from 75 Years of Publishing." *Houston Post*, undated clipping from Houston Metropolitan Research Center, "H-Houston-Newspapers-Houston Post-History" vertical file.

³⁹ Handbook of Texas Online, Diana J. Kleiner, "Houston Post."

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Deam, "Born in 1880, Houston Post was a Feisty, Daily Diary of City."

⁴² Handbook of Texas Online, William P. Hobby, Jr., "Hobby, William Pettus," accessed January 06, 2017, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fho04>.

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Houston in 1892 when his father, a county judge, failed to be re-elected.⁴⁴ In 1895, at the age of sixteen, Hobby got his first job as a clerk in the circulation department of *The Houston Post*. He earned \$8 per week.⁴⁵ Seven years later, in 1901, he had become a business writer at \$22.50 per week and owned ten shares in the newspaper.⁴⁶ Two years later, he rose to city editor and a year after that, managing editor.⁴⁷ In 1907 he became editor and publisher of the *Beaumont Enterprise* and the *Beaumont Journal*.

Hobby was elected lieutenant governor in 1914 and was reelected in 1916. He married Willie Chapman Cooper, who died in 1929. When James Ferguson was impeached in 1917, Hobby became the 26th governor of Texas. In 1918 he defeated Ferguson in the race for governor by a large majority.⁴⁸ His administration dealt principally with the issues of World War I, a severe drought, and the improvement of education and infrastructure. After completing his term, he returned to the *Beaumont Enterprise*, purchased the *Beaumont Journal*, and was associated with both papers until 1924, when he returned to the *Houston Post* serving as the managing of the director of the *Post* under both Sterling and Josey.⁴⁹

On February 23, 1931, Hobby married Oveta Culp of Killeen and Houston. The daughter of state legislator, Ike W. Culp, Oveta developed an interest in the law and the inner workings of government from a young age.⁵⁰ She attended Mary Hardin Baylor College in Belton and the University of Texas, and in 1925 was asked by the speaker of the Texas House of Representatives to serve as legislative parliamentarian.⁵¹ Following her marriage to Hobby in 1931, Oveta quickly learned the intricacies of the journalism world and joined her husband as book editor from 1933 to 1936, assistant to the editor of the *Post* from 1936 to 1938, and executive vice president of the *Post* in 1938.⁵² An active member of Houston society, Mrs. Hobby was a board member of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, a member of the Junior League, a the Houston Symphony Orchestra Committee, and regional chairman of the Mobilization for Human Needs.⁵³

Governor Hobby acquired the *Post* in 1939. During the early 1940s, Governor Hobby managed the *Post* while Oveta contributed to the organization of women's war efforts and from 1941 to 1942 served as the Director of the Women's Interest Section, War Department Bureau of Public Relations. Following the outbreak of World War II, the Women's Interest Section became the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, where Director Hobby became the first woman in the United States Army to wear a colonel's uniform and received a Distinguished Service Medal for outstanding service.⁵⁴ During the war, Governor Hobby served as a member of the Houston board for the registration of aliens, contributing to the salvation of Houston citizens of Japanese descent from internment.

The Hobbys were active supporters of General Dwight D. Eisenhower's campaign for president in 1952. On April 11, 1953, Colonel Hobby was appointed the first Secretary of the new Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (now Health and Human Services) and moved to Washington, D.C. As Secretary, she oversaw funding to public universities, pension and welfare disbursements, and the administration of the then-new polio vaccine.⁵⁵ Governor Hobby continued to

⁴³ Handbook of Texas Online, William P. Hobby, Jr., "Hobby, William Pettus."

⁴⁴ "William P. Hobby, 86, is Dead." *The New York Times*, June 8, 1964.

⁴⁵ Clark, "The Post," 1.

⁴⁶ Clark, "The Post," 2-L.

⁴⁷ "William P. Hobby, 86, is Dead." *The New York Times*, June 8, 1964.

⁴⁸ Ross Phares, *The Governors of Texas* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing, 1998), 134.

⁴⁹ Deam, "Born in 1880, Houston Post was a Feisty, Daily Diary of City."

⁵⁰ Clark, "The Post," 4-L.

⁵¹ Handbook of Texas Online, William P. Hobby, Jr., "Hobby, Oveta Culp," accessed January 06, 2017,

<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fho86>.

⁵² Clark, "The Post," *Houston Post*, 8-L.

⁵³ Debra L. Winegarten, *Oveta Culp Hobby: Colonel, Cabinet Member, Philanthropist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 19.

⁵⁴ Clark, "The Post," 9-L.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

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run the *Post* in Secretary Hobby's absence. During this period, the *Post* became a platform to Houston's religious leaders when the Supreme Court decision of the desegregation of public schools was nearing public announcement. The consensus in favor of the decision was published on the first page of the *Post*.⁵⁶

At the end of 1954 and carrying over into early 1955, the Hobbys moved the headquarters of the *Post* to the new building at 2410 Polk. After Secretary Hobby's return to Houston in 1955, Governor Hobby became chairman of the board of directors and Secretary Hobby was promoted to president and editor.⁵⁷ The two spent the next decade working closely together at the newspaper. According to their son, she rarely left his side for more than a few hours at a time.⁵⁸ Governor William P. Hobby died June 7, 1964. A State of Texas historical marker at his birthplace in Moscow was dedicated that same year.⁵⁹ Oveta and her son, William P. Hobby, Jr. managed the *Houston Post* for the next two decades. In 1968 Oveta was nominated to the board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. She supervised the construction of the *Post's* new building on Southwest Freeway.⁶⁰

In addition to her work at the *Post* after William's death, she served in the following roles: The first female member of Mutual of New York's board of trustees, chairman of the Board of the Bank of Texas, a member of the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service under Lyndon B. Johnson, a member of the HEW Vietnam Health Education Task Force, and a board member at Rice University. She also served on the Advisory Committee for Economic Development, the Continental Oil Company Scholarship Award Committee, the National Advisory Board of the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium, the board of the Eisenhower Birthplace Memorial Park, the President's Commission on Employment of the Physically Handicapped, the President's Commission on Civilian National Honors, the Committee for the White House Conference on Education, the board of the Eisenhower Exchange Fellowships, the Board of Directors of the Houston Symphony Society, and in several other roles. Over the course of her career, Oveta Culp Hobby received honorary degrees from Baylor University, Sam Houston State Teachers College, the University of Chattanooga (1943), Colorado Women's College (1947), Bard College (1954), Ohio Wesleyan University, Bryant College (1953), Columbia University, Smith College, Middlebury College (1954), Lafayette College (1954), the University of Pennsylvania, Colby College (1954), Fairleigh-Dickinson (1954), Mary Hardin Baylor College (1956), Western College (1954), and C. W. Post College (1962).⁶¹ In 1983 Oveta sold the *Post* and retired, though she continued to take an active role in various philanthropic activities. She died at the age of 90 on August 16, 1995 and is buried alongside her husband in Houston's Glenwood Cemetery.⁶²

Voelcker & Associates

Herbert Rudolph Voelcker was born in 1888.⁶³ Voelcker graduated from Texas A&M University with undergraduate degrees in architecture and engineering in 1909.⁶⁴ Voelcker was first employed at Lewis and Kitchen, Engineers in Kansas City in 1911 and worked in the firm's Chicago Office from 1913 to 1915.⁶⁵ Between 1916 and 1918, Voelcker worked for Louis Kahn in Detroit, Michigan and for Stanley Field in Wichita Falls, Texas.⁶⁶ In 1916, he served as

⁵⁶ Handbook of Texas Online, William P. Hobby, Jr., "Hobby, Oveta Culp."

⁵⁷ Winegarten, *Oveta Culp Hobby: Colonel, Cabinet Member, Philanthropist*, 79.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Handbook of Texas Online, William P. Hobby, Jr., "Hobby, William Pettus."

⁶⁰ Handbook of Texas Online, William P. Hobby, Jr., "Hobby, Oveta Culp."

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Winegarten, *Oveta Culp Hobby: Colonel, Cabinet Member, Philanthropist*, 90.

⁶³ Voelcker family history information provided by Voelcker's great-granddaughter, Leslie Tyrone. Leslie Tyrone, e-mail message to Anna Mod, February 24, 2017.

⁶⁴ *American Architects Directory*, George S. Koyl, ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1955), 577.

⁶⁵ Leslie Tyrone, e-mail message to Anna Mod, February 24, 2017.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

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supervising architect for the new Wichita County courthouse. He and his wife, Selma Mamie Miller were married May 6, 1916 and settled in Wichita Falls in 1917.⁶⁷ In 1918, Voelcker partnered with Jesse Dixon and formed the architectural firm, Voelcker & Dixon.⁶⁸

Voelcker & Dixon was responsible for the design of ten Texas county courthouses, including the 1928 Beaux Arts Wilbarger County Courthouse in Vernon and 1929 Classical Revival Callahan County Courthouse in Baird. Around the same time, the firm designed the stylized Classical Revival 1929 Midland County Courthouse, and when searching for a more modern design aesthetic, they designed the more avant-garde 1930 Cottle County courthouse in Paducah (NRHP 2004). Architectural historian, Jay C. Henry mused on the Cottle County building, “The dramatic articulated massing seen in the Paducah courthouse tends to diminish in subsequent work by Voelcker and Dixon.”⁶⁹ Partly as a result of budget constraints and the need for functional government buildings during the Great Depression, Voelcker and Dixon’s courthouses reflected simplified designs that blended traditional elements with modern forms to create Modern Classical buildings. Typical of this later style are the 1932 Gregg County Courthouse, the 1935 Knox County Courthouse, the 1936 Grayson County Courthouse, the 1937 Van Zandt County Courthouse (NRHP 2017), the 1940 Jack County Courthouse (NRHP 2012) and the 1941 Rockwall County Courthouse.⁷⁰ The firm also produced a design for the Motley County Courthouse in 1938. It was never built but an original rendering survives. In addition to courthouses, the firm is credited with several other civic buildings, schools, colleges, private homes and hospitals including the 1924 Seymour Municipal Building, the 1927 Wichita Falls City Hall and Municipal Auditorium, the 1931 Wichita Falls Post Office and the 1936 Hardin Administration Building at Southwestern University.⁷¹

In 1945 Voelcker established Herbert Voelcker & Associates with offices at 1202 Dennis Avenue, in Houston. The firm designed the Richard Coke Building at Texas A&M and Lee Junior College in Baytown in 1951, a series of public schools in El Dorado, Arkansas from 1950 to 1955 and in 1954, the Houston Post building.⁷² In 1955, the firm designed the Waller County Courthouse in Hempstead. Voelcker was appointed to the City of Houston Planning Commission on October 21, 1970. He died April 12, 1971 in Houston.

The Houston Post Building (2410 Polk Street)

Despite numerous additions to the warehouse building across the street, it remained too small to accommodate the staff and increasingly larger machinery necessary to produce the growing paper.⁷³ By the early 1950s the Hobbys also wanted to abandon the 1926 Houston Post – Dispatch downtown skyscraper at Texas and Fannin. The plan was to build a new home for the *Post* across Dowling Street from the old warehouse.

W. Howard Baldwin, the newspaper’s vice president and general manager, who had extensive prior experience with newspaper plant design, assumed the task of supervising the planning and layout of the new building that would house both the offices and printing facilities for the *Houston Post*.⁷⁴ Baldwin took into account a number of factors before deciding the position of the building on the site, which was bounded on the north by Polk, on the south by Clay (now Bell), on the west by Dowling (now Emancipation Avenue) and on the east by St. Charles. Dowling Street was plagued by

⁶⁷ Leslie Tyrone, e-mail message to Anna Mod, February 24, 2017.

⁶⁸ *American Architects Directory*, Koyl, ed. 577.

⁶⁹ Jay C. Henry, *Architecture in Texas: 1895-1945* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 199.

⁷⁰ Henry, *Architecture in Texas: 1895-1945*, 312.

⁷¹ Henry, *Architecture in Texas: 1895-1945*, 84, 157, 174-175, 302; Gregory Smith, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Jack County Courthouse, Jacksboro, Jack County, Texas, 2012, 13-15.

⁷² Stephen Fox, “Bryan, College Station, A&M: An Architectural Tour,” supplement to *Cite 41* Spring 1998, 12; *American Architects Directory, Second Edition*, George S. Koyl, ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1962), 727.

⁷³ “The Post’s Home: New Plant Designed With Eye to More Expansion in the Future,” 14-L.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*,

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heavy traffic and so he chose St. Charles as the location for the discharge of finished papers allowing for vendor pickup on a quieter street. Polk was the choice for the primary facade of the building. A spur track railroad ran along Clay and allowed for the delivery of newsprint rolls and other large supplies. Baldwin began schematic designs for the building in 1953. The Hobbys as well as the heads of various departments advised him on the plans.⁷⁵

In the spring of 1953, Herbert Voelcker & Associates were contracted to design the new building. Earl R. Gilbert and Ed Schroeder conceptualized the architectural design, while George Smith created the structural design, and Charles Chenault handled the electrical and mechanical plans, in cooperation with the production superintendent, S. E. Buttrill. The plans were completed on October 9, 1953 and E. Lee Bond was hired shortly after as general contractor for the project.⁷⁶ Other subcontractors and suppliers included Wood-Leppard Air Conditioning, Keith Plumbing and Heating Co., Trane Co., Elgin-Butler Brick Co., Audish and Yeatts, and Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co.⁷⁷

Voelcker's 1954 design continued a trend in Houston architecture that began in the 1940s. Architect Peter Papademetriou has described many examples of Houston architecture of this transitional period as "gawky" and displaying "progressive trends, yet not be truly avant-garde, and conservative trends, yet not be truly eclectic."⁷⁸ He continued to say that "Without a fully developed cultural vocabulary of form, this "contemporary" architecture often appeared a bit ungainly."⁷⁹ This period represented architect's selective adaptation and experimentation with certain modern features first introduced in 1932 with the emergence of the International Style, and the retention of some traditional architectural trends.

As an established firm noted for their Eclectic and Modern Classical buildings under the previous name of Voelcker and Dixon, Herbert Voelcker & Associates blended modern design concepts with vestiges of their earlier work to create a unique manifestation in the Houston Post building. Embodying many of these seemingly competing elements like other "Modern Boxes" in Texas, this abstract building shared both an emphasis on horizontality and verticality, had centralized massing, was symmetrical, had traditional and man-made materials, and the site reflected suburban development patterns. Designed with the client's specific needs and preferences in mind, the building represented a departure from Voelcker's traditional 1920s and modernistic 1930s work.⁸⁰ Similarly, Voelcker's 1955 Waller County Courthouse serves as another example of this transitional phase, indicating the firm's continued attempt to reconcile traditional and progressive design concepts (Figure 21).

Preliminary excavations began in November 1953 and the first of the building's 16-foot-deep and 10½-foot-wide spread concrete footings was poured on December 2, 1953. Approximately 150 footings were poured under an immense slab on which rested a 2-inch thick layer of cork under the pressroom floor to cushion the vibrations from the presses. With construction progressing at a remarkable rate, a trial run was carried out on the new \$1.6 million Goss Headliner presses on October 1, 1954.⁸¹

The various departments, beginning with the advertising department, moved into the new building while it was still under construction. The first edition of the paper from the new building was published October 11, 1954. Employees began moving in that same year and by the end of January 1955, all employees reported to 2410 Polk.⁸² The T-shaped building

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Advertisements in *Houston Post*, January 30, 1955.

⁷⁸ Peter C. Papademetriou, "Doldrums in the 'Forties: Houston Building Design in Transition," *Texas Architect*, November-December 1979, 29-30.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Papademetriou, "Doldrums in the 'Forties," 28-35.

⁸¹ "The Post's Home: New Plant Designed With Eye to More Expansion in the Future," 16-L.

⁸² Ibid.

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was divided into two main parts: the two-story office section, which formed the horizontal “arm” of the T facing north to Polk Street and the three-story printing plant that occupied the vertical “stem” and a third secondary part that negotiated the two disparate functions and separate floor plates.

The ground floor of the arm section of the building housed the business, advertising, purchasing, and executive departments, with paper storage in the rear.⁸³ On the second floor of the front section were additional executive offices, a conference room, the circulation, promotion and photography departments, and a cafeteria. This floor also had a spacious newsroom, flanked by the offices of the managing editor, the editorial writers, the amusements editor and the women’s and sports departments, a library, an interview room, the staff artist’s office, photographic studios and darkrooms and a large room containing the teletype machines on which state, national and international news stories were received.⁸⁴ The hallway leading from the front part of the second floor to the mailing room at the rear of the arm section was lined with offices for the cafeteria manager and the production superintendent.⁸⁵

The new *Post* building was the first air conditioning system in the United States to install the Minneapolis-Honeywell automatic temperature controls, a state-of-the-art system at the time.⁸⁶ The building was divided into 15 comfort zones, each with its own air conditioning system guided by electronic temperature controls. Except for the band that wraps around the arm section of the building at the second story level, the building was windowless—a feature that aided the effective air-conditioning of its interior space.

The building was also innovative in its solutions to common issues with printing plant design. The press operating level, because of the structure of the presses, was located between the first and second stories of the building, making access at this level impossible via the service elevator. The designers solved the problem by placing the elevator’s second landing in between the press operating level and the second floor and installing ramps from the elevator down to the presses and up to the second floor mailing room for lift trucks to drive on.⁸⁷ Another unusual feature of the new building was the convenient placement of the reel room (where giant rolls of newsprint are placed on the presses) on the ground floor, adjacent to the paper storage room, rather than in the basement of the building—which does not exist here.⁸⁸

The T-plan building was designed with future expansion in mind. The offsets created on either side of the stem of the T faced west to Dowling and east to St. Charles Street. A foundation capable of supporting a third floor was laid for the two-story arm section of the building.⁸⁹ The arm section of the building, occupied almost the entire length of the block (approx. 250 feet) along Polk Street, and served as offices. The narrower, three-story back section extended south toward the spur rail track and Clay Avenue. A row of 15 printing units and three folders ran along the west side of the stem section. In 1959, the *Post* announced that Herbert Voelcker & Associates would increase the size of the pressroom with the addition of two new bays, each 25 feet wide and 175 feet long and three stories high immediately adjacent to the original row of printing units.⁹⁰ In August 1959, seven new presses and additional equipment for color printing would be installed in the following two years. The expanded pressroom could accommodate as many as 48 total units in the future.⁹¹ These upgrades were completed in 1961. (Figure 7)

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ “Post to Enlarge Plant, Triple Pressroom Space.” *Houston Post*, August 21, 1959.

⁹¹ Ibid.

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In July 1969 plans were drawn up to expand the building again.⁹² For these modifications, the architectural firm Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson, which was also engaged in designing the Post's new facility at 4747 Southwest Freeway, was hired. In 1970 the pressroom was extended by one additional bay, infilling the "T" shape along Dowling Street. This area was used for paper storage. Additionally, a loading dock was added on the rear elevation of the front building and a metal truck bay canopy was enlarged and raised on the east side of the building. On July 18, 1970 a four-alarm fire broke out in the months-old paper storage area of the building along Dowling Street.⁹³ By this time, the editorial, executive and advertising departments had all moved to the new building on Southwest Freeway, though the East Downtown warehouse was still being used as a printing plant. Ironically, fire marshals had been summoned to the building the previous Sunday to address complaints of limited egress from the building.⁹⁴ The building was renovated in 1972 and the large, non-descript metal clad warehouse was added to the rear this same year (Figure 7).

The 1954 building at 2410 Polk continued to be used as a printing facility until the *Post* was sold to the *Toronto Sun* in October 1983.⁹⁵ Less than two months later, on December 7, 1983 the building was sold to H&C Communications Inc., (H&C is Hobby & Catto) a subsidiary of the *Houston Post*. A deed from the same day was filed between H&C Communications, Inc., granting the property to Hobby-Catto Interests.⁹⁶ The current owner purchased the Houston Post building at Polk and Dowling in 2013 from the Houston Chronicle with plans to rehabilitate the building.

Summary

The Houston Post building reflects the major role of the *Houston Post* in the 20th Century Houston newspaper industry under the direction and ownership of former Governor William P. Hobby and Secretary Oveta Culp Hobby. Designed and built in 1954 by Herbert Voelcker & Associates, the building was modified over the years to accommodate business growth but remained a symbol of the *Houston Post's* prominence, first as one of three leading newspapers, and later the largest Houston newspaper at the height of its success. As such, the building is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Communications at the local level of significance. The period of significance spans between 1954 and 1969.

⁹² "Post's History Dates Back to 1835." *Houston Post*, January 12, 1970, 3.

⁹³ "Four-Alarm Fire Fatal to Man, Paralyzes Post's Printing System." *Houston Chronicle*, July 18, 1970.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Deam, "Born in 1880, Houston Post was a Feisty, Daily Diary of City," *Houston Chronicle*, September 21, 2016.

⁹⁶ Harris County Deed Records, File Number J268629.

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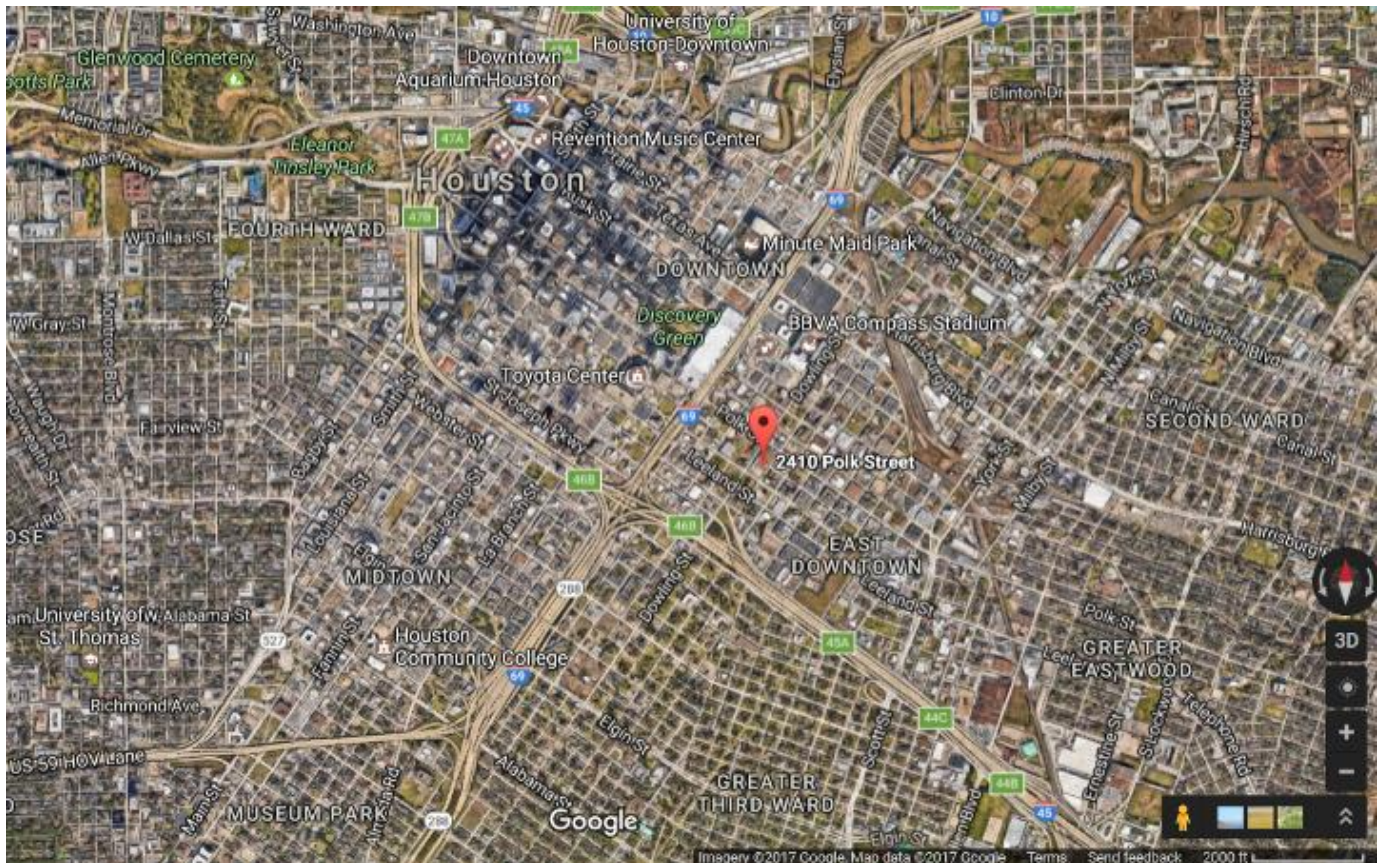
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Map 1: Harris County

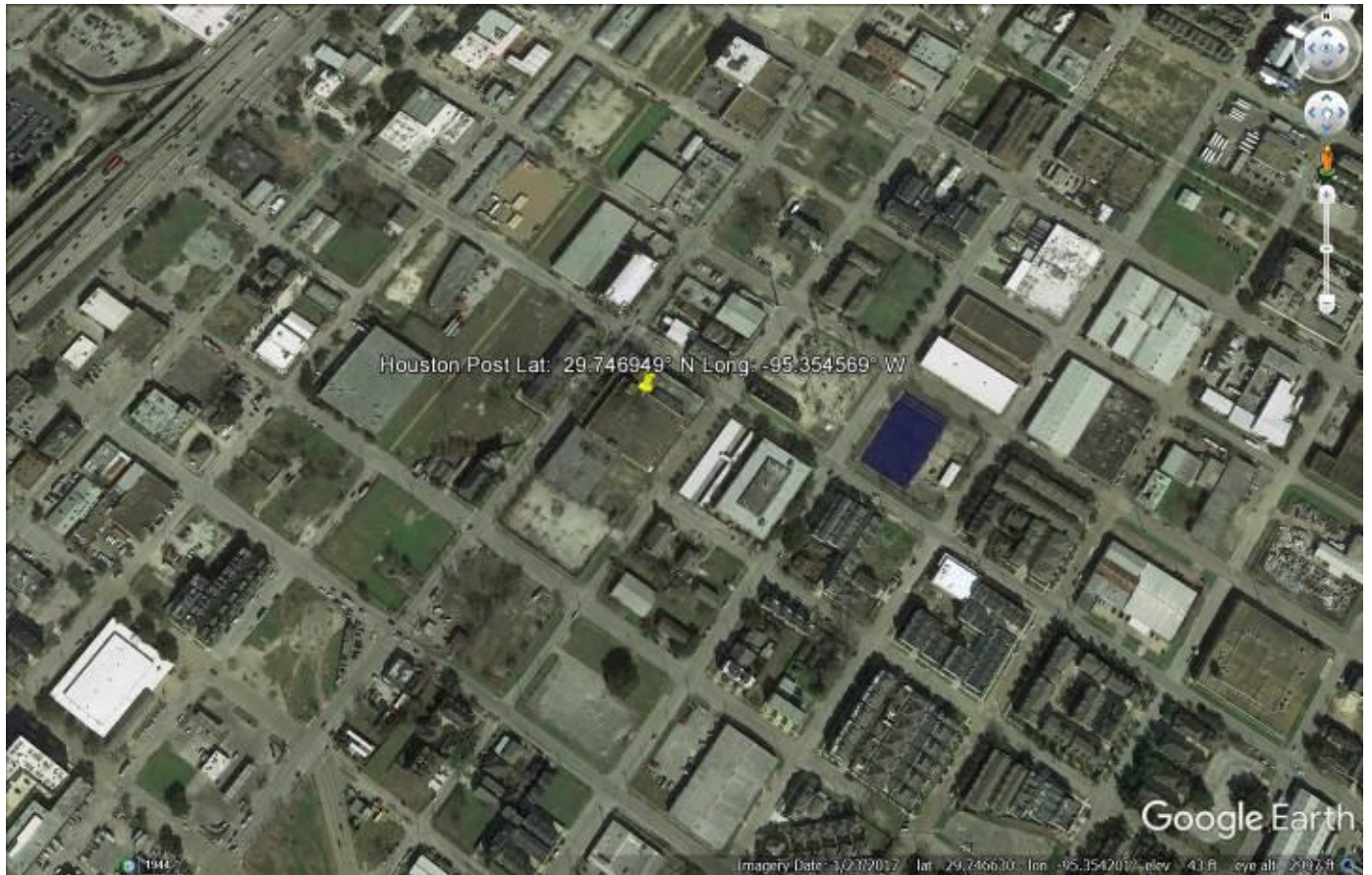


Map 2: Google Maps, Accessed May 5, 2017



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Map 3: Google Earth, Accessed June 12, 2017



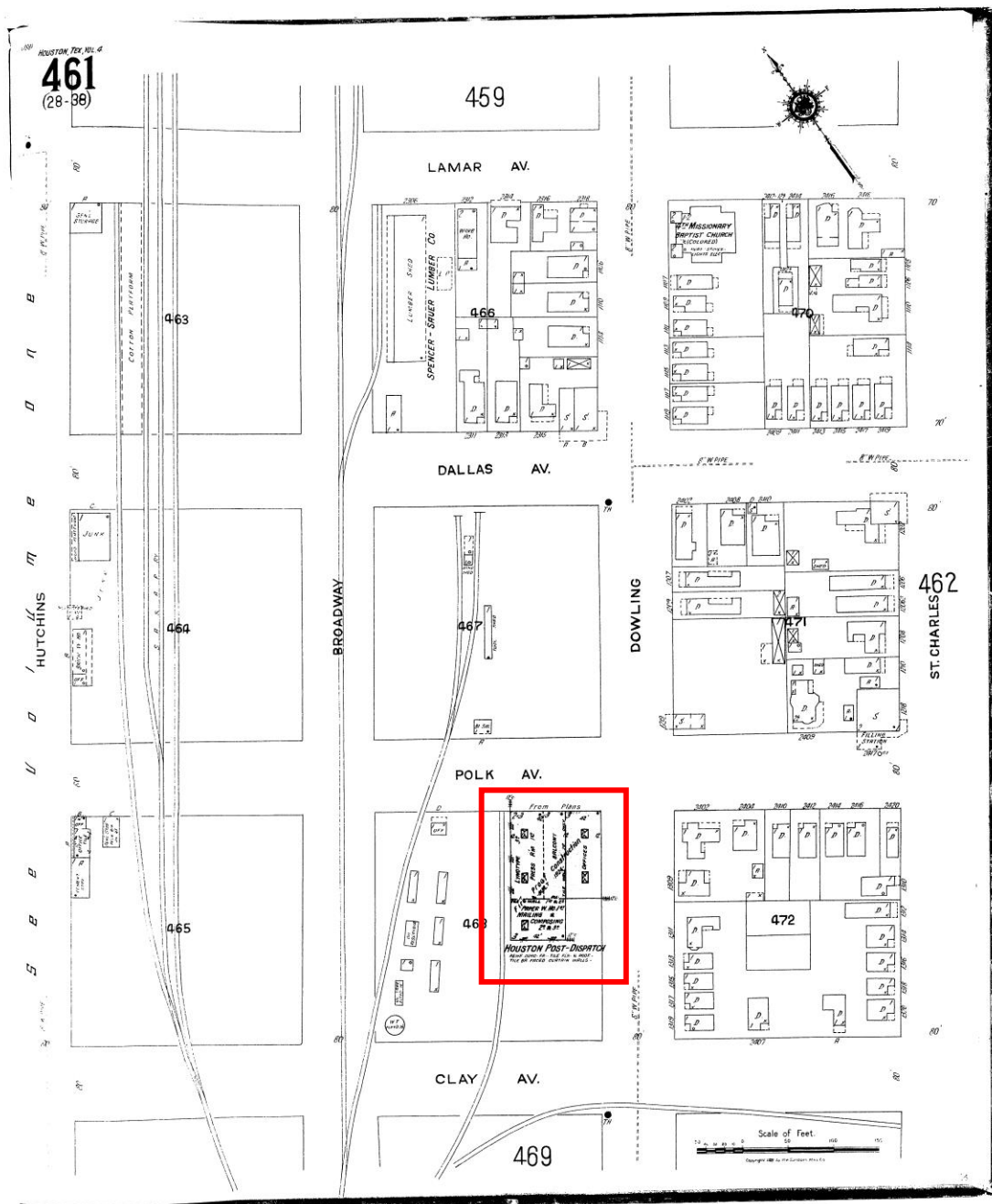
Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Map 4: Location map showing building footprint



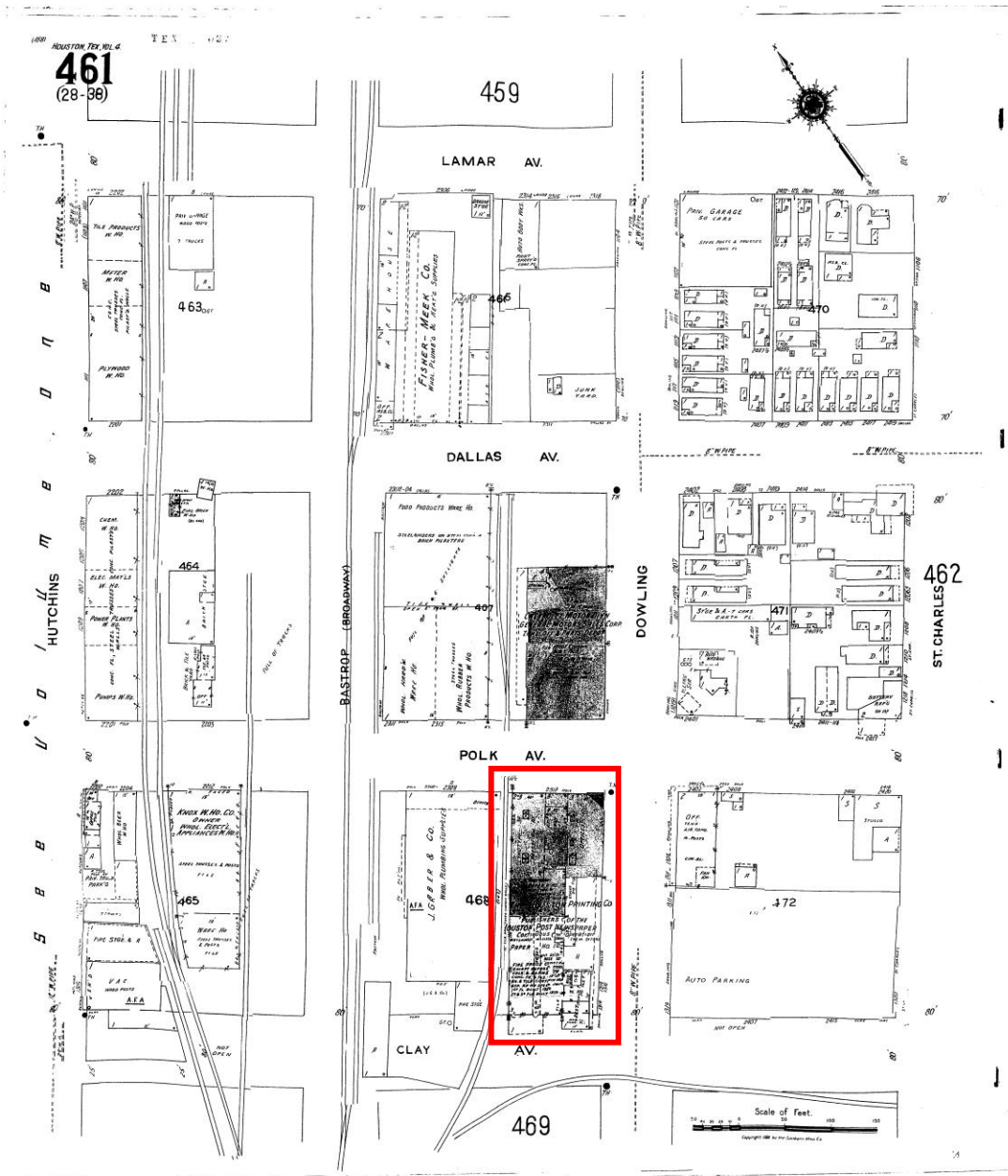
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Figure 1 – Sanborn Map, 1924-1950, Volume 4, sheet 461. Shows former 1925 Houston Post building on the SW corner (Block 468) of Polk and Dowling. Courtesy: Digital Sanborn Maps 1867-1970, ProQuest, LLC.



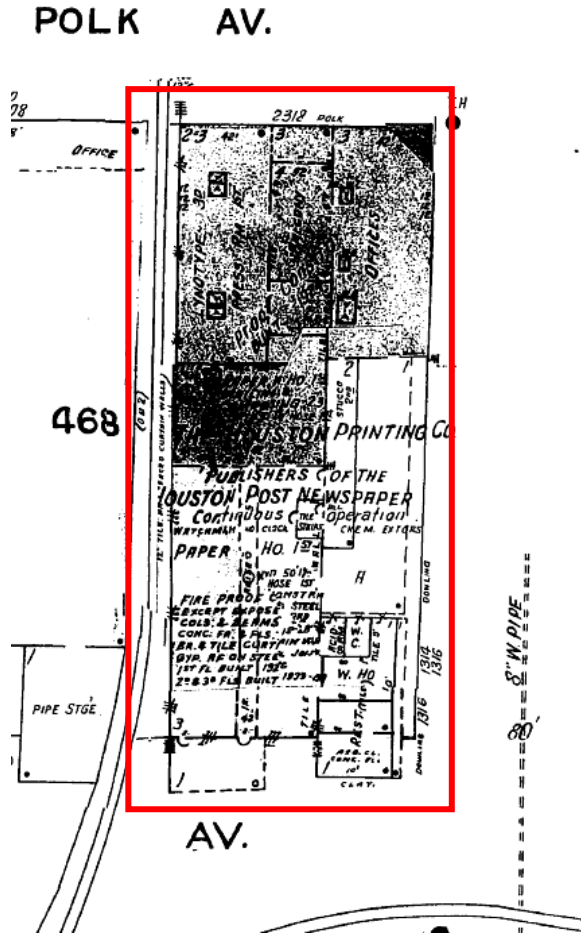
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Figure 2 – Sanborn Map, 1924-1951, Volume 4, sheet 461. Shows previous 1925 Houston Post building on the SW corner (Block 468) of Polk and Dowling. The 1954 building is located on Block 472 on the SE corner of the same intersection. Courtesy: Digital Sanborn Maps 1867-1970, ProQuest, LLC.



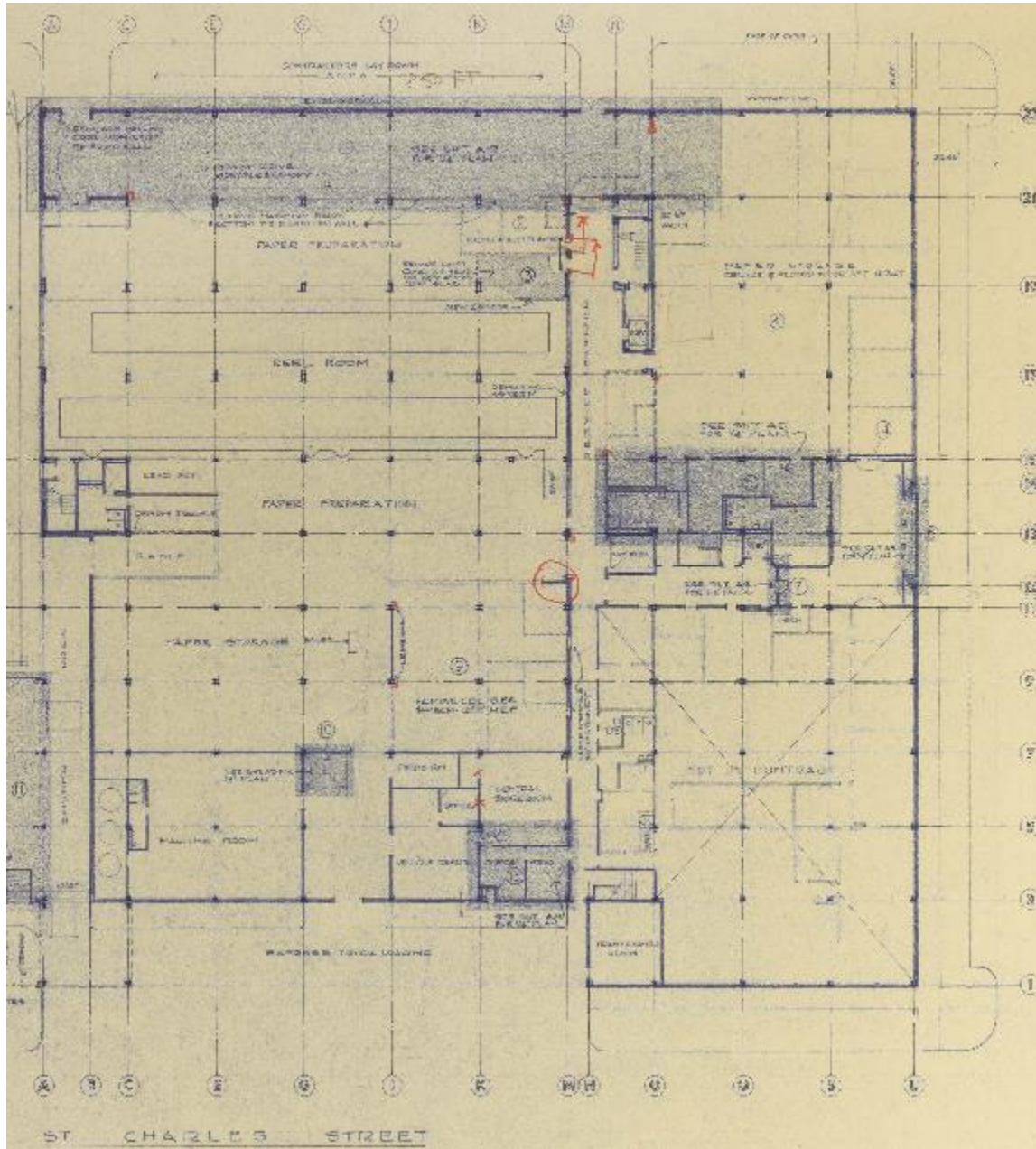
Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 3 – Sanborn Map, 1924-1951, Volume 4, sheet 461. Shows previous 1925 Houston Post building on the SW corner (Block 468) of Polk and Dowling. Courtesy: Digital Sanborn Maps 1867-1970, ProQuest, LLC.



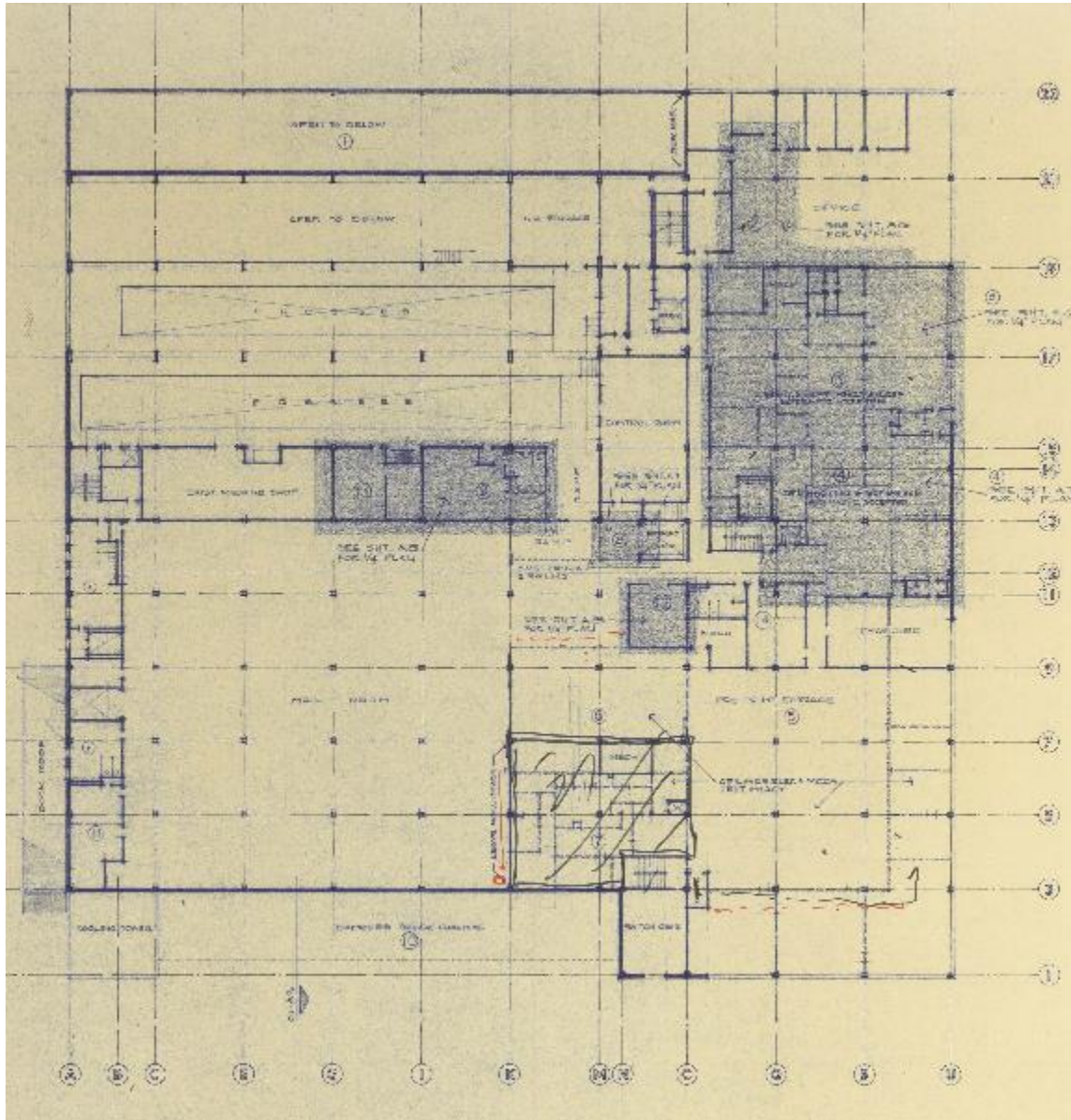
Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 4 – First Floor Plan, Wilson, Morris, Crain, & Anderson, February 1970. Courtesy: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library. N ➡



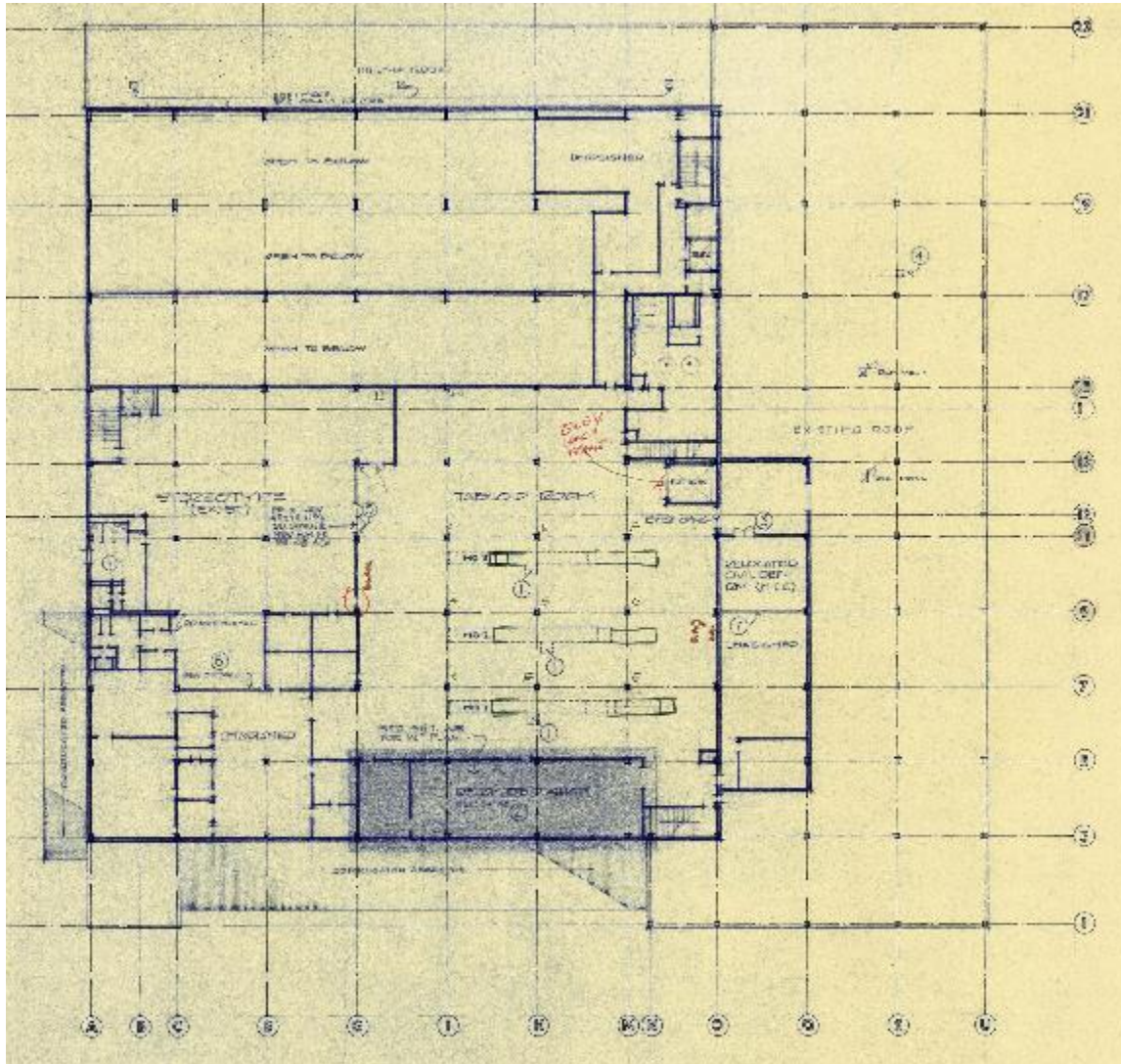
Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 5— Second Floor Plan, Wilson, Morris, Crain, & Anderson, February 1970. Courtesy: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library. N ➡



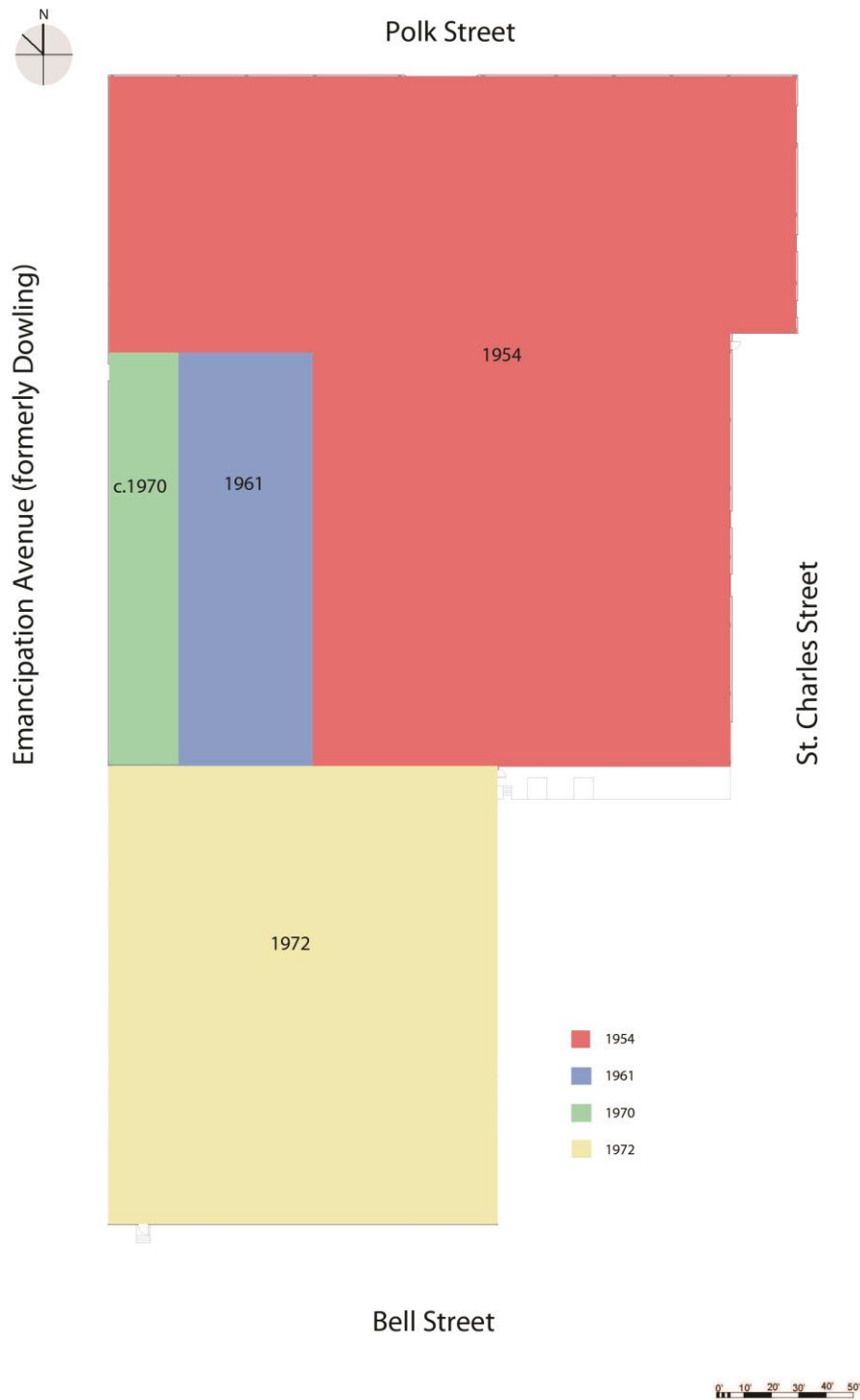
Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 6 – Third Floor Plan, Wilson, Morris, Crain, & Anderson, February 1970. Courtesy: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library. N ➡



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 7 – Diagram of construction timeline for Houston Post.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 8 – An earlier *Houston Post* location at the corner of Texas and Travis. This postcard is dated 1910. Courtesy: Rice University Digital Scholarship Archive, From the George Fuermann Texas and Houston Collection. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 9 – A 1925 image of the Houston Post building on the southwest corner of Polk (2318 Polk) and Dowling (now Emancipation). Image courtesy:

<http://www.angelfire.com/tx4/toastedposties/postphotohistory.html>



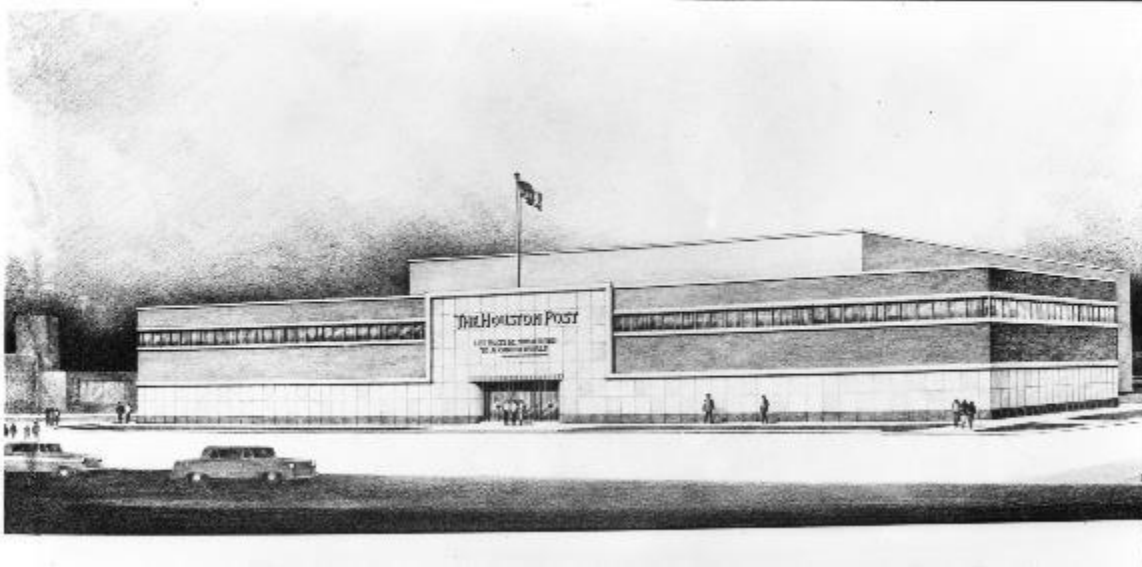
Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 10 – The 1926 Houston Post – Dispatch building (NRHP 2002) at the corner of Texas and Fannin. Postcard collection of Anna Mod.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 11 – Houston Post Building Rendering, Voelcker & Associates, January 16, 1957. Courtesy: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 12 – Houston Post Building, January 17, 1958. Courtesy: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.



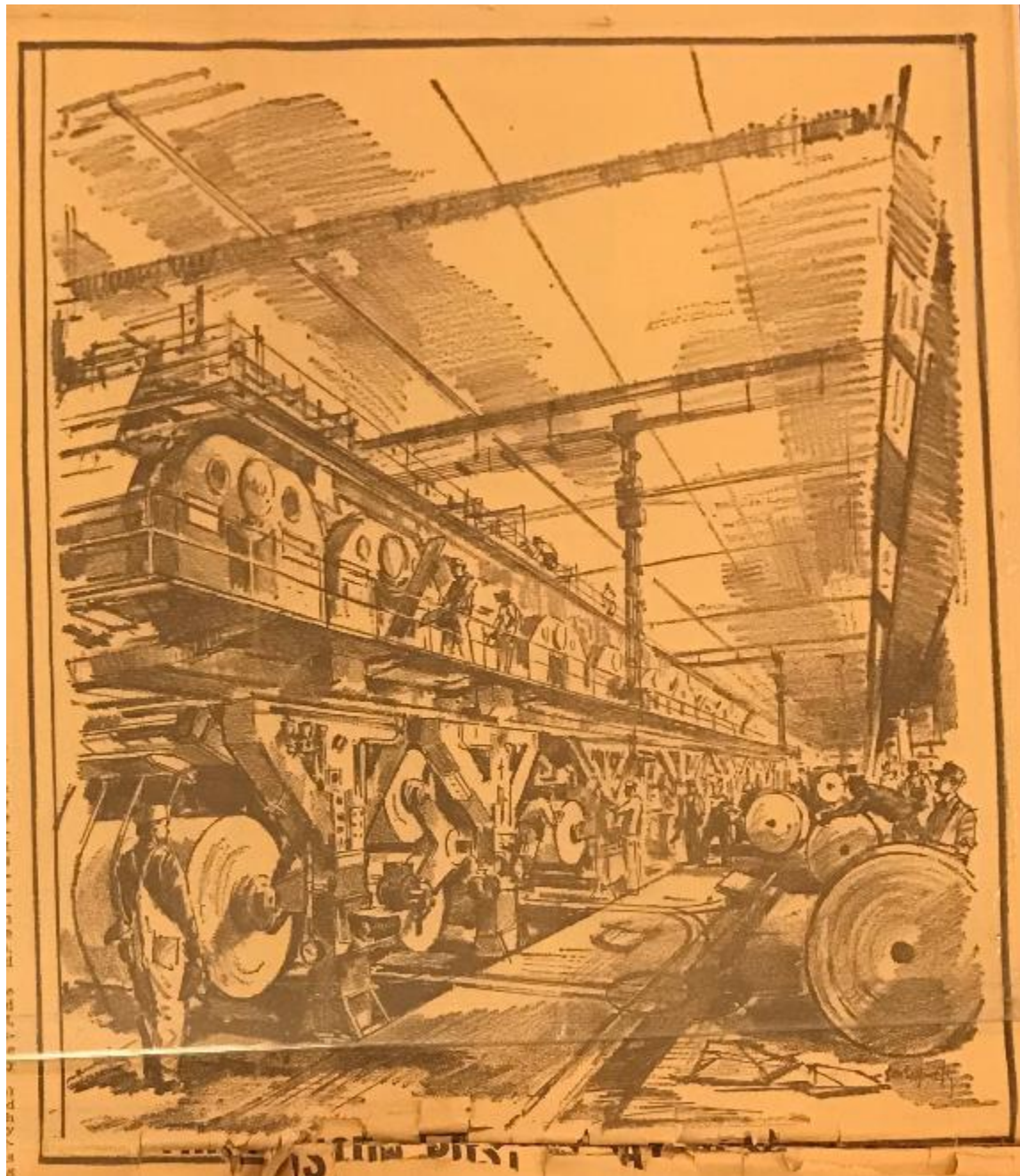
Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 13 – Houston Post Building, August 1955. Courtesy: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 14 – “Post Press Room” by E.M. Schwetz. *Houston Post*, January 30, 1955. Courtesy: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 15 – Publicity for Houston Post air conditioning system. *Houston Post*, January 30, 1955.
Courtesy: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

FIRST in Houston

THE HOUSTON POST
has the
"First in Houston"
completely automatic
air conditioning system
using
centrifugal refrigeration

Installation by
WOOD-LEPPARD
AIR CONDITIONING
2305 Dunlavy, JU-5488

Plumbing by
KEITH PLUMBING
AND HEATING CO.
1015 Sampson, CA-1486

MINNEAPOLIS-HONEYWELL
ELECTRONIC CONTROLS
AND GRAPHIC PANEL


TRANE CO. 'CENTRAVACS'
The first centrifugal refrigeration machine
providing economical fully
automatic operation.

Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 16 – Publicity for Houston Post masonry. *Houston Post*, January 30, 1955. Courtesy: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

Continued on Page 6 "You'll be SATISFIED with CLASSIFIED"

M *Modern* MASONRY goes on the job



**IN THE NEW \$4,000,000
HOUSTON POST PLANT**
... for Permanence and Beauty

**Masonry Materials and Equipment
furnished by:**

ELGIN-BUTLER BRICK CO.
Glazed Tile — Hollow Building Tile

SAFEWAY SCAFFOLDS

ALATEX
Lime

CORDELL BRICK
Common Brick — Common Tile

BOEHCK ENGINEERING CO., Inc.
Construction Equipment

SOUTH TEXAS STONE CO.
Granite and Cut Stone

ALL MASONRY WORK BY

AUDISH and YEATTS
GENERAL MASONRY *Contractors*

**Some of the Other
Fine Jobs We Have Done**

- Montrose Building
- Rice Gymnasium
- St. Vincent de Paul Church
- Deepwater School
- Green Peterson Chevrolet
- Trinity Episcopal Church
- Haliburton Oil Well
- Greyhound Bus Station
- Kress Building
- Memorial Hospital — Baytown
- Lum Terrace School
- Nurses Housing — Medical Center

4102 WESLOW MI-9-2085

Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 17 – Publicity for Houston plate glass installed by Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co. *Houston Post*, January 30, 1955. Courtesy: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.



P

Pittsburgh

GLASS

SELECTED

for the New \$4,000,000 POST PLANT

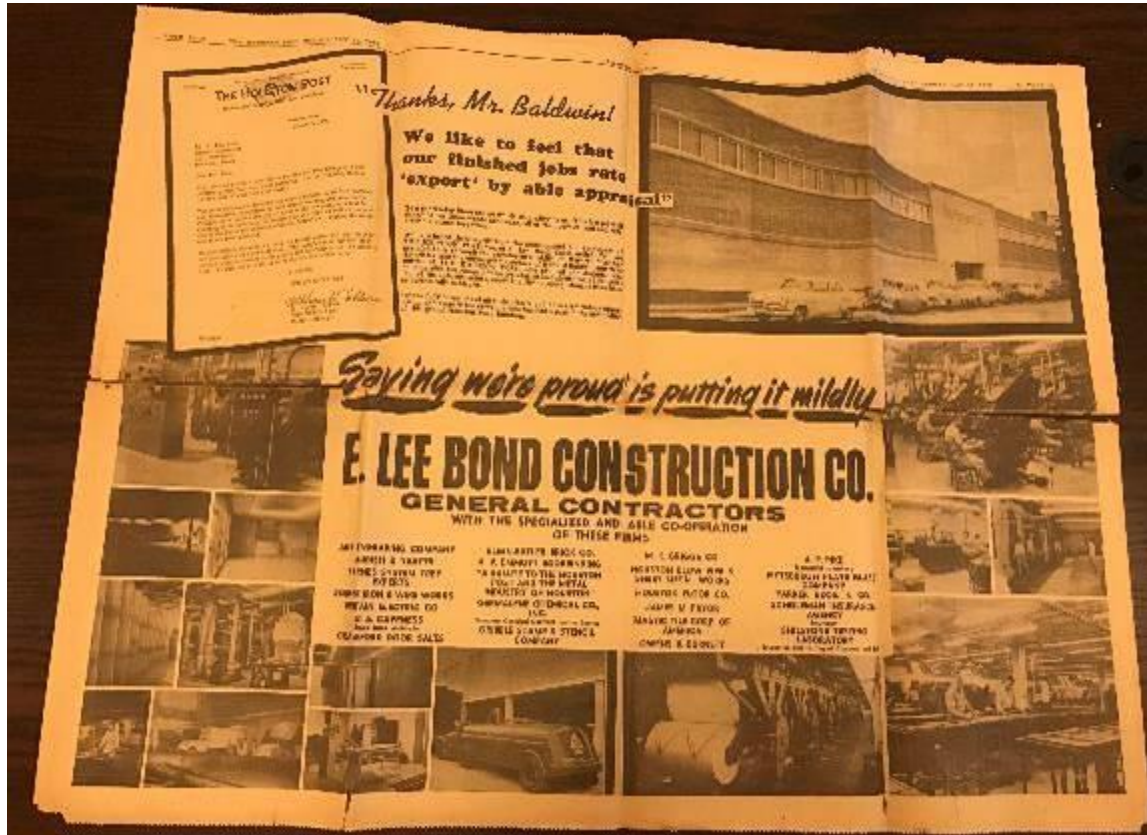
Like The POST, Pittsburgh had faith in the future of Houston and more than 38 years ago established a service branch here to distribute Pittsburgh quality glass and paint products. In 1940 a modern paint factory was built in Houston to better serve our customers. Our faith in the future of Houston was not ill-founded and Pittsburgh in 1955 will build a new modern distributing branch to further expand our facilities for service. We are planning today for tomorrow's needs.

Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co.

101 Crawford AT-7571

Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 18 – Publicity for E. Lee Bond Construction Co. *Houston Post*, January 30, 1955. Courtesy: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 19 – “The Post’s Men and Machinery Produce Your Morning Paper.” *Houston Post*, January 30, 1955, page 18-L. Courtesy: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 20 – “The Executives,” featuring portraits of the Hobby Family. *Houston Post*, January 30, 1955.
Courtesy: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 21 – 1955 Waller County Courthouse designed by Herbert Voelcker and Associates located in Hempstead, Texas. Photo courtesy *254 Texas Courthouses*, <http://www.254texascourthouses.net/088-waller-county.html>.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 1 – East elevation (L) and north façade (R), view southwest.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 2 – North façade (L) and west elevation (R), view southeast.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 3 – West (L) and south (R) elevations, view northeast.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 4 – South (L) and east (far R) elevations, view northwest.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 5 – East elevation, view northwest.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 6 – Entrance detail on primary facade, view south.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 7 – Interior, press room printing bay, view south



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 8 – Interior, cartridge storage with press room in rear, view southeast. Roller tracks for moving paper rolls visible in floor.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 9 – Interior, press room, view south with press room addition in rear.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 10 – Interior, 1972 metal warehouse addition, view northeast.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 11 – Interior, first floor in original public space, view southeast. Tiled wall separating publically accessible commercial space from industrial printing area visible at center.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 12 – Interior, second floor executive offices, view northwest.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 13 – Interior, second floor newsroom, view southeast.



Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo 14 – Interior, second floor newsroom, view east. Original ribbon windows intact.







Dorland St

LOVETT

10000 Lovett Rd
Atlanta, GA 30328
770.412.1234
www.lovettschools.org

←











NO SMOKING

NO SMOKING



CAUTION
NO SMOKING
NO OPEN FLAMES

MC













BLACK

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Houston Post

Multiple Name:

State & County: TEXAS, Harris

Date Received: 2/14/2018 Date of Pending List: 3/9/2018 Date of 16th Day: 3/26/2018 Date of 45th Day: 4/2/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100002269

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL	<input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue
<input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Photo
<input type="checkbox"/> Waiver	<input type="checkbox"/> National	<input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary
<input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Period
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> TCP	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> CLG	

Accept Return Reject 4/2/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The Houston Post building is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Communications. The distinctive office and light industrial facility served as the home of the prominent Houston Post newspaper from 1954-1969, a period marked by substantial growth in circulation and influence under owners William Hobby and Oveta Culp Hobby.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept NR Criterion A.

Reviewer Paul Lusignan

Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2229

Date 4/2/2018

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories



TO: Edson Beall
 National Register of Historic Places
 Mail Stop 7228
 1849 C St, NW
 Washington, D.C. 20240

From: Mark Wolfe, SHPO
 Texas Historical Commission

RE: Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas

DATE: February 12, 2018

The following materials are submitted:

X	Original National Register of Historic Places form on disk. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the National Register of Historic Places nomination of the Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas
	Resubmitted nomination.
X	Original NRHP signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
	Multiple Property Documentation form on disk.
	Resubmitted form.
	Original MPDF signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
X	CD with TIFF photograph files, KMZ files, and nomination PDF
	Correspondence.

COMMENTS:

- SHPO requests substantive review (cover letter from SHPO attached)
- The enclosed owner objections (do) (do not) constitute a majority of property owners
- Other:

