

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

MP-1930

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: United States Post Office  
Other names/site number: Federal Building, U.S. Post Office and Courthouse  
Name of related multiple property listing:  
Bronson Park Historic District, Kalamazoo Multiple Resource Area  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 410 West Michigan Avenue  
City or town: Kalamazoo State: MI County: Kalamazoo  
Not For Publication:  Vicinity: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 level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

	11/16/2017
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	
Federal Preservation Officer <u>U.S. General Services Administration</u>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<hr/>	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<u>Bruce Conway SHPO</u>	<u>10/2/17</u>
<b>Title:</b> <u>SHPO</u>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Patrick Andrews  
Signature of the Keeper

12/26/2017  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	buildings
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	sites
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	structures
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	objects
<u>    0    </u>	<u>    0    </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register     1      
Contributing to Bronson Park Historic District

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- GOVERNMENT/Post Office
- GOVERNMENT/Government Office
- 
- 
- 
- 

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- GOVERNMENT/Courthouse
- GOVERNMENT/Government Office
- 
- 
- 
-

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENTS/Moderne

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete; Kasota Limestone; Brick,;  
Granite

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The United States Post Office is located at 410 West Michigan Avenue in downtown Kalamazoo, Michigan, and is a contributing resource in the Bronson Park Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Designed solely for use by the postal service and constructed in 1939, the building was subsequently modified to accommodate multiple federal tenants. The main block of the rectangular building is a single story, while a small utilitarian section at the rear is a story plus mezzanine. The federal government building is a reinforced concrete bearing wall structure with interior framing of steel and reinforced concrete floor slabs and is faced with Kasota limestone and brick. Like many government and civic buildings of the period, it reflects the Classical Moderne architectural style. Two entrances located near the ends of the West Michigan Avenue façade have metal work that incorporates Art Deco-inspired forms and are surmounted by panels with bas-relief eagles. Classical elements include tall window openings separated by fluted piers supporting a parapet wall. Portions of the West Michigan Avenue postal lobby and adjacent stair halls remain intact and convey the original Art Moderne design of the public spaces in the building.

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The exterior of the building has a high level of integrity. Unsympathetic 1960s alterations to the façade's entrance doors and windows were significantly improved circa 1987 with replacements matching the appearance, if not the material, of the original units. While the interior was subjected to significant modifications with rehabilitation of much of the postal area for use by the court and federal agencies, portions of the most significant public areas remain intact.

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### **Narrative Description<sup>1</sup>**

The United States Post Office, completed in 1939, is located at the western edge of the central business district of Kalamazoo and at the northwest corner of the Bronson Park Historic District. The United States Post Office is a contributing resource in the National Register of Historic Places-listed Bronson Park Historic District, which encompasses the city's civic center area.<sup>2</sup> Originally designed for use solely by the postal service, the building was subsequently modified to include a courtroom and offices for the court and other federal agencies. The building occupies the northwest corner of the intersection of West Michigan Avenue (south elevation) and Park Street (east elevation) and is set back from the sidewalk by a narrow lawn on both streets. An asphalt-paved parking lot with forty-four spaces is located on the north side of the building and extends to West Water Street, the northern boundary of the property. The property is surrounded by commercial buildings and several churches.

The United States Post Office is an expression of the Classical Moderne architectural style in both design elements and materials. The prominent corner setting for the building, overall formality, and emphasized entrances demonstrate the continuing influence of Beaux-Arts classicism. A more modernistic tone is established with the smooth yellow Kasota limestone walls, punched window openings, broad fluted piers, and metalwork at the entrances, handrails, and window well walls.

The United States Post Office has two street facing elevations, the south and east sides. The primary façade faces south, onto West Michigan Avenue and the primary entrances are located at east and west ends of this facade. The predominantly rectangular footprint of the building includes a smaller rectangular block projecting from the north (rear) elevation. A long loading platform is located on the north elevation of this smaller rectangular block, facing the parking lot. The main block is one story above a raised basement, while the small rear block contains two levels: a low first story and mezzanine level.

The United States Post Office is a reinforced concrete bearing wall structure with interior framing of steel and reinforced concrete floor slabs. The street-facing south and east elevations

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<sup>1</sup> Architectural drawings for the United States Post Office are located in the building. Original drawings were approved in February 1938 by Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department.

<sup>2</sup> An irregularly shaped seven-block area around Bronson Park, the city's public square, containing many of the oldest and most significant of Kalamazoo's governmental, civic and religious structures, including the United States Post Office, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 5/27/1983 as the Bronson Park Historic District (# 83000855).

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are clad in Kasota limestone. The secondary west and north elevations are clad in yellow brick. All window openings contain replacement units composed of dark-colored anodized aluminum frames and sash with double glazing and mullion and muntin patterns closely approximating the appearance of the original windows.<sup>3</sup> A sheet metal canopy shelters the loading platform on the north side of the building. A yellow brick chimney rises from the northwest corner of the building. Toward the rear of the west elevation, a glazed aluminum framed structure with a shed roofline has been installed over the exterior stairs to the basement and a portion of the adjacent window well. The roof of the building is a flat deck, covered with black rubber membrane.

## Exterior

The south and east exterior walls of the United States Post Office, including the raised basement, are faced with dressed yellow Kasota limestone laid in large square panels. The limestone extends one bay beyond the facade onto the west elevation. A molded Kasota limestone belt course marks the top of the water table on the south façade and east elevation. Plain stone coping caps the roofline on all elevations. On the façade, the rectangular basement windows are set within a continuous window well between the two entrances. The west elevation mirrors this feature. Decorative iron railings are attached to limestone curbing around the window wells. The railings' supporting posts have cast iron panels with a pattern of overlapping diamonds. The basement windows are covered in decorative metal grilles with a small, repetitive pattern. The metal railings and window grilles are painted grey.

### South (front) Façade

The main (south) façade has vertical elements that balance the horizontality of the long, one-story façade. The two entrances placed at the ends of this façade frame nine central bays. This long wall expanse is set slightly forward from the wide corner pavilions. Wide fluted piers rise from the molded water table to a lintel molding that takes the place of a classical frieze. The walls of each bay are recessed from the plane of the pilasters and deep sills. The continuous lintel runs along the tall window openings. On the façade, the large window units are composed of full-height, six-over-six windows with six-light transoms. Both transom and window sash are flanked by a single row sidelight matching the adjoining pane pattern. These replacement units replicate the configuration and muntin pattern of the original windows.

The two identical entrances on West Michigan Avenue are approached by nine granite steps flanked by Kasota limestone cheek walls. Decorative metal railings on the cheek walls have paired iron posts flanking a cast iron panel with an overlapping diamond pattern, similar to those around the window wells. The panel is repeated five times along the length of the railing. A simple modern handrail has been added in the center of the steps. The entrance openings are the same height as the window openings. A metal frame with narrow border and offset vertical muntins frames both the entrance and the tall transom above. A pair of glazed doors is set below

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<sup>3</sup> The original windows were double hung wood sash with operable transoms that swung inward. Between 1968 and 1986, the original windows on the primary façade were replaced with aluminum windows that made no attempt to match the pattern of the original windows. The current windows were installed throughout the building in 1987.

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a fluted lintel. Each leaf of the door has six lights. These doors are recent replacements.<sup>4</sup> Three panels with foliate forms above the fluted lintel correspond to the widths of the central three vertical divisions of the transom. The metal components of the entrance, doors and railings are all painted grey. A pair of stone reveals emphasizes the verticality of the entrance openings and supports a lintel molding. Exterior lights are recessed in the entrance openings' soffits.

Bas-relief limestone panels of eagles and stars enrich the parapet wall above both entrances. The limestone panels are flanked by single rosette carvings. The original carved lettering on the parapet wall which read "United States Post Office" was replaced with "Federal Building United States Post Office and Courthouse" in 1968, following the removal of the main post office function from the building and rehabilitation to convert postal spaces into court and office space. A cornerstone is located at the east end of the façade, just below the water table belt course, and is inscribed as follows:

HENRY MORGENTHAU, JR  
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY  
JAMES A FARLEY  
POSTMASTER GENERAL  
LOUIS A SIMON  
SUPERVISING ARCHITECT  
NEAL A MELICK  
SUPERVISING ENGINEER  
LEROY & NEWLANDER  
GEORGE D MASON & CO  
ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS  
1938

### East Elevation

The Park Street elevation has a slightly projecting central portion that has seven bays of windows. The design of the bays is similar to that of the West Michigan Avenue façade except the window walls are separated from the piers by two stone set-backs and the windows lack sidelights. The window openings hold six-light transoms over six-over-six double-hung sash, replicating the configuration and muntin pattern of the original windows. The long basement window well is edged with the decorative railing used along the West Michigan Avenue facade.

At the north end of the east elevation, and inset from it, is the one-bay-wide side elevation of the rear block. Its east elevation is faced in Kasota limestone but is otherwise unornamented. A pair of small single pane windows are centered in the wall and set low, corresponding to lower height of the first floor in the rear block. The upper portion of the wall, corresponding to the mezzanine level, is blind.

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<sup>4</sup> The original drawings indicate the entrance doors were to be hollow metal with divisions matching those in the current door, but having steel plates rather than glazed panes. At some unknown date, the original doors were replaced by unsympathetic aluminum and glass doors. These were replaced by the current doors after 1986.

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North (rear) Elevation

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The long, narrow rear block projects from the main block of the building by one bay and is inset from the east and west side walls of the main block by one bay on either side. The east end of the north elevation of the main block of the building, visible beyond the rear block, is faced in Kasota limestone and contains a pair of windows which match those on the adjacent Park Street elevation.

At the west end of the elevation, a yellow brick chimney rises in the corner formed by the projecting rear block and north wall of the main block. The stone coping along the roofline continues across the chimney, which rises well above the roof level. Small rectangular openings with metal louvers are located in the upper portion of the chimney and round metal pipe extends from its top. The north elevation of the main block of the building is clad in yellow brick and is blind. Mechanical equipment set on grade at the northwest corner of the building is enclosed with a screened chain link fence.

The north elevation of the rear block is clad in yellow brick and, above the loading platform canopy, has a series twelve small windows openings, lighting the mezzanine level. The easternmost opening has been infilled with metal louvers, but the remaining window openings contain one-over-one, double-hung sash. A series of openings with replacement doors and windows are located in the wall below the loading platform canopy. A series of square columns support the canopy, which is edged with sheet metal with decorative ribs. Additional support from above is provided by tie-rods attached to plates in the wall. The loading platform has been extended at the west end by one bay, which has a higher canopy than the rest of the platform. A concrete ramp with a pipe railing extends from the Park Street sidewalk to the east end of the loading platform.

#### West Elevation

The west elevation of the main block of the building is clad in yellow brick except for the southernmost bay where Kasota limestone wraps around the corner onto this elevation from the primary (south) elevation. Four windows are grouped at the north end of the west elevation. A wide pier separates them from three additional window openings more widely spaced toward the south end of the wall. A single window opening penetrates the Kasota-clad southernmost bay. Alterations include brick walls flanking a dark finished, glazed aluminum frame enclosure of the exterior steps to the basement at the north end of the west elevation. In addition, the adjacent window well is covered with a similar structure. Both enclosures have a shed roofline.<sup>5</sup>

The west elevation of the rear block is recessed from the west elevation of the main block and is one wide bay in width. It is clad in yellow brick and is blind.

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<sup>5</sup> The current enclosures were installed after 2008, replacing nearly identical structures with curved rooflines. The date of installation of these previous enclosures is unknown.



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## Interior

The first floor of the United States Post Office originally contained a large public lobby which extended across the entire south side of the building, where the public could access service windows, postal boxes, and attend to other postal matters. Offices of postal service officials were located at the center of the first floor, and a large post office workroom was located at the rear of the building. A series of catwalks above the postal workroom allowed postal inspectors to observe employees at work below. The mezzanine or partial second story at the rear of the building housed post office support spaces including the "swing room" or employee break room.

In 1959, the main branch of the postal service in Kalamazoo moved to a new facility, leaving a only a smaller postal substation in the West Michigan Avenue building. Vacated postal service areas, including much of the lobby and postal workroom, were rehabilitated for the courts and federal offices between 1962 and 1963.

The two remaining portions of the post office lobby, at the east and west ends of the building, now function as interior lobbies that connect with stair halls to the basement. The west lobby also serves as the main point of entrance into the building. The rest of the lobby between the east and west ends has been partitioned off into office space. The original layout of the post office workroom has also been divided into smaller spaces, including a small bankruptcy courtroom and larger district courtroom. The original catwalks remain, hidden above the dropped ceiling. The mezzanine level is not serviced by an elevator and thus is largely unused. The rehabilitated areas feature modern office finishes including carpeted floors, drywall partitions, dropped ceilings, and florescent lighting. The basement houses mechanical equipment, storage and some office spaces.

The west lobby extends into the original L-shaped space of the post office lobby that served the money order and postal savings windows. The original, small vestibule inside the entrance is enclosed with glazed metal panels with six-light fixed sash and a pair of doors with glazed upper portions. The black terrazzo floor of the west lobby and stair hall is outlined with a gray terrazzo border. Polished black granite forms a base and wainscot on the walls as well as plain piers that flank the exterior entrance and doorway to the stair hall.

The upper wall between the piers that frame the entrance to the stair hall is enriched with concentric rectangular plaster borders above a narrow band of fluted molding. The ceiling of the entrance space also has a pattern of concentric rectangular recessed borders with fluted edges that surround a recessed rectangular panel. Bronze directories are mounted on the west wall the entrance hall.

A writing stand is positioned north of the entrance to the stair hall on the west wall of the west lobby. A base supports a polished black marble shelf edged with an aluminum molding and black marble back splash. A bronze envelope holder flanked by two green hemispheric pen holders sits on the shelf. Additional writing stands are located in the former post office lobby. The west lobby contains a modern security desk and security screening apparatus.

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The east lobby is similar to the west lobby in materials and trim. The lobby has a small vestibule inside the entrance enclosed with glazed metal panels with six-light fixed sash and pair of doors with glazed upper portions, matching that of the west lobby. The east lobby has polished black granite base and wainscoting on the walls as well as black granite piers located opposite the doors in the east and south walls. The east wall of the east lobby also has two decorative bronze directory cases.

The stairwells on the west and east end of the south side of the building have a polished Kasota limestone wainscot above black marble bases. Recessed telephone shelves with black marble counters framed with Kasota limestone are positioned in the west and east elevations of the interior walls separating the lobby from the stair wells. A black iron stair railing edges the two staircases that have terrazzo treads.

### **Alterations and Integrity**

The exterior of the United States Post Office has a high degree of architectural integrity with regard to design, materials, and workmanship. The building still conveys the formality of a federal building and the scale of the post office operation at the time it was built. It retains its distinctive Kasota limestone walls and Art Deco inspired metalwork. Although it does not retain its original windows, the existing replacement windows, installed in 1987, approximate the original design. Moreover, on the primary façade, the 1987 windows replaced inappropriately configured unfinished aluminum windows installed in the 1960s. Similarly, inappropriate aluminum doors installed in the 1960s have been replaced with doors more in keeping with the original design and appearance. Other alterations to the exterior, such as the handicapped ramp on the east side and basement stair coverings on the west side, are located on secondary elevations, are minor and reversible.

The interior of the United States Post Office retains less integrity than the exterior. The main floor was substantially reconfigured in 1963 when the main Kalamazoo post office moved to another location and altered again in the 1990s after the remaining postal functions vacated the building. However, portions of the original lobby remain at the east and west entrances. These extant portions of the public lobby and the adjacent stair halls convey the design and formality of the building's major public interior space and exhibit integrity with regard to design, materials and workmanship.

The location of the United States Post Office, in downtown Kalamazoo, at the northwest corner of the Bronson Park Civic Center is unchanged, although the setting has changed somewhat, with newer buildings replacing several of its original late nineteenth and early twentieth century neighbors. Finally, United States Post Office retains its overall monumentality as a governmental entity and continues its use as a federal building, all of which contribute to integrity of feeling and association.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Politics/ Government

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1939

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1939

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

LeRoy & Newlander

George D. Mason & Company

Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect of the Treasury

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The United States Post Office is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The building meets Criterion A for Politics/Government at the local level and Criterion C for Architecture at the local level. The period of significance is 1939, representing the completion of the building. The building retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a federal building of the period.

Under Criterion A for Politics/Government, the United States Post Office represents two historical developments: implementation of a local city planning program and a national construction program. The United States Post Office is one of three government buildings erected for the city, county, and federal governments during the 1920s and 1930s in the area surrounding Bronson Park during the transformation of that portion of Kalamazoo into the Bronson Park Civic Center. The United States Post Office is a notable example of a federal government building in Kalamazoo erected under the New Deal-era federal programs designed in the 1930s to relieve the economic problems caused by the Great Depression.

Under Criterion C for Architecture, the United States Post Office is a representative example of the Classical Moderne style of architecture in a federal building erected during the 1930s. The Classical elements are expressed on the exterior in the symmetrical façade divided by pilasters, and Moderne elements include the façade setbacks, flat planar surfaces and the relative lack of exterior ornamentation. The United States Post Office completed a set of three civic buildings designed in the modernistic idioms of the 1920s and 1930s, which includes the Art Deco style Kalamazoo City Hall, the Classical Moderne Kalamazoo County Building, and the United States Post Office.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**Historic Context:**  
**Federal Buildings Construction Program**

The U.S. Treasury Department was the agency responsible for the construction of federal buildings—mainly post offices and courthouses—from the mid-nineteenth century until the Federal Works Agency was created in 1939. The U.S. Treasury Department established the Office of Supervising Architect in 1852 to oversee design and construction of the federal civilian facilities. The work of this office represents several eras defined by congressional authorizations, the Supervising Architect's stylistic preferences, and the involvement of private

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architects. During the first fifteen years of the twentieth century, private architects provided designs for larger projects while the staff in the Office of the Supervising Architect produced plans for many smaller buildings. The period between 1915 and 1930, however, was characterized by a more standardized approach to the design of federal buildings, and relatively little new construction took place during this period. A system of four classes of buildings was defined, based on the value of annual post office receipts and the value of adjoining real estate in large cities; buildings in higher classes were allowed larger budgets for design and construction.<sup>6</sup>

The onset of the Great Depression after the stock market crash in 1929 ushered in a new era of federal building projects. The Hoover Administration and the U.S. Congress had increased funding for the federal building program in 1928 and did so again in 1930 and 1931. The U.S. Congress amended the Public Buildings Act of 1926 on May 31, 1930 with increased funding and authorized the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury to contract with private firms and individuals. The Federal Employment Stabilization Act of 1931 appropriated an additional \$100 million for that year and directed federal agencies that oversaw construction projects to prepare six year plans. As a result of this act, the staff of the Supervising Architect's office was significantly increased and more than 130 private architectural firms were commissioned to design federal buildings in 1931. By 1934, more than 300 firms were involved in the program.<sup>7</sup>

The Public Works Administration (PWA) was established in 1933 to oversee the planning and construction of public works projects. As the main goals of the program were to provide employment and to erect buildings, standardization of design continued to be a priority. "Cabinet Sketches" produced by the U.S. Treasury Department included standard floor plans for post offices of various sizes. Individual treatment was limited mostly to exterior details. More than 400 post offices represented the most typical and widely built of the PWA's projects by 1939. The PWA did not become involved in the design of any PWA funded buildings or projects, except to require that building materials be from the United States and manufactured by American firms. Michigan was in the PWA's Region 2 where "traditional and 'modern' design both appear[ed] without any notable trend toward one or the other" during the 1930s.<sup>8</sup>

Louis A. Simon (1867-1958), who served as Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department from 1933 to 1941, had long guided the stylistic development of federal buildings under James Wetmore, who was the Acting Supervising Architect from 1915 to 1933 and had no formal training in architecture. Simon was born in Baltimore, Maryland and received his education from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After an extended tour throughout Europe, he opened an architectural office in Baltimore in 1894. Two years later, Simon joined

<sup>6</sup> Lois Craig, ed., and the staff of the Federal Architecture Project, *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and Symbols in the United States Government Building* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1979), 99-105, 195; Emily Harris, *History of Post Office Construction, 1900-1940*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Postal Service, 1982, 1-11; Beth M. Boland, *National Register Bulletin 13: How to Apply the National Register Criteria to Post Offices*, originally published 1984, revised 1994, electronic document, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletings/nrb13/>.

<sup>7</sup> Harris, *History of Post Office Construction*, 14-15.

<sup>8</sup> C. W. Short and R. Stanley-Brown, *Public Buildings: Architecture Under the Public Works Administration, 1933-1939* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1986 reprint of a Government Printing Office 1939 publication), VI, XII Harris, *History of Post Office Construction* 16, 21-22.

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the Office of the Supervising Architect, where he spent the rest of his working career.<sup>9</sup> Under Simon's leadership, the design of post offices and other federal buildings conformed to a modernized classicism that private architects were using for civic buildings. This style has been variously described as Classical Moderne, Simplified Classical, Stripped Classical and PWA Moderne.

### Classical Modern Architectural Style

The work of Paul Phillipe Cret (1876-1945) appears to have been particularly influential in the adoption of the Classical Moderne style for federal and civic buildings.<sup>10</sup> Born in France and educated at L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Lyon, France, Cret began his American architectural practice in 1907. His work was firmly rooted in the classical, Beaux Arts tradition, but, infused with modernist sensibilities, resulting in radically simplified form and ornament.

Cret's design for the Hartford County Building and Courthouse of 1926 was praised for its "style liberation" and became an important prototype for the modern classical architecture that both Cret and federal buildings would be known for during the 1930s. The bold rectangular pillars on the façade of Hartford building, widely identified with the freedom from traditional classicism, were actually derived from the little-used Attic order. Cret used the Attic order to reinterpret the forms and overall tone of classicism and to reduce the visual conflict between the components of the classical order and steel-framed construction. He moved from the use of minimal capitals and no bases on the Hartford County Building and Courthouse to designing fluted shafts with no capitals to support a reinterpreted frieze and cornice assembly in his Château-Thierry Monument in France (1926-1932). This form also appeared on his influential Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., completed in 1932.

Cret's "liberation" of the classical forms was widely adopted by architects for civic and commercial buildings during the late 1920s, although no doubt the simplified, non-ornamented, and modern appearance was more influential than the academic origin of the rectangular pillars. By the time Cret was competing for the commission for the Federal Reserve Board Building in Washington, D.C., in 1935, a "liberated," or Neo-Classicism had been widely adopted in the design of federal buildings and characterized the submittals of most of his competitors. Cret's participation on many architectural juries and commissions extended his influence on the classicism of the era.<sup>11</sup>

The modernized classicism that exhibits Cret's influence often has abstracted columns, pilasters, and entablatures. Classical ornament and forms could be reduced to geometric incisions in stone, be altered in scale, or reinterpreted in other ways. Stone enclosing walls cut by stacked windows with crisp surrounds and abstracted pilasters create a rhythmic pattern of piers and windows perceived as a series of solids and voids. The *Architectural Forum* noted in 1938 that "[a] distinct modern influence and the continuing tradition of 'government classic' are the two

<sup>9</sup> Antoinette Lee, *Architects to the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 258.

<sup>10</sup> Lois Craig, et. al., *The Federal Presence*, 294-297.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman, *The Civic Architecture of Paul Cret* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 140-159, 170, 193-195; Craig, et al., *The Federal Presence*, 294.

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conflicting tendencies which have resulted in the first sign of vitality in American Post Office design.”<sup>12</sup>

Under the tenure of Supervising Architect Louis A. Simon (1934-1941), during which the building was erected, the Classical Moderne style generally prevailed as the most common federal building style. Other styles utilized by the office tended to be variants of the Colonial Revival and Neoclassical Revival styles. There has been no study of the distribution of major post office styles in the United States, nor is it clear if there was a deliberate policy on the part of the Supervising Architect to choose designs to match regional tastes. However, the Classical Moderne was the style common to many public and civic buildings of the 1930s and 1940s. The strong effect of mass achieved a sense of monumentality, presence, and permanence, while simplified detailing satisfied the burgeoning taste for sleek surfaces and minimal ornamentation, as witnessed by the subsequent growth of modern architecture. The Office of the Supervising Architect likely embraced the concept of the Classical Moderne style because the form was updated yet still classical and dignified, conveying the nation’s democratic lineage and the stability of the federal government during an uncertain time. Simultaneously, the lack of ornamentation characteristic of the style allowed cost savings and an appearance of austerity at a time when exuberant details would have been out of place.

### History of the Postal Service in the United States

The establishment of the postal service began as a means to provide communication among the colonies during the Revolutionary War. On July 26, 1775, the Second Continental Congress developed the post office under its first Postmaster General, Benjamin Franklin. The post office was the only agency to remain intact through the Revolutionary War, the Confederacy period, and the years after the Constitution was adopted. Subsequently, the newly established federal government viewed the post office as the means for conveying knowledge of its laws and proceedings to all parts of the country.<sup>13</sup>

During the postal service’s early growth period, the number of post offices expanded from 75 in 1789 to 16,749 in 1849.<sup>14</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, the postal system served as the principal means of long distance communication. Postal service provided both a physical and intellectual link between great distances as the nation expanded across the continent.<sup>15</sup> By 1820, the number of post offices and miles of post roads approximately quadrupled that of 1800.<sup>16</sup> Local taverns, grocery stores, coffeehouses, and inns, all focal points of community life, housed the first post offices.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Robert A. M. Stern, *New York 1930* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 107.

<sup>13</sup> Rita L. Maroney, *History of the U.S. Postal Service: 1775-1982* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ellis L. Armstrong, *History of Public Works of the United States, 1776-1945* (Chicago: American Public Works Association, 1976), 327.

<sup>15</sup> Beth Boland, National Register of Historic Places, Bulletin 13, “How to Apply National Register Criteria to Post Offices” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1994), Section II, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Boland, Section II, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Maroney, 1.



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Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Congress established or improved postal services and facilities throughout the nation. Efforts to increase the speed and efficiency of mail delivery encouraged the growth of roads, railroads, shipping lines, and eventually airlines. The postal presence, through its sheer number, distribution, and types of services, provided tangible reminders to otherwise isolated communities of the role and ideals of the central government. Consequently, the buildings constructed for use as post offices have reflected governmental and architectural philosophies throughout the nation.<sup>18</sup>

The postal service built structures for receiving, processing, and distributing mail to provide services for the expanding population during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For smaller communities, a special counter in a local store served as the post office. In larger villages or towns, a separate post office building was constructed with a public service counter, workroom for mail processing, and a loading platform. Urban post offices handling large volumes of mail required larger buildings with extensive workrooms, offices, employee facilities, loading platforms, and windows or counters to serve the public. Urban post offices often shared space in federal buildings with courts and branch offices of federal agencies. The Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department oversaw the design and development of these postal facilities.<sup>19</sup>

Criteria used to determine the placement of postal offices reflected the uses of the facilities and the manner in which they were designed to function. Post offices that included other federal offices or courts were often located near other government buildings in the community. Single-function post offices built prior to the 1930s were often located on or near main transportation corridors and commercial centers and near the railroad station to facilitate movement of mail to and from trains. Facilities constructed during the 1930s and later became more truck and auto-oriented and were located near the downtown, but perhaps a block or two from the town's main street. This made the post office easy to find, but also allowed better access to truck activity. In the second half of the twentieth century, in response to suburbanization, postal facilities moved even further from the downtown area, often locating on the edge of town where large parking lots and tractor trailer-friendly loading bays could be accommodated. As a consequence, many of the earlier post offices became redundant.

The modern-day United States Postal Service (USPS) was officially established as an independent federal agency on July 1, 1971, when Congress implemented the Postal Reorganization Act.<sup>20</sup>

### **Development of the United States Post Office in Kalamazoo**

A settlement was established by Titus Bronson, the first permanent settler, on the Kalamazoo River in 1829. The first plat for the village was filed in 1831 as Bronson. The name was changed to Kalamazoo in 1836. Settlers from New York, the New England states, and Western Europe relocated to the village during the 1830s. When Michigan was admitted to the union as a state in 1837, Kalamazoo was incorporated as a village. By the time that the Michigan Central Railroad was completed east-west through Kalamazoo in 1846, it had a population of nearly

<sup>18</sup> Boland, Section II, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Maroney, 5.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

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3,000. The water power of the Kalamazoo River and its location on the Territorial Road between Detroit and Chicago fostered the village's growth and development as an industrial center. Manufacturers of buggies, steam engines, paper-making mills, and stoves established factories in Kalamazoo during the nineteenth century as the population of the industrial town increased to 13,000 by 1876.<sup>21</sup>

Kalamazoo, which became known as the "Paper City," enjoyed an era of prosperity during the first decades of the twentieth century that was based in part on its concentration of paper mills. Kalamazoo firms produced various paper products that included such specialties as wax paper and vegetable parchment. The city's paper industry grew and matured as firms merged and expanded product lines. Also significant in this period was the Upjohn Pill and Granule Company, which was founded in Kalamazoo in 1886 and found success with a process for manufacturing readily absorbed medications. Renamed the Upjohn Company in 1903, the firm grew throughout first decades of the twentieth century to become a leader in pharmaceutical industry and a major influence in Kalamazoo. It was among the city's largest employers and its philanthropically-inclined founder, Dr. William Upjohn (1853-1932), left Kalamazoo a substantial legacy, including its commissioner-manager form of government, community foundation, Civic Auditorium, and a park.<sup>22</sup> As the city center was redeveloped with larger buildings, a fifteen-story bank building, the city's first skyscraper, was erected in 1930.<sup>23</sup>

Bronson Park, located on the west side of the downtown commercial district, was transformed from an amenity for a residential district into a civic center during the late 1920s. A new city hall, designed by Weary & Alford of Chicago in the Art Deco style, was built on the south side of the park in 1924. That same year a YMCA building was erected on the east side of the square. City Planner Jacob L. Crane, Jr. recommended that Bronson Park be developed as a civic center as part of a city-wide plan for Kalamazoo completed in 1929. He proposed that a new county building be erected on the north side of the park to join the several churches and a planned civic auditorium on the perimeter of the park. Although the Crane plan was not formally adopted by the city, it guided the development of the area. The Civic Auditorium, designed by Aymar Embury II, was built on the square in 1930-1931. A new County Courthouse and Jail, designed by local architect M. J. C. Billingham with Smith, Hinchman & Grylls of Detroit as associate architects, was constructed on the north side of the square in 1936-1937. When completed in 1939, the United States Post Office on West Michigan Avenue was adjacent to new buildings around Bronson Park and extended the civic center to the northwest. These buildings are

<sup>21</sup> Hasbrouck Peterson Associates, Historic Structures Report, "Kalamazoo Federal Building, U.S. Post Office and Courthouse," unpublished report prepared for the U.S. General Services Administration, 1986, 1.

George Torry, *History of Kalamazoo County* (1876), Kalamazoo County History Rootsweb website, <http://www.rootsweb.com/~mikalama/kalamazoo1876history.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> William E. Upjohn: Person of the Century 1852-1932, Kalamazoo Public Library website (archived), <https://web.archive.org/web/20070824163035/http://www.kpl.gov/collections/localhistory/AllAbout/biography/Upjohn.aspx/>.

<sup>23</sup> Larry B. Massie, *Kalamazoo, the Place Behind the Product: An Illustrated History* (Sun Valley, California: American Historical Press, 1998), 142, 152. Willis F. Dunbar, *Kalamazoo and how it grew... and grew...* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Western Michigan University, 1969), 155, 164-167.

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included in the Bronson Park Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>24</sup>

The Depression of the early 1930s caused many local firms to close their doors, but overall Kalamazoo fared much better than many cities due to the stability of the paper industry and the growth of the Upjohn Company. The city received improvements, including paving, park projects, airport improvements, and a golf course, made possible by the Works Progress Administration, the New Deal agency that employed millions of people to construct public works projects. In addition, the Public Works Administration, which provided funds to private contractors for public projects, funded the County Courthouse and Jail, a field and stadium on the Western State Teachers College campus, and a County Juvenile Detention Home. PWA funds also were used to build the United States Post Office.<sup>25</sup>

Postal service was inaugurated in Kalamazoo in May 1830 and the first post office was established in 1832. The post office in Kalamazoo found a long-term home in 1854 at the Firemen's Hall after being housed in several locations. In 1890, when a federal appropriation provided for a new building, the post office was located in rented quarters in the Beecher, Kymer & Patterson Building. The new post office was opened in 1892 at the corner of South Burdick and West South Streets. The Romanesque style red brick building had a round corner tower. This building was expanded in 1904 with an addition that was larger than the original building. The post office operation moved into the second floor of the building in 1924 as the demand for more service and space continued.<sup>26</sup>

Within just a few years, the growing city's postal needs again exceeded the capacity afforded by the expanded building. Local newspapers closely reported the progress and setbacks in Kalamazoo's effort to secure a new and larger building for its post office. A budget of \$575,000 was allocated for the new building, and potential sites were considered by January 1932. During the following months, architects were selected and specifications were developed. The site at the corner of West Michigan Avenue and Park Street was chosen for its location close to the Michigan Central Railroad depot, the downtown business district, and the civic center developing around Bronson Park. Newspaper articles from this period reported that construction would begin in 1932 or 1933.<sup>27</sup>

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration suspended and then abandoned the plans to construct the new post office in March 1933. This decision was reversed by June 1934, although it took over two years for the project to progress. The post office property was acquired after a condemnation suit was filed against the multiple owners of the lots in September 1936. The architectural firms of LeRoy & Newlander of Kalamazoo and George D. Mason & Company of

<sup>24</sup> Dunbar, *Kalamazoo and how it grew* 168, 177; Kathryn Bishop Eckert, *Buildings of Michigan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 221-222; "Unique Civic Center Possible, Crane Says," *Kalamazoo Gazette* 10 March 1930; Carol Knauss, *A History of Bronson Park, Kalamazoo*, unpublished M.A. thesis, Western Michigan University, 1982, on file at the Kalamazoo Public Library, 49, 56, 58; Brendan Henehan and Robert O. Christensen, *Historic Resources of Kalamazoo, Michigan: Partial Inventory – Historic and Architectural Resources*, 1982.

<sup>25</sup> Dunbar, *Kalamazoo and how it grew* 177, 179-180.

<sup>26</sup> Hasbrouck Peterson, *Historic Structures Report*, 5-7.

<sup>27</sup> Hasbrouck Peterson, *Historic Structures Report*, 7-8.

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Detroit provided plans in 1937. Kalamazoo civic leaders were not happy with the proposed one story building, which they felt would be too small to meet future postal service needs and did not reflect the scale of buildings in the central portion of the city. Supervising Architect Louis A. Simon rebuffed these criticisms and the project proceeded as planned. Simon approved drawings for the building in February 1938.<sup>28</sup>

Rockwell A. LeRoy (1864-1950) and Manuel M. Newlander (dates unknown) were the local architects involved in the U.S. Post Office project. LeRoy, the dominant partner, worked in his father's building construction business as a young man. He completed a correspondence course in architecture and relocated to Kalamazoo in 1895 to supervise a construction project for A. W. Buckley, a Chicago architectural firm. After working for developer Charles B. Hayes for a few years, LeRoy established a partnership with Newlander and the firm designed several school buildings for towns in the Kalamazoo vicinity. LeRoy & Newlander designed the Police Station (1912-1913), the Elite Theatre (1912), and the old Central High School (1912, 1923, 1924), which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, as well as residential and industrial buildings in Kalamazoo. LeRoy retired from the practice in 1940 and died in 1950.<sup>29</sup>

George DeWitt Mason (1856-1948) studied architecture with Mortimer L. Smith and Henry T. Brush in Detroit. In 1878, he established a practice with Zacharias Rice which lasted ten years. After practicing by himself for a few years Mason organized the firm of George D. Mason & Co. during the early 1920s. The firm designed churches, hotels, public buildings, and commercial buildings. Its major projects include the Y.M.C.A., First Presbyterian Church, Trinity Episcopal Church and the Brewster and Parksite Housing Projects in Detroit. The firm also designed the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island.<sup>30</sup>

The firm of Algernon Blair of Montgomery, Alabama, won the contract to construct the building. Blair's firm had been doing construction work for the federal government for thirty years and had several post office buildings under way throughout the nation at the time of the Kalamazoo project. The firm used local labor supervised by company foremen and a project superintendent.<sup>31</sup>

The United States Post Office was built in 1938 and 1939. Dedicated in November 1939, it served as the main post office in Kalamazoo until a new building was completed on Miller Road in 1959. The West Michigan Avenue location then served as the downtown "Court Station," a postal substation with complete window service. The 1939 United States Post Office building

<sup>28</sup> "Plan for New \$517,500 Post Office Here Put Off," *Kalamazoo (MI) Gazette*, 1 April 1933; "New Post Office Designs and Plans Given Approval," *Kalamazoo (MI) Gazette* 6 June 1937; "U.S. Explains Why P.O. Here Will Be 1-Story," *Kalamazoo (MI) Gazette*, 22 May 1938.

<sup>29</sup> Hasbrouck Peterson, *Historic Structures Report*, 10; Lynn Smith Houghton and Pamela Hall O'Connor, *Kalamazoo Lost & Found* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Kalamazoo Historic Preservation Commission, 2001), 53, 145. LeRoy & Newlander with Albert Kahn, Inc. of Detroit provided plans for a Kalamazoo County Building in 1931. But after PWA funding was secured for the project in 1934, the design submitted M. J. C. Billingham with Smith, Hinchman and Grylls was selected, according to several articles in the *Kalamazoo (MI) Gazette*, including, "Local Architects Selected to Plan County Building," *Kalamazoo (MI) Gazette*, 14 August 1931.

<sup>30</sup> Hasbrouck Peterson, *Historic Structures Report*, 10.

<sup>31</sup> Hasbrouck Peterson, *Historic Structures Report*, 11; "Work Starts on P.O. Site Present Week," *Kalamazoo (MI) Gazette*, 29 May 1938.

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was remodeled in 1962-1963 for shared occupancy by the postal service, the Kalamazoo division of the Federal District Court of Western Michigan, and other federal agencies. The name on the upper wall of the West Michigan Avenue façade was altered in 1968 to read “Federal Building United States Post Office and Courthouse.”<sup>32</sup> The postal substation was closed at the West Michigan Avenue location in 1994. Current tenants of the building include, the U. S. District Court, Bankruptcy Court, U. S. Attorney, U. S. Marshals Service, Food and Drug Administration, and Department of Homeland Security.

## Statement of Significance

### Criterion A – Politics/Government (Local Level)

The United States Post Office in Kalamazoo is significant in the area of Politics/Government as an embodiment of local and federal government efforts on behalf of Kalamazoo. It was completed at the end of a period when several new civic buildings, including the Y.M.C.A., Kalamazoo City Hall, Kalamazoo County Courthouse and Jail and Civic Auditorium were constructed around Bronson Park as it became the city’s civic center. City Planner Jacob L. Crane, Jr. recommended that Bronson Park be developed as a civic center as part of a city-wide plan for Kalamazoo completed in 1929. Although the Crane plan was not formally adopted by the city, it guided the development of the area, which became the physical and symbolic center of Kalamazoo. The selection of the site for the new United States Post Office at the northwest edge of the area in 1932 helped to solidify the plan.

The United States Post Office was one of the major New Deal projects in Kalamazoo. It embodies the ideals of the federal building campaign initiated by the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations, intended to provide employment and stimulate local economies, and represents the federal government’s commitment to architectural quality as it implemented relief programs during the 1930s. Funded by the Public Works Administration, the federal building was designed by local architects, under the direction of the U.S. Department of Treasury’s Office of Supervising Architect, and constructed by local labor. The siting of the building, within the civic center area, demonstrates the federal government’s willingness to support to local plans, to the extent practicable. The erection of the building was perceived as a symbol of community pride and achievement and as a representation of the federal presence in Kalamazoo.

### Criterion C – Architecture (Local Level)

Kalamazoo’s United States Post Office, completed in 1939, is representative local example of the Classical Moderne style strongly associated with federal buildings, which were constructed in large numbers in towns and cities throughout the nation in the 1930s through New Deal construction programs. The Classical Moderne influence is evident throughout the design that has only abstracted references to classical forms and ornament. The planar quality of the yellow Kasota limestone walls and the rhythm of the tall window openings and piers establish the

<sup>32</sup> Hasbrouck Peterson, *Historic Structures Report* 12.; “Post Office Dedicated by U.S. Official,” *Kalamazoo (MI) Gazette*, 12 November 1939.

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architectural qualities of the building. The fluted piers that divide the façade, derivative of Paul Cret's variant of the Attic style, are wide and short and do not have classical proportions. Minimal lintel moldings stand in for an entablature. The height of the door and window openings, as well as the fluted piers, counter the horizontality of the long façade. The panels in the parapet wall with bas-relief eagles and stars flanked by single rosettes are the only ornament and the sole use of federal iconography. The designs of the entrance transoms' metal work and railings at both the stairs and window wells incorporate Art Deco motifs. On the interior, the two remaining sections of the postal lobby display Art Moderne characteristics including extensive use of highly polished, flat surfaces and setbacks.

The United States Post Office is also significant as one in a set of three civic buildings designed in the modernistic idioms of the 1920s and 1930s in Kalamazoo's Bronson Park Civic Center: the Kalamazoo City Hall (1931, Weary & Alford); the Kalamazoo County Building (1936-1937, M. J. C. Billingham with Smith, Hinchman and Grylls of Detroit); and the United States Post Office (1939, LeRoy & Newlander; George D. Mason & Company). The Art Deco style prevails in the City Hall design, while both the United States Post Office and the County Building reflect the less ornamented appearance of the Classical Moderne style during the 1930s. These three buildings are prominent landmarks in the Bronson Park Civic Center, a National Register of Historic Places historic district.

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*William E. Upjohn: Person of the Century 1852-1932*. Available at Kalamazoo Public Library website (archived), <https://web.archive.org/web/20070824163035/http://www.kpl.gov/collections/localhistory/AllAbout/biography/Upjohn.aspx/>

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: U.S. General Services Administration, Great Lakes Region

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_



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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property** 1.3 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

**Or**

#### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 16 | Easting: 616421 | Northing: 4683147 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The United States Post Office is located on original plat lots 5 and 6, lots 7 and 8 except the northern 67 5/8 feet, and lot 21, except the west 18.44 feet, lots 22, 23, and 24, parcel number 00-06-15-351-021, City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nomination consists of the property historically associated with the building known by the address 410 West Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Betsy H. Bradley and Andrew J. Schmidt/Architectural  
Historians  
organization: Summit Envirosolutions, Inc., prepared for the U.S. General Services  
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city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20405  
e-mail elizabeth.hannold@gsa.gov  
telephone: 202-501-2863  
date: November 2017

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: United States Post Office

City or Vicinity: Kalamazoo

County: Kalamazoo

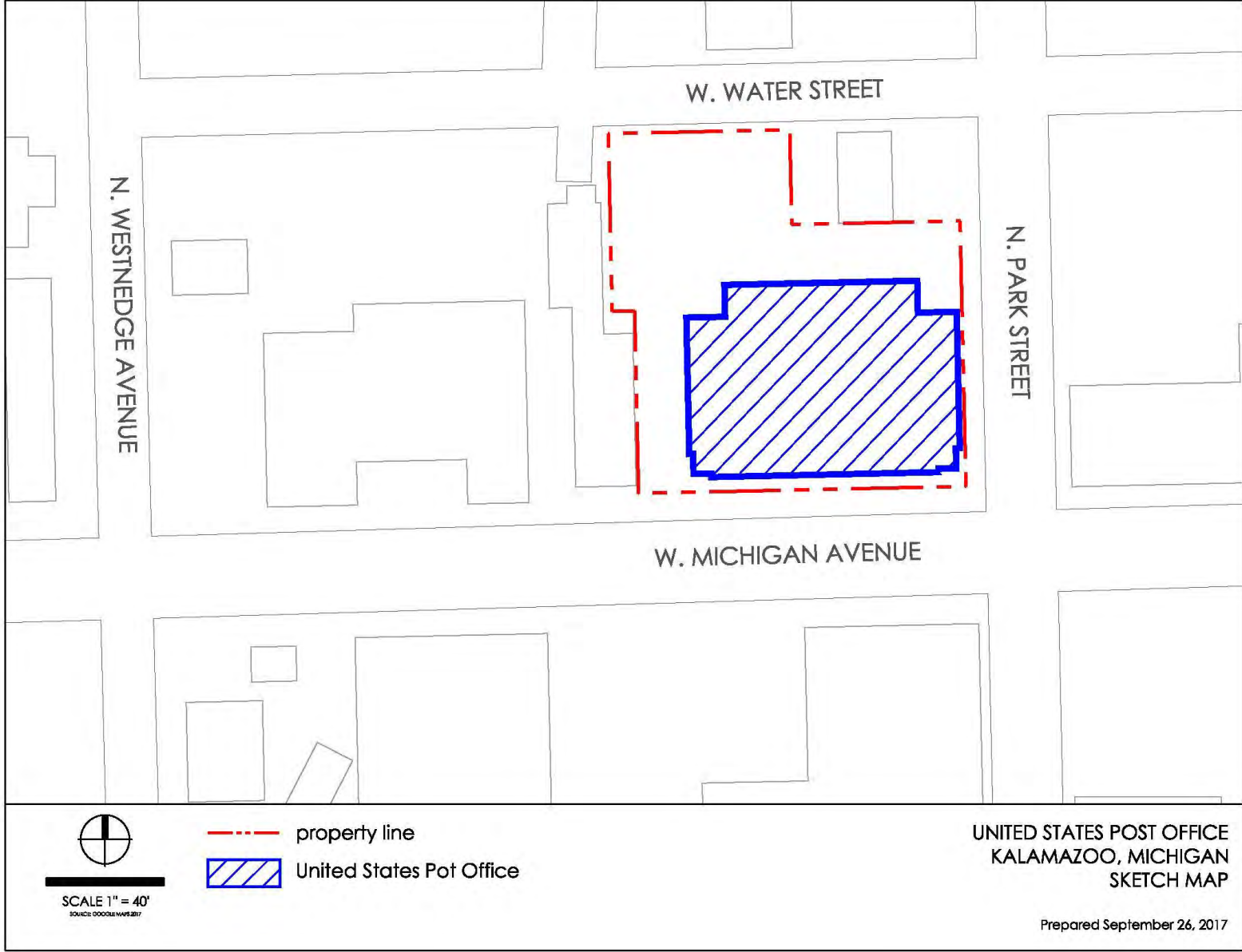
State: Michigan

Photographer: Michael Liu and Kevin Maas, U.S. General Services Administration, Great Lakes Region

Date Photographed: July 30, 2017

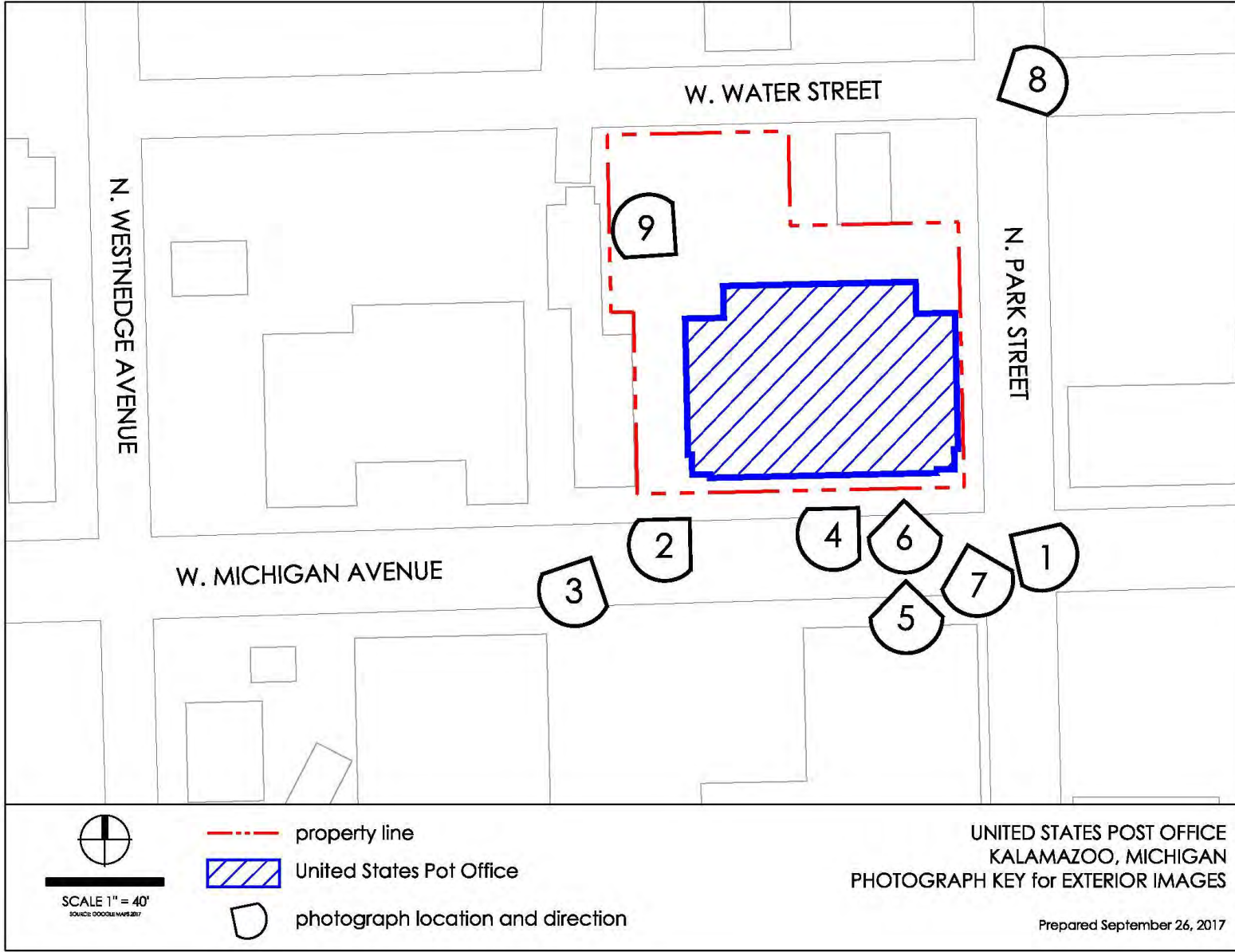
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

0001\_ SOUTH AND EAST ELEVATIONS, FACING NORTHWEST  
0002\_ SOUTH ELEVATION, FACING NORTHEAST  
0003\_ SOUTH AND WEST ELEVATIONS, FACING NORTHEAST  
0004\_ EASTERN ENTRANCE STEPS, SOUTH ELEVATION, FACING NORTHEAST  
0005\_ EASTERN ENTRANCE DOORWAY, SOUTH ELEVATION, FACING NORTH  
0006\_ EASTERN ENTRANCE BAS RELIEF, SOUTH ELEVATION, FACING NORTH  
0007\_ EAST ELEVATION, FACING NORTHWEST  
0008\_ EAST AND NORTH ELEVATIONS, FACING SOUTHWEST  
0009\_ WEST AND NORTH ELEVATIONS, FACING SOUTHEAST  
0010\_ WEST LOBBY, SECURITY DESK AREA, FACING SOUTHEAST  
0011\_ WEST LOBBY, STAIRWAY TO BASEMENT, FACING WEST  
0012\_ WEST LOBBY, ENTRANCE TO STAIRWAY, CEILING VIEW, FACING WEST  
0013\_ EAST LOBBY ENTRANCE VESTIBULE, FACING SOUTHEAST



United States Post Office  
Name of Property

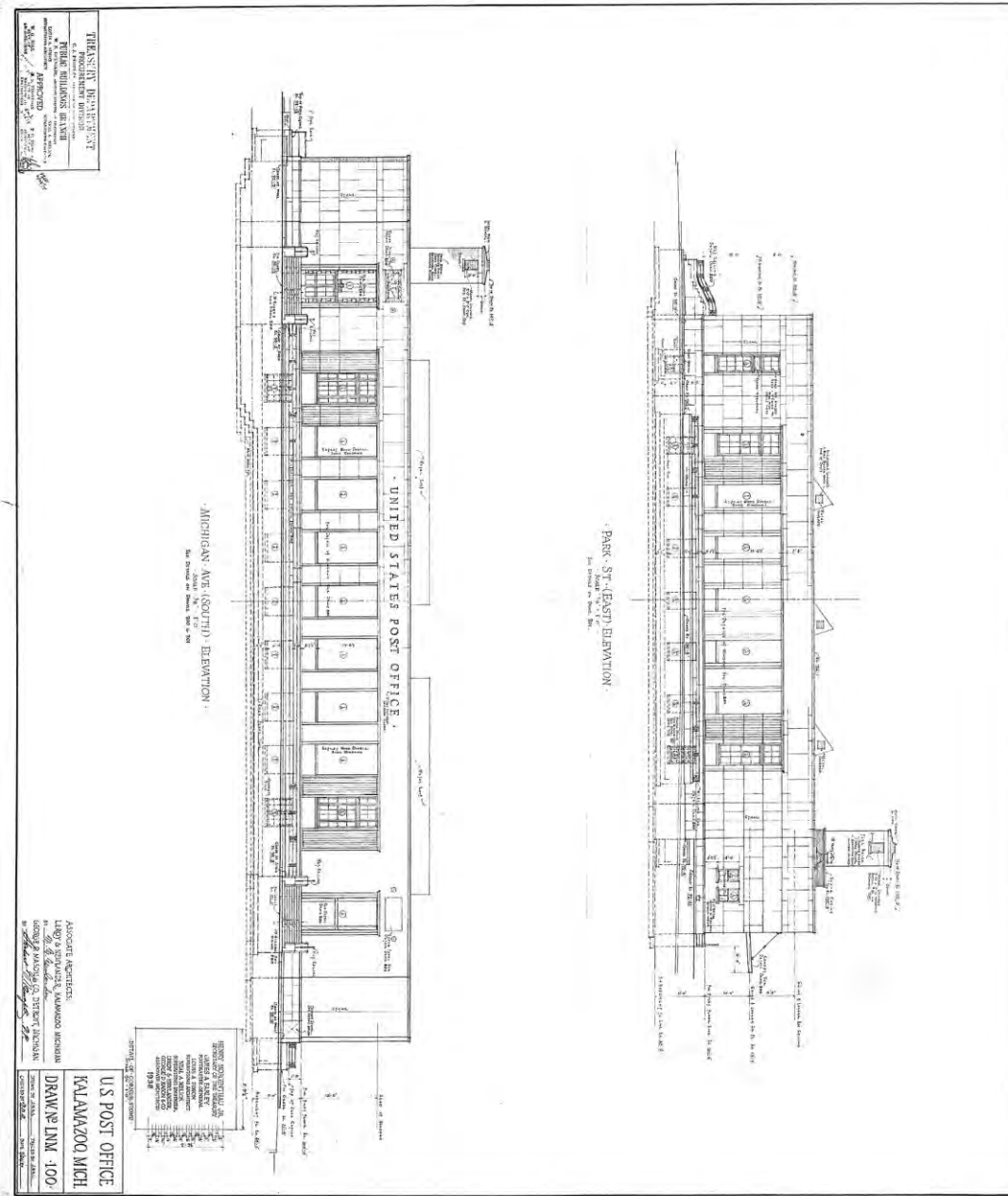
Kalamazoo, MI  
County and State



United States Post Office  
Name of Property

Kalamazoo, MI  
County and State

Figure 1 – 1938 Drawing of United States Post Office, Kalamazoo, MI, East and South Elevations.



United States Post Office  
Name of Property

Kalamazoo, MI  
County and State

Figure 2 – Circa 1955 photograph of United States Post Office, Kalamazoo, MI.



United States Post Office  
Name of Property

Kalamazoo, MI  
County and State

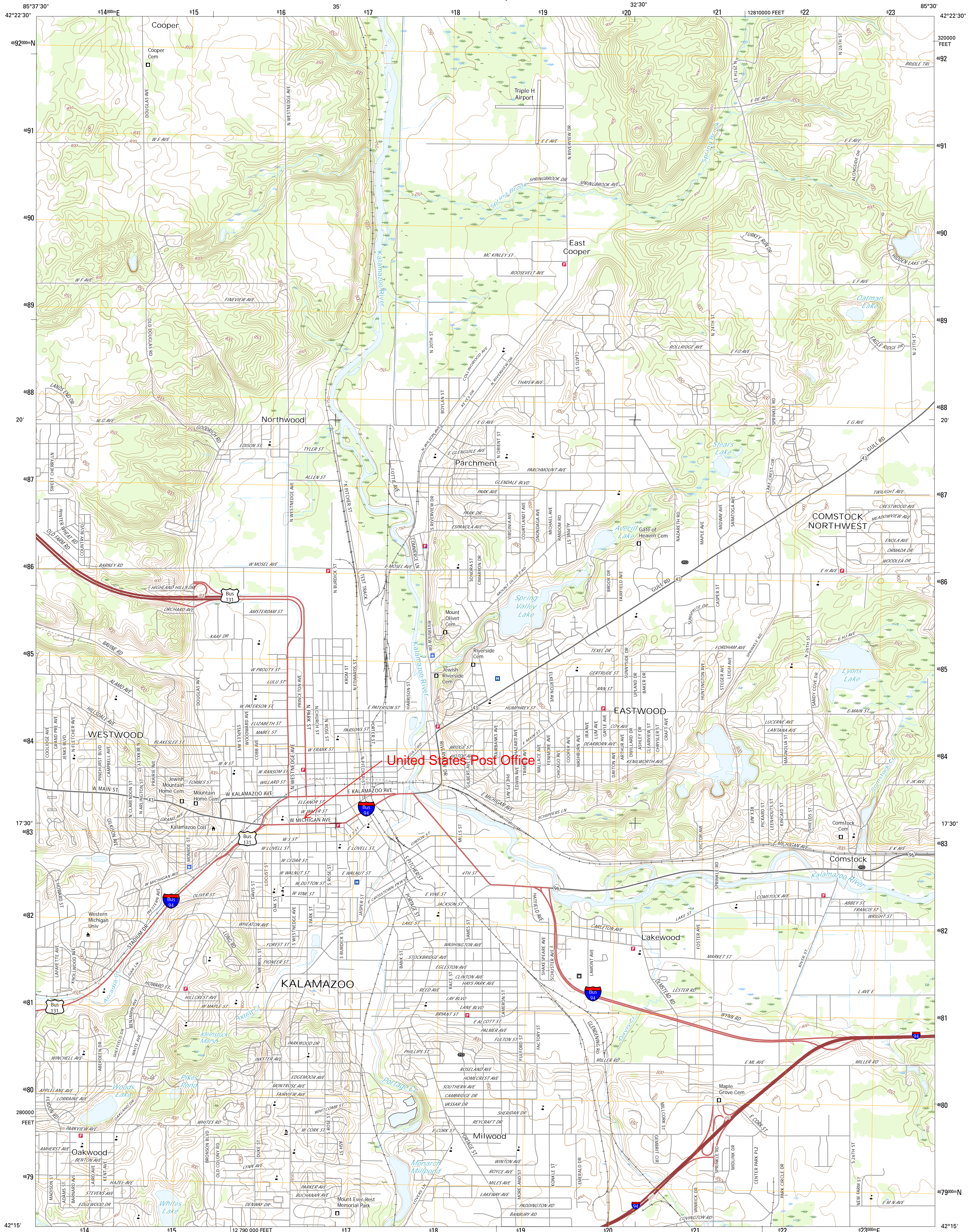
Figure 3 – Photograph of United States Post Office, Kalamazoo, MI, after 1968 name change and alteration of windows and doors on West Michigan Avenue façade.



**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.).

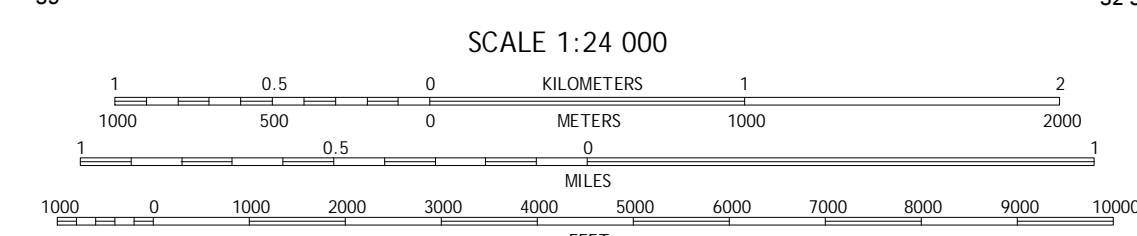
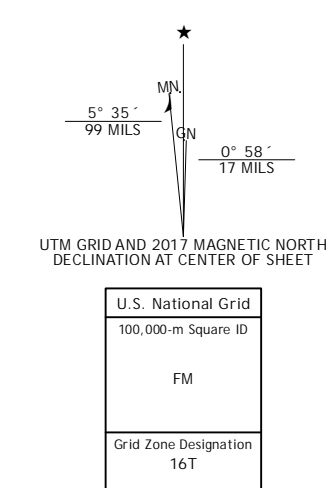
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.





Produced by the United States Geological Survey North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83) World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84) Projection and 1000-meter grid. Universal Transverse Mercator. Zone 16T 10 000-foot ticks: Michigan Coordinate System of 1983 (south zone)

This map is not a legal document. Boundaries may be generalized for this map scale. Private lands within government reservations may not be shown. Obtain permission before entering private lands. Imagery: NADIP, October 2014 Roads: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2016 Names: GNIS, 2016 Hydrography: National Hydrography Dataset, 2014 Contours: National Elevation Dataset, 1999 Boundaries: Multiple sources; see metadata file 1912-2016 Public Land Survey System: BLM, 2016 Wetlands: FWS National Wetlands Inventory 1977-2014



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Expressway	Local Connector
Secondary Hwy	Local Road
Ramp	4WD
Interstate Route	US Route
	State Route

ADJOINING QUADRANGLES

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	

1 Otsego  
2 Kalamazoo NE  
3 Delton  
4 Kalamazoo SW  
5 Galesburg  
6 Schoolcraft NW  
7 Portage  
8 Adams Park

KALAMAZOO, MI 2017





FOURTH WARD, UNITED STATES

HOUSE

Michigan  
First St

ONE WAY

NO PARKING



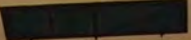
UNITED STATES POST OFFICE AND COURTHOUSE

BRONSON PARK  
CENTRAL CITY  
HOLMES & RAYMOND'S BOWLING



FEDERAL BUILDING  
UNITED STATES





210







HERALD MONUMENTAL BR  
JAMES A. HALEY  
1911-1981  
1911-1981  
1911-1981  
1911-1981  
1911-1981













1ST FLOOR

US TRUSTEE, INC. OF MEETINGS	111
US MARSHAL	124
US COURT CHAMBERS	127
US COURTROOM	126
US COURT CHAMBERS	116
US COURTROOM	116
US BANKRUPTCY CHAMBERS	112
CLERK OF COURT	107
YOUNG	104

LOWER LEVEL

US PROBATION	
US ATTORNEY, 8TH	
FEDERAL PUBLIC DEF.	

CONFERENCE ROOM  
FEDERAL PROTECTIVE  
CIA PROPERTY WARE  
FOOD & DRUG ADMIN.



**ATTENTION**



**SECURITY CHECK POINT**

ALL PERSONS & PACKAGES ENTERING THIS AREA  
SUBJECT TO SEARCH

VALID GOVERNMENT ISSUED IDENTIFICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENTRY

NO ARMS, EXPLOSIVES, RECORDERS, CELLULAR  
TELEPHONES, LAPTOP COMPUTERS, AND WIRELESS  
COMMUNICATION DEVICES

PROHIBITED BEYOND THIS POINT

BY ORDER OF THE  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN







KEYCARD EXIT ONLY  
All Others Use  
West Doors  
By Security Services

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination  
Property Name: United States Post Office  
Multiple Name:  
State & County: MICHIGAN, Kalamazoo

Date Received: 11/16/2017      Date of Pending List: 12/8/2017      Date of 16th Day: 12/26/2017      Date of 45th Day: 1/2/2018      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: MP100001930

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      12/26/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary  
Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria      Accept, National Register Criteria A and C.

Reviewer      Patrick Andrus *Patrick Andrus*      Discipline      Historian

Telephone      (202)354-2218      Date      12/26/2017

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.



November 15, 2017

Mr. Paul Loether  
Chief, NRHP & NHL Program  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20005



Dear Mr. Loether:

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is pleased to nominate the United States Post Office (current name: Federal Building, U.S. Post Office and Courthouse) located at 410 West Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan, for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The building is located within and contributes to the previously listed Bronson Park Historic District (#83000855). The nomination is hereby submitted on disk in accordance with the May 6, 2013 guidance and includes the following:

- Signed original first page of the National Register of Historic Places nomination form;
- Disk 1 - The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the United States Post Office, located in Kalamazoo, MI, to the National Register of Historic Place; and,
- Disk 2 - The enclosed disk contains the .tif image files for the above referenced nomination.

In accordance with 36 CFR Part 60.9(c), the appropriate local elected officials were notified of GSA's intent to nominate the above referenced property to the National Register of Historic Places by letters dated September 29, 2017. No response comments were received. GSA did receive a number of review comments from the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office by letter dated October 3, 2017. The enclosed nomination incorporates revisions responding to each of those comments.

If for any reason any nomination package that GSA submits needs to be returned, please do so by a delivery service as items returned to our offices via regular mail are irradiated and the materials severely damaged. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this nomination package, please contact Elizabeth Hannold at (202) 501-2863 or [elizabeth.hannold@gsa.gov](mailto:elizabeth.hannold@gsa.gov).

Sincerely,

Beth L. Savage  
Federal Preservation Officer  
Director, Center for Historic Buildings

Enclosures

cc: Brian D. Conway, State Historic Preservation Officer  
Regina Nally, Regional Historic Preservation Officer