

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 and Custom House

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 180 Kellogg Boulevard East

City or town: St. Paul State: MN County: Ramsey

Not For Publication: Vicinity: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 X 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 X 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 X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<u>Barbara Mitchell Howard</u>	<u>March 31, 2014</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>Barbara Mitchell Howard, Deputy SHPO, MHS</u> Date	
_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____ Signature of commenting official:	_____ Date
_____ Title :	_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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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:)


Signature of the Keeper

5-19-14
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)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/Post Office

GOVERNMENT/Custom House

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

STONE: Kasota Limestone, Granite

METAL: Aluminum, Steel, Bronze

CONCRETE

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.)

Summary Paragraph

The United States Post Office and Custom House is located at the southeast corner of Kellogg Boulevard East and Jackson Street in downtown St. Paul. The property consists of a seventeen-story Art Deco-style building with stepped tower on the north end of the site (constructed in 1934 with a four-story addition in 1939) and a large six-story annex to the south (constructed between 1961 and 1963). Both the main building and annex feature dark gray granite bases with upper floors clad in Kasota limestone. The main entrance into the building is at the center of the north elevation. The building is regularly fenestrated with window openings contained within vertical bays framed by fluted aluminum vertical muntins and dark metal spandrel panels. The main building was designed by Lambert Bassindale in collaboration with the Chicago architecture firm Holabird & Root; the 1939 four-story addition was designed by U. S. Treasury Department architect Louis A. Simon. The St. Paul architecture firm Ellerbe and Company designed the 1961 six-story annex. With the exception of wholesale window replacement in

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1985, the building retains good exterior integrity, with no major additions or alterations. The building was owned and operated by the United States Postal Service until 2013.

Narrative Description

Site and Setting

The United States Post Office and Custom House is located at the south end of downtown Saint Paul, on a roughly rectangular lot bounded on the north by Kellogg Boulevard East, on the south by East Second Street, on the west by Jackson Street, and on the east by North Sibley Street. The south elevation of the property is angled to follow Second Street. The lot slopes significantly as it drops south from Kellogg Boulevard down toward the river, so that the basement levels of the building are at grade on Second Street. The lot also slopes downward as it extends east along Kellogg Boulevard, so that the first floor of the building is below grade on the northwest corner and above grade on the northeast corner. The building is built up to the lot line on all sides and is bordered by concrete sidewalks. The building is surrounded by commercial office buildings, and the Union Depot is located just east of the building across Sibley Street. A raised parking structure is located just south of the building and partially obscures the building when viewed from the Mississippi River.

Structure

The United States Post Office and Custom House consists of the main seventeen-story Art Deco building, (constructed between 1934 and 1939) at the north end of the lot and a large six-story annex (completed in 1963) at the south end of the lot. These two structures are connected along the entire south elevation of the main building and north elevation of the annex; the lower portion of the south exterior wall of the main building was removed when the annex was constructed to provide a seamless continuation between the two structures on the first through the fifth floors. The south wall of the main building resumes at the sixth floor. The sixth floor of the main building and annex are connected only by a narrow corridor located just east of the elevator core. The tower that rises above the sixth floor on the main building is C-shaped through the twelfth floor, with projecting wings extending south from the east and west ends. The twelfth through the fifteenth floors, added in 1939, are a stepped addition to the main east-west axis of the tower, with the sixteenth and seventeenth floors housed in a large penthouse that is stepped back from the main elevations on the north, west, and east.

Both the main building and annex are steel-frame structures with concrete columns and floors and exterior walls of ashlar stone. Roofs are flat with bitumen roofing material covered with gravel. The two-story penthouse that houses the two top floors of the main building is surmounted by a polygonal chimney stack clad in Kasota limestone. Two non-historic metal sheds are also present on the penthouse roof. Two masonry head houses project from the south end of the annex roof, and a large mechanical unit is also located on the annex roof, situated on a

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raised platform.

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A central circulation core houses a group of six passenger elevators and the building's primary enclosed stair, as well as a secondary bank of freight elevators. The main stair features terrazzo treads, risers, and landings and an ornamental brass railing. Additional utilitarian enclosed stairs and elevators are situated along the perimeter walls.

Exterior

North Elevation (Kellogg Boulevard)

The primary facade of the United States Post Office and Custom House is the long north elevation fronting onto Kellogg Boulevard. The four-story base is nine bays in width, with a central entrance bay flanked on each side by four projecting window bays framed in aluminum. Above the dark gray granite water table, the elevation is clad in smooth ashlar Kasota limestone. The projecting window bays are set on dark gray granite bulkheads, and each bay houses four non-historic steel casement windows at each story. Large aluminum V-shaped mullions frame the windows and extend the entire height of the projecting bays; grooved metal spandrel panels separate each floor.

The main entrance is deeply recessed; the walls and ceiling of the recess are clad in dark gray granite. At the east and west wall of the recess, the words "United States Post Office and Custom House" are carved into the stone. A carved plaque near the main entrance gives the names of the Secretary of the Treasury (William H. Woodin), the Postmaster General (James A. Farley), the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury (Lawrence W. Robert Jr.), the Acting Supervising Architect (James A. Wetmore) and Associated Architects (Lambert Bassindale and Holabird and Root) and 1933, the date of construction. The entrance itself consists of a set of bronze and glass double doors flanked by two bronze and glass revolving doors and topped with a large multi-pane transom. The doors are set into a bronze surround with inset paneling and a continuous grooved soffit, which separates the doors from the transom above. The center doorway is recessed and features flush lighting fixtures in the soffit. Above the recessed entrance, six projecting aluminum mullions angle out and extend to the top of the four-story base, separating non-historic slider windows and non-historic metal spandrels that are consistent with the rest of the facade.

The fifth and sixth stories are stepped back from the four-story base, clad in Kasota ashlar limestone and regularly fenestrated with smaller window openings in groups of two windows per opening. Simple limestone banding decorates the sixth story. Window openings on these stories are simple punched openings in the masonry wall; the non-historic windows are separated vertically by stainless metal mullions and horizontally by non-historic painted metal spandrel panels. Several of these window openings now house mechanical louvers within the original openings.

Above the sixth story, the building steps back again and rises uninterrupted through the fifteenth floor. On this tower portion, the north facade is composed of fluted Kasota limestone blocks that

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form prominent vertical piers between the fourteen rows of dark spandrel windows. Narrow bands of limestone near the top of the tower are carved with a stylized vine motif. The two-story penthouse is stepped back approximately five feet from the north of the tower and is fenestrated with smaller window openings with simple limestone sills that hold pairs of non-historic steel windows.

The north elevation of the annex, which extends above the connection with the south side of the main building and is only partially visible from Kellogg Boulevard, Sibley Street, or Jackson Street, is un-fenestrated (although several mechanical louvers have been cut into the wall), and clad in ashlar Kasota limestone.

West Elevation (Jackson Street)

The west elevation of the main building is similar in design and detailing to the north elevation, but less wide. It is five bays wide, with projecting spandrel windows framed by prominent aluminum mullions and separated by grooved metal spandrel panels. On this elevation, a number of the spandrel panels have been replaced with mechanical louvers. Two non-historic single-leaf metal doors have been inserted at the base of the window bay just north of the southernmost window bay. Like the north elevation, the fifth and sixth stories are set back on the west elevation and regularly fenestrated. The upper tower features fluted limestone piers separating the six spandrel windows, with a vine motif above the fourteenth floor windows. The west elevation of the two-story penthouse holds three window opens at the center of the sixteenth story, with non-historic steel windows in the original openings. A mechanical louver is cut into the seventeenth story.

The annex abuts directly to the south elevation of the main building, projecting slightly from the west elevation. The west elevation of the annex features materials and architectural detailing that are consistent with the main building, with a base of dark granite marking the basement level and unornamented Kasota limestone above. Three projecting spandrel window bays, framed with aluminum mullions, are closely grouped at the center of the west annex elevation. The non-historic casement windows (identical to those installed on the main building) are separated by alternating rows of solid metal spandrel panels and metal mechanical louvers. Recessed pedestrian entrances are located at the north and south ends of the west annex elevation. Under the center window bay is a large loading entrance with automatic folding doors. The original loading dock entry, which was situated at the fifth bay, has been infilled.

East Elevation (Sibley Street)

The east elevation of the main building is very similar to the west elevation, with a dark gray granite base, walls of Kasota limestone, and five projecting spandrel window bays with non-historic casement windows and metal spandrels. The southernmost window bay on this elevation holds a non-historic loading entrance with an overhead rolling door. Directly north of this loading entrance is a single-leaf metal door accessed by a set of concrete steps with a pipe

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railing. The stepped fifth and sixth stories and the upper tower are identical to the west elevation. The east side of the two-story penthouse holds two window openings at the sixteenth story, with non-historic steel windows in the original openings.

As on the west elevation, the annex abuts directly to the south elevation of the main building through the fifth story, and projects slightly from the four-story base of the main building. The basement level of the east annex elevation is clad in dark gray granite, with ashlar Kasota limestone above. The east elevation of the annex is completely un-fenestrated. Four large louvers have been inserted on the lower portion of the wall. A large loading entrance with mechanical folding doors is situated near the north end of the east annex elevation, and a recessed pedestrian entrance is located near the southeast corner. In 1978, two skyway penetrations were made to this elevation to connect the building to the Kellogg Deck, a mailing platform and parking facility across Sibley Street. These skyways have been removed and the penetrations infilled.

South Elevation (Second Avenue)

The south elevation of the annex is similar in design and detailing to the west elevation, clad in dark gray granite at the basement level with Kasota ashlar limestone above, and with six spandrel window bays grouped toward the center of the elevation. There are no entrances along the south elevation, but the granite base is interrupted at regular intervals by mechanical louvers. Because Second Avenue followed the line of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway running to the Union Depot, the building angles north (beginning between the two westernmost window bays) as it proceeds towards Sibley Street.

The south elevation of the main building's upper tower rises above the annex. The south, east, and west walls of the projecting end wings are consistent in design and detailing with the previously described elevations of the tower, with fluted Kasota limestone piers separating spandrel window bays with non-historic steel casement windows and metal spandrel panels. Above the fifteenth story, the penthouse is fenestrated with single window openings housing pairs of non-historic steel windows. Several of these openings have been infilled with mechanical louvers.

Interior

The lower subbasement of the United States Post Office and Custom House contains HVAC and mechanical equipment. The sub-basement and basement of the building house primarily storage and loading spaces. The sub-basement originally connected via two tunnels (a trucking tunnel and a conveyer tunnel) directly to the Union Depot across Sibley Street.

The primary significant interior space in the building is the main lobby that extends across the north end of the main building. The lobby retains many original features, including Tennessee Travernelle marble flooring, Maryland Cariff green marble walls, stylized bronze grillwork above the service bays with plaques depicting the four modes of transportation, and an elevator

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lobby with bronze elevator doors decorated with stylized eagle plaques. The interior vestibule at the main entrance also retains original marble flooring and wall coverings, as well as historic plaster ceilings and interior bronze and glass vestibule doors. The historic coved plaster ceilings in the lobby remain intact above modern coffered ceiling tiles. A large modern steel and glass security gate was installed in 2005 between the main entrance and the elevator lobby and has recently been removed.

Beyond the lobby, the first floor is primarily open, utilitarian space that was used for mail handling and sorting. All of the upper floors of the annex, as well as the second and third floors of the main building, are also open, utilitarian spaces with exposed concrete structure and mechanicals that served as mail handling and processing facilities.

The upper floors of the main building, which housed USPS facilities and an ever-changing range of governmental offices, have been extensively altered. On most floors, the original double-loaded corridor plan remains intact, with terrazzo flooring exposed in some locations. Most of the corridors and office spaces have dropped ceilings and fluorescent lighting. Office doors along the corridors are a mixture of historic wood and steel doors and non-historic replacements. The office spaces have been continually updated and reconfigured to suite the changing needs of the USPS and other tenants. On the sixth floor, a bank of wood and glass teller windows survives along the north wall of the corridor.

Integrity

The United States Post Office and Custom House retains excellent exterior integrity, with no major additions or alterations excepting window replacement. Although the original aluminum windows were replaced in 1985, the replacement steel windows were installed within the original spandrel bays and are compatible with the historic structure. The building retains its historic circulation patterns, including the central elevator lobby and primary enclosed stair with terrazzo treads and landings and ornamental brass railing. The interior of the building retains its historic lobby and the open, utilitarian nature of its mail handling facilities. On the upper floors, the double-loaded corridor plan of the office spaces remains largely intact.

Overall, the building retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association to convey its significance under National Register Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government as the largest postal facility in St. Paul and an important center of federal services in the city.

The 1961 annex, designed by noted St. Paul architects Ellerbe and Company, is over fifty years old and was constructed during the building's period of significance as a post office and federal building. The annex is compatible in design and materials with the Art Deco main building. As such, the annex contributes to the historic significance of the United States Post Office and Custom House under National Register Criterion A.

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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.)

GOVERNMENT/Post Office

Period of Significance

1934-1964

Significant Dates

1934; 1939; 1961

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Bassindale, Lambert with Holabird & Root (1934 original building)

Simon, Louis A. (1939 addition)

Ellerbe and Company (1961 Annex)

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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 and Custom House at 180 Kellogg Boulevard East in St. Paul is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Government as the center for the City of St. Paul's postal operations through most of the twentieth century. The building is also associated with the Minnesota statewide context "Urban Centers, 1870-1940." When the original building was completed in 1934, it was hailed as the most modern new post office in the United States, and served to consolidate and expand post office and federal operations in the city. The building served as the main postal distribution center for the region until 2010, when the United States Post Office moved its bulk mail operations to nearby Eagan, Minnesota. Completed in 1934 with major additions in 1939 and 1961, the United States Post Office and Custom House exemplifies the enormous expansion and push for modernization that transformed the country's postal system in the twentieth century.

Because the building served as the main postal facility for St. Paul from 1934 through 2010, the period of significance for the building begins in 1934, when the original building was completed, and extends to 1964, the National Register fifty-year cut-off.

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

Commercial Expansion and the Development of the Post Office in Saint Paul (1851-1930)

As the capital of the Minnesota Territory established in 1849, the city of St. Paul rose to prominence as a center for commerce and government institutions through the last half of the nineteenth century. While the city's first municipal buildings—the First Minnesota Capitol (1852, demolished) and the First Ramsey County Courthouse (1857, demolished)—were prominent Greek Revival-style structures, the first post office was considerably less grand. Henry Jackson, St. Paul's first postmaster, set up a homemade box with pigeonholes in his store in 1851 to inaugurate postal service in the city. However, the importance of St. Paul as a postal center was established early on. As the northernmost accessible point along the Mississippi River, St. Paul developed as a gateway to the Minnesota frontier and the Dakota Territory beyond. In 1858, the year that Minnesota was granted statehood, 1,068 steamboats arrived in St. Paul—an exponential increase from the ninety-five that had docked just ten years earlier.¹ These boats carried packages and letters in addition to hopeful settlers. By the 1850s, mail to and from the British Red River Settlement 390 miles northwest of the city and the vast fur trading territories of the Hudson Bay's Company were also being routed through the post office at St. Paul.²

¹ Alan H. Patera and John S. Gallagher, *The Post Office of Minnesota* (Burtonsville, Maryland: The Depot, 1978), 8.

² J. W. Patterson, "The Post Office in Early Minnesota," *Minnesota History*, vol. 40, Summer 1966, 83.

Jeffrey A. Hess and Paul Clifford Larson, *St. Paul's Architecture: A History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 17.

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By 1873, the city had constructed its first purpose built post office and custom house, beginning a long tradition of combining postal facilities with other federal functions. The first St. Paul Custom House and Post Office (demolished) at Fifth and Wabasha Streets was the most expensive building in the city when it was completed, costing over \$350,000 to build. It was also the first building in St. Paul to be built of granite. The Romanesque Revival building was an imposing presence and established the post office as a physical center for the burgeoning community.³ As Postmaster General John Wanamaker said in 1889, "The Post Office is the visible form of the Federal Government to every community and every citizen. Its hand is the only one that touches the local life, the social interests, and business concern of every neighborhood."⁴

During the 1880s and 1890s, the railroad surpassed the river as the primary mode of shipping and receiving goods, including mail. In the 1890 Polk's City Directory for St. Paul, the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce boasted, "St. Paul is the railroad centre of the great Northwestern System." Twenty-eight rail lines radiated from the city, connecting to Milwaukee and Chicago to the east, Lake Superior to northeast, south to St. Louis and Kansas City, and north and west to "the fruitful fields, the great timber belts, the extensive grazing domains, the wonderful deposits of coal, iron, copper, silver and gold...and connecting with the Pacific on the west, making St. Paul the distributing center for commerce with the islands of the sea and with Japan, China, and India."⁵

Between 1880 and 1900, the population of St. Paul nearly quadrupled, from 41,473 to 163,065.⁶ Physically, St. Paul also grew by leaps and bounds, as aggressive annexation nearly tripled the size of the city in the mid-1880s. Wholesale trade sales exceeded \$120 million in 1890, up from just \$20 million in 1876. The city's postal service grew apace, with postal receipts reaching \$465,078.67 in 1899, up from \$31,958.68 in 1881.⁷ Rural Free Delivery service, which was first established in Minnesota in 1897, extended the reach of the post office into the surrounding farming communities and required additional mail carriers and larger facilities.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury first drew up plans for a new federal building in St. Paul in 1892, under Supervising Architect Willoughby J. Edgebrook, who died later that year. When it was finally completed in 1902, the United States Post Office, Court House, and Custom House of Minnesota at 75 West Fifth Street (now known as Landmark Center) was one of the most imposing and architecturally distinguished buildings in the city, as was typical of post office buildings in urban centers at the turn of the century. Designed in the Chateausque style, the building featured walls of pink granite ashlar, steeply pitched multiple hipped roofs with a profusion of rounded towers with conical turrets and projecting gables. Two massive towers projected above the roofline, serving as a "tangible symbol of the government's presence."⁸ The

³ Hess and Larson, 24.

⁴ James H. Bruns, *Great American Post Offices* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), xxi.

⁵ R. L. Polk & Company's 1890 St. Paul City Directory, 46.

⁶ Patera and Gallagher, 11.

⁷ Polk City Directories from 1882 and 1899.

⁸ Hess and Larson, 75-76; Bruns, 72-73.

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building housed the main post office, the federal circuit court of appeals, circuit and district courts, the offices of the U. S. Surveyor General, the District Attorney, and port of delivery offices of the Custom and Internal Revenue Department.

Demand for postal services continued to increase steadily in St. Paul through the early twentieth century. By 1903, the city had established a commercial station and four branch stations, in addition to the main post office in the newly completed Federal building. The commercial station, according to the 1903 city directory, was situated near the Union Depot in Lowertown to "insure speedy delivery of mail to and from the wholesale district."⁹ Although the number of branches remained steady through the 1910s and 1920s, the Postal Department increased service by establishing dozens of substations throughout the city. Substations, postal facilities located in existing commercial spaces, were a cost-effective way to extend service. Between 1903 and 1916, the number of substations increased from twenty-two to thirty-nine.

The need for more postal service stations stemmed in large part from the introduction of domestic parcel post in 1913. Parcel post had a tremendous impact on postal facilities. 300 million packages were delivered across the country during the first six months, and post offices had to somehow accommodate for the processing of an exponentially increasing volume of mail. In St. Paul, the postal revenues reached \$1,551,591.34 in 1914 and nearly \$2 million in 1916. The Post Office employed 621 people in the main office, 5 branch stations, and 41 substations.¹⁰

By the mid-1920s, with the city's population reaching 250,000, a new federal building with expanded and modernized post office facilities was clearly needed, and St. Paul Postmaster Charles J. Moos, with the support of the St. Paul Association, conducted a survey of the city's federal facilities in 1925. The following year, Postmaster Moos and a group of St. Paul business leaders traveled to Washington, D.C. to lobby for funding for a new federal building under the Public Buildings Act, which authorized \$275 million for the construction of federal buildings across the country. Carl T. Schuneman, a St. Paul lawyer and department store manager, had just been appointed as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury to administer the new building program. In 1927, Congress appropriated \$2.7 million from the Public Building Act for the construction of a new six-story federal building in St. Paul.¹¹

This initial victory was short-lived, however, as the process of planning for the building would lead to a nationwide investigation of Post Office leasing practices that would ultimately serve to delay the completion of the building for nearly a decade.

The Commercial Post Office Scandal (1929-1931)

The following is primarily excerpted from the National Register Evaluation Report for the building prepared by Earth Tech/Berger Joint Venture for the U.S. Postal Service in 2007.

⁹ Polk City Directory 1903, p. 39.

¹⁰ Ibid, 1914 and 1916.

¹¹ "Farley Here for P.O. Rites, Promises Business Regime," *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 21, 1934, 3.

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The government planned to construct the new federal building in St. Paul on the site of its current operations in the Commercial Post Office Building, in the block bounded by Sibley, Jackson, and Third Streets. The location, directly opposite the new Union Depot (completed in 1923) would allow the new federal building to be directly connected to the rail lines and consolidate commercial and domestic operations. The building—a three-story masonry loft structure that sat on the northwest corner of the block—had served as the city's commercial post office since 1921, when the government entered into a 20-year cancellable lease with the building owner, Jacob Kulp of the Chicago firm Brown and Kulp, for an annual rent of \$120,775. At that time, the federal government thought that it might need three more floors of space in the future. The new lease gave the government a reduction in rental rate of \$775 a year with the provision that the owners would add three floors to the building. The new lease also omitted the cancellation clause, locking the government into a 20-year lease.¹² At that time, no one raised alarm over the cost of the yearly rent or the non-cancellable nature of the lease.

Plans for construction of the new building brought to light the circumstances of the Commercial Post Office Building's lease to the federal government. Melvin J. Maas, a Republican Representative from Minnesota, brought the matter of the lease to the attention of the U. S. Congress. On March 8, 1928, a Federal grand jury charged Kulp with fraud and corruption, citing that the building would only be appraised at \$450,000, making the annual rent for the building exorbitant. Although the owner agreed to construct three additional stories in the new lease, the grand jury doubted the "engineering possibility" of the proposal. Finally, the grand jury concluded that the government did not get anything in exchange for its surrender of the cancellation clause. Just after the charges were filed, the U. S. Government stopped making rental payments on the building. In response, Kulp filed suit against the Government in the federal Court of Claims for the unpaid rent.¹³

Although Kulp was charged with fraud, the matter did not receive serious attention from government officials until June 1929, under the administration of newly elected President Herbert Hoover, when Attorney General William D. Mitchell appointed a representative to look into the matter.

The St. Paul Commercial Post Office lease scandal brought about the investigation of post office leases nationwide. In March 1930, President Herbert Hoover ordered a nationwide survey of post office buildings and their lease agreements.¹⁴ In April 1930, U.S. Senators Gerald Nye of North Dakota and John Blaine of Wisconsin were calling for a Senate investigation into the post office leases nationwide.¹⁵

On April 18, 1930, a resolution by Senator Blaine for a nationwide investigation was adopted. On May 15, 1930, the House Expenditures Committee instructed a sub-committee to draft a resolution for investigation into the Post Office Department's policy with regard to the

¹² "Post Office Lease is Under Scrutiny," *New York Times*, June 9, 1929, N2.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ "Postal Survey Finished," *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 16, 1930, 1.

¹⁵ "Nye Charges P.O. Scandal," *St. Paul Dispatch*, April 8, 1.

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government's 6,000 post office leases nationwide.¹⁶ By August 29, 1930, the committee found that the government paid more than \$17 million for the 6,000 leases and two professional bidders, Jacob Julp of Chicago and Raymond Brown of Indianapolis, each held leases totaling \$1 million.¹⁷

While the post office lease scandal stretched across the nation, the fight between the Commercial Post Office Building owners, the city of St. Paul, and the U.S. Treasury Department continued. On September 5, 1929, a valuation hearing before the federal appraisal commissioners was held to determine the value of the land and existing buildings for the site, particularly the Commercial Post Office.¹⁸ On September 24, structural engineer Carl Van Suntum testified at the hearing calling the Commercial Post Office Building "valueless, a menace to workers and impractical to repair. Van Suntum testified to the condition of the post office and all of the adjacent buildings:

*The west wall, that is the party wall between the Drake building and the Commercial station, is in a state of collapse from the foundation to the roof at the south end. There is also a settlement from three and one-half to four inches in this wall.*¹⁹

The poor condition of the existing Commercial Post Office building prompted both St. Paul and federal government officials to investigate the situation further. Irving C. Pearce, acting commissioner of parks and buildings in St. Paul, initiated two investigations. Pearce asked city architectural engineer H.S. Bronson to investigate any health hazards in the building.²⁰

On September 27, 1929, the St. Paul building department condemned all of the buildings on the proposed post office site including the Commercial Post Office Building, Drake Building, Badger Building, and four buildings on Jackson Street. The order called for all of the buildings except the Commercial Post Office Building to be demolished immediately. Plans and specifications for repairs to the Commercial Post Office Building were to be submitted immediately and work on them was to start within 30 days.²¹

However, by March 1930, no such plans had been drawn up and the U.S. Treasury Department was discreetly conducting its own investigation of the building's condition. W. C. Lyon, assistant superintendent of the structural division of the supervising architects, made an "exhaustive" investigation of the building and found it to be "more than 99 percent" sound.²² Based on this report, the Treasury Department had no intention of immediately vacating the building. Although the Treasury Department concluded from the Lyon report that the Commercial Post Office Building was safe, Representative Maas charged that the Lyon report actually admitted that employees were in danger of falling debris from the party wall of the Drake Building. In the

¹⁶ "Action on P.O. Demanded," *St. Paul Dispatch*, May 15, 1930, 1.

¹⁷ "Kulp Holds Postal Leases for \$1,000,000," *St. Paul Dispatch*, August 29, 1930, 1.

¹⁸ "Union Depot Co. Projects Huge Trackage Plan," *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 5, 1929, 1.

¹⁹ "Commercial Station Branded Menace," *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 24, 1929, 1.

²⁰ "Capital Told P.O. Peril," *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 25, 1929, 1.

²¹ "City Condemns Commercial Station Site," *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 27, 1929, 1.

²² "U. S. Contends P.O. is Safe," *St. Paul Dispatch*, April 2, 1930, 1

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report, Lyon recommended that surplus furniture be piled against the wall to keep debris from falling on workers.²³

Throughout the spring, the Treasury Department continued to occupy the building insisting that it did not want to vacate until a clear title had been obtained. The City continued to insist that the government leave the crumbling building that caused a hazard to the workers within. On April 15, 1930, J.M. Clancy of the Commission of Public Safety warned that he would use force if necessary to vacate the most dangerous part of the building. The commissioner also warned that the rear section of the building was going to be fenced off to protect passersby from falling debris. The next day, Postmaster Charles J. Moos complied with Clancy's demands, vacating half of the first floor and large sections of the basement, second, and third floors.²⁴

The condition of the building continued to worsen, and the city building inspector and structural engineer officially condemned the building in May 1930. Despite the condemnation, the city and Treasury Department continued to wrangle over whether the building should be completely vacated while the hearings on the valuation and leasing of the building continued. The owners appealed the valuation of the building and land in federal court in May 1930. Presiding Judge W. A. Cant rendered a verdict that settled the valuation at \$334,416. Immediately after the decision was rendered, the St. Paul superintendent of building inspection wrote a letter demanding that the U.S. District Attorney render an opinion on the razing of the buildings on the site, particularly the Commercial Post Office. First Assistant Postmaster General Arch Coleman's response to the letter further illustrates the contentious relationship between the local and federal officials:

*The Government is perfectly capable of managing its affairs without any interference from city officials. If they would stay out of it, attend to their own affairs, and let the Government attend to its business, more progress would be made.*²⁵

Mr. Coleman asserted that repairs to the Commercial Post Office building had been made and approved by the city inspectors and that the government was in no rush to vacate the building while plans moved forward for the new structure. On August 7, 1930, the owners of the building again appealed the valuation of the property. Concurrently, the U.S. Senate investigating committee began its own hearing concerning the Commercial Post Office lease. Minnesota Representative Melvin J. Maas accused First Assistant Postmaster General Coleman of actively interfering with the city's condemnation proceedings for the building. Large discrepancies between the Department of Justice's valuation of the building (\$334,000) and that of the Post Office Department (\$677,000) caused further consternation.²⁶ On October 23, 1930, a settlement of \$830,000 was finally reached, and so the new federal building could move forward. However,

²³ "Post Office Sift Made in Chicago, Mass Asserts," *St. Paul Dispatch*, April 5, 1930, 1.

²⁴ "Clancy to Close Part of P.O. Station," *St. Paul Dispatch*, April 15, 1930; "Bog Found Under P.O. Station," *St. Paul Dispatch*, April 16, 1930, 1.

²⁵ "Let Us Alone, Coleman Says to St. Paul," *St. Paul Dispatch*, May 16, 1930, 1.

²⁶ "P.O. Inquiry Will Call Coleman," *St. Paul Dispatch*, August 27, 1930, 1; "P.O. Alibi Scored By Drill," *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 25, 1930, 1.

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the Post Office insisted that the new building be constructed in two phases so that the existing Commercial Post Office could remain in use as long as possible.

The battle over post office leases and the demolition of the Commercial Post Office Building overshadowed the real need for a new post office and custom house. The main post office had been completed before the inauguration of parcel post, which exponentially increased the demand for postal services in St. Paul and throughout the country. The city's attempt to handle the demand through dozens of scattered substations proved inefficient, and a large, modern, centrally-located facility was needed. By consolidating operations and combining the commercial post office, rural delivery office, and other services into a single building, the Post Office would save on leases, improve efficiency, and increase deliveries and revenue.

The United States Post Office and Custom House (1934-1963)

On August 14, 1931, plans for the new six-story federal building were approved by Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Ferry K. Heath. The architect chosen for the project was Lambert Bassindale (1875-1945), a native of Racine, Wisconsin, who practiced in St. Paul from approximately 1914 until his retirement in 1942. Before coming to St. Paul, he helped in planning the Cook County Courthouse and City Hall in Chicago, the Chicago Northwestern Terminal, and the Union Railway Terminal in Kansas City. Arriving in St. Paul, he was an associate architect with Charles Frost for the St. Paul Union Depot and the Great Northern Station in Minneapolis.²⁷ Bassindale brought in the noted Chicago firm of Holabird and Root to assist with the project. The plans had a provision for an additional three stories if needed.

The site was cleared by mid-November 1931 and 2,500 piles were driven to support the weight of the new building. In spring 1932, Representative Melvin Maas requested an additional \$1.1 million be appropriated for six additional stories to the new building. The appropriation was granted in March, but funds were not released until September 1932.²⁸

A groundbreaking ceremony was held on April 8, 1932, and in May construction began for two 22-foot-wide by 15-foot-high tunnels under Sibley Street that would connect the new post office directly to the Union Depot. Finally, on March 5, 1933, the contract for the new post office was signed by Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Ferry K. Heath. The contract called for completion of the building by December 1934. The Fleisher Engineering and Construction Company of Chicago was awarded the general construction contract. The Treasury Department allowed an extra \$12,000 in expenditure so that the building could be faced with Kasota limestone, a native Minnesota stone.²⁹

²⁷ AIA Historical Directory of American Architects,

<http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/ahd1002426.aspx>, accessed October 7, 2013.

²⁸ "Ground Broken for St. Paul Post Office" *St. Paul Dispatch*, April 8, 1932, 1; "U. S. Requests Permit for P.O. Depot Tunnels," *St. Paul Dispatch*, May 10, 1932, 1.

²⁹ "St. Paul Firm Awarded P.O. Heating Contract," *St. Paul Dispatch*, March 13, 1933, 1.

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Labor disputes plagued the project through the summer of 1933; because the project was funded in part through the Public Works Administration, a federal program designed to keep people employed, the U.S. Department of Labor was brought in to investigate the disputes.³⁰

The construction of the new building next door caused rapid settling in the Commercial Post Office Building, and on August 19, 1933, workers were ordered to evacuate. The pace of construction for the new building was accelerated, and the displaced workers moved into the basement, first and second floors of the partially completed building on October 1.³¹

After nearly ten years of planning and controversy, the new United States Post Office and Custom House was dedicated on September 21, 1934 in a ceremony at the corner of Kellogg Boulevard and Jackson Street. The three basement levels contained mechanical equipment and modern mail-handling facilities. Post Office facilities occupied the first five stories, which included modern sorting equipment in large, open spaces. Floors six through eleven housed offices for various government organizations, including the Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Engineering Department, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Customs, and the U.S. Weather Bureau. The top three stories held some office space as well as service facilities, ventilating equipment, and elevator equipment.³²

The new fourteen-story building was touted by Postmaster A. A. Van Dyke as the most modern structure of its kind in the country:

*The new home will end costly inefficiencies, replace leased space rented at an exorbitant figure, improve working conditions for . . . employees, and also end a large rent bill for other departments. . . heretofore scattered in a number of office buildings around the city. . . On the fourth and fifth floors, we have the railway terminal, formerly in the Union Depot, in which are handled and rerouted mail for Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, northern Michigan, Illinois, Montana, and Iowa. All the mail approaching these states through the Twin Cities is sorted here.*³³

Postmaster Van Dyke also attested to the speed and efficiency of the new post office, stating that a sack of mail could be unloaded from a rail car, placed on a conveyor, taken to the sorting floor, sorted, sacked, and sent down a chute for reloading within four minutes. He also touted the building as "the largest business concern in St. Paul." The facility delivered mail to 77,376 buildings in the city, had an annual payroll of \$9 million, and was the central accounting office for \$37 million in postal savings deposits in the state. The post office employed 1,200 workers, and an additional 300 federal employees occupied the government offices on the upper floors, including the Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Engineering Department, U.S. Geological Survey,

³⁰ "P.O. Labor Appeal Made to Perkins," *St. Paul Dispatch*, June 21, 1933, 1.

³¹ "Farley Here for P. O. Rites, Promises Building Regime," *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 21, 1934, 3.

³² "Van Dyke Calls New Post Office Most Modern in United States," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, September 22, 1934,

10.

³³ *Ibid.*

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the Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Custom, and the U.S. Weather Bureau.³⁴

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The continued expansion of postal services through the middle of the twentieth century was reflected in the physical expansion of the United States Post Office and Custom House. In 1939, just five years after the original building was completed, a four-story addition was constructed on roof. The addition was designed by Louis A. Simon (1857-1958), who served as Supervising Architect for the Treasury Department from 1933 to 1939, to blend seamlessly with the existing building.

After World War II, the Post Office Department embarked on a massive modernization program that saw the construction of dozens of new mechanized post offices and the expansion and retrofitting of hundreds of existing facilities. The buildings that came out of this program, historian James H. Bruns writes, reflected a marked shift in the post office design. No longer was the desire to create elaborate architectural symbols of the government's power; new urban post office facilities constructed in the 1950s and 1960s were "little more than mail-processing factories...practical buildings of glass, concrete, and steel. Rehabilitations of older structures were often unsympathetic to the architecture of the existing building, leading to renovations that "stuck out like a matron in a miniskirt."

The 1961 annex that was constructed for the United States Post Office and Custom House, designed by the St. Paul architecture firm of Ellerbe and Company, is thus uncharacteristically compatible with the existing building. It was clad in Mankato stone, and features spandrel windows similar to those on the base of the existing building. The annex added 232,000 additional square feet of floor space, all of which was donated to modern, mechanized mail processing. The St. Paul Dispatch reported in January 1961 that "a new conveyer-to-chute system and electronic brains will move the mail . . . An electronic machine on the top floor, using a code system, will tip parcel post off a conveyer to specific spots so that items can be made ready for delivery." Construction was completed on the annex in 1963.³⁵

Later History (1964-2010)

The United States Post Office and Custom House continued to serve as the primary federal building in St. Paul until the completion of the Warren E. Burger Federal Building and United States Courthouse in 1966, and it continued to house the city's primary postal operations until 2010 as the Eugene McCarthy Post Office. In 1978, a new mailing platform and parking facility known as the Kellogg Dock was constructed to the east of the main building, connected via two skyways. This platform and the connecting walkways were demolished as part of the rehabilitation of the Union Depot. The building was purchased by Ironton Custom House LLC in 2013.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ "Work on Big Post Office Addition May Start This Fall," *St. Paul Dispatch*, January 28, 1961, 31.

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Conclusion

The United States Post Office and Custom House at 180 Kellogg Boulevard East in St. Paul is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Government as the center for the City of St. Paul's postal operations through most of the twentieth century. The building is also associated with the Minnesota statewide context "Urban Centers, 1870-1940." The building served as the main postal distribution center for the region from 1934 until 2010. Completed in 1934 with major additions in 1939 and 1961, the United States Post Office and Custom House exemplifies the enormous expansion and push for modernization that transformed the country's postal system in the twentieth century.

The building may also qualified for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for architecture as an example of the Art Deco style. However, because of the alterations to the building and the proximity of more refined examples of the style in downtown St. Paul (most notably the St. Paul City Hall and Ramsey County Courthouse at 15 Kellogg Boulevard (1932; NRHP #83000940) and the St. Paul Women's City Club at 305 Saint Peter Street (1931; NRHP #82004628), the consultant has chosen to only pursue listing under National Register Criterion A.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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1929

- "Action on P.O. Demanded." *St. Paul Dispatch*, May 15, 1930.
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"Capital Told P.O. Peril." *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 25, 1929.

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“City Condemns Commercial Station Site.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 27, 1929.
“Clancy to Close Part of P.O. Station.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, April 15, 1930.
“Commercial Station Branded Menace.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 24, 1929.
“Let Us Alone, Coleman Says to St. Paul.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, May 16, 1930.
“Kulp Holds Postal Leases for \$1,000,000.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, August 29, 1930.
“Nye Charges P.O. Scandal.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, April 8, 1930.
“P.O. Alibi Scored By Drill.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 25, 1930.
“P.O. Inquiry Will Call Coleman.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, August 27, 1930.
“Post Office Sift Made in Chicago, Mass Asserts.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, April 5, 1930.
“Postal Survey Finished.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 16, 1930.
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“Union Depot Co. Projects Huge Trackage Plan.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 5, 1929.

1932

“Ground Broken for St. Paul Post Office.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, April 8, 1932.
“U. S. Requests Permit for P.O. Depot Tunnels.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, May 10, 1932.

1933

“P.O. Labor Appeal Made to Perkins.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, June 21, 1933.
“St. Paul Firm Awarded P.O. Heating Contract.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, March 13, 1933.

1934

“Farley Here for P. O. Rites, Promises Building Regime.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, September 21, 1934.

1961

“Work on Big Post Office Addition May Start This Fall.” *St. Paul Dispatch*, January 28, 1961.

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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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): RA-SPC-4518

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.67 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 44.947003 | Longitude: -93.086968 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

Legal Description of 180 Kellogg Blvd E (Pin # 06.28.22.11.0025) from the Ramsey County Assessor's Office:

Post Office Site As Follows Subject To Streets: Part Of Blk 3o Including Drakes Re Of Part Thereof Nwly Of L Par With And 8 5/1o Ft Nwly Of Cl Of Most Nwly St Paul Union Depot Co Spur Across Blk 30

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries encompass the entire parcel associated with the United States Post Office and Custom House at 180 Kellogg Boulevard East in St Paul, MN.

United States Post Office and Custom House
Name of Property

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Emily Ramsey, Senior Associate
organization: MacRostie Historic Advisors LLC
street & number: 53 West Jackson Blvd, Suite 1323
city or town: Chicago state: IL zip code: 60604
e-mail: eramsey@mac-ha.com
telephone: 312-786-1700 x7013
date: October 17, 2013

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 and Custom House

City or Vicinity: St. Paul

County: Ramsey

State: MN

Photographer: Emily Ramsey

Date Photographed: October 2013

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

- 1 of 16: North and east elevations, looking south
- 2 of 16: North and west elevations, looking southeast
- 3 of 16: East elevation, looking southwest
- 4 of 16: East elevation, looking northwest
- 5 of 16: South elevation, looking north
- 6 of 16: West elevation, looking southeast
- 7 of 16: West elevation, upper floors of Main Building, looking east
- 8 of 16: North elevation, main entrance detail, looking south
- 9 of 16: Detail of south elevation of Main Building tower, looking west from roof
- 10 of 16: First floor lobby, looking west from main entrance
- 11 of 16: Typical lower floor mail processing space, looking northeast from southwest corner of Annex
- 12 of 16: Typical lower floor mail processing space, looking east through Annex
- 13 of 16: Primary enclosed stair in Main Building

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14 of 16: Sixth floor, detail of teller windows

15 of 16: Typical upper floor, tower of Main Building, elevator lobby, looking north

16 of 16: Typical upper floor, tower of Main Building, main corridor, looking east

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.



Figure 1: The former Post Office and Courthouse (now Landmark Center), constructed in 1902 in St. Paul, circa 1909 (image courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society)

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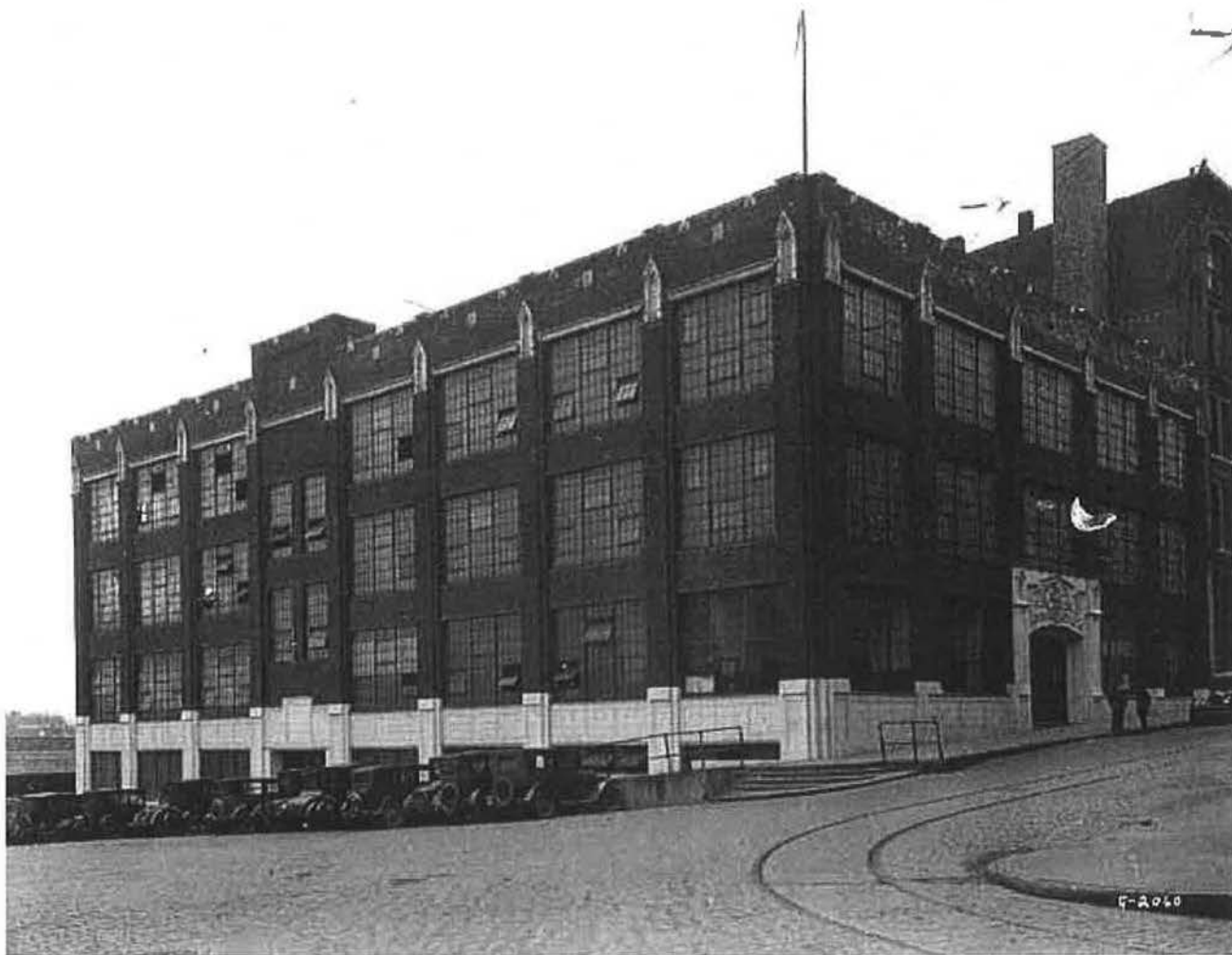


Figure 2: Old commercial post office station at Kellogg Boulevard and Sibley Street, no longer extant (image courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society)

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Figure 3: Dedication of United States Post Office and Custom House in 1934, looking southeast from Kellogg Boulevard and Jackson Street (image courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society)



Figure 4: Parcel sorting room, circa 1935 (image courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society)

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Figure 5: Interior view, circa 1937 (image courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society)



Figure 6: Interior view, circa 1937 (image courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society)

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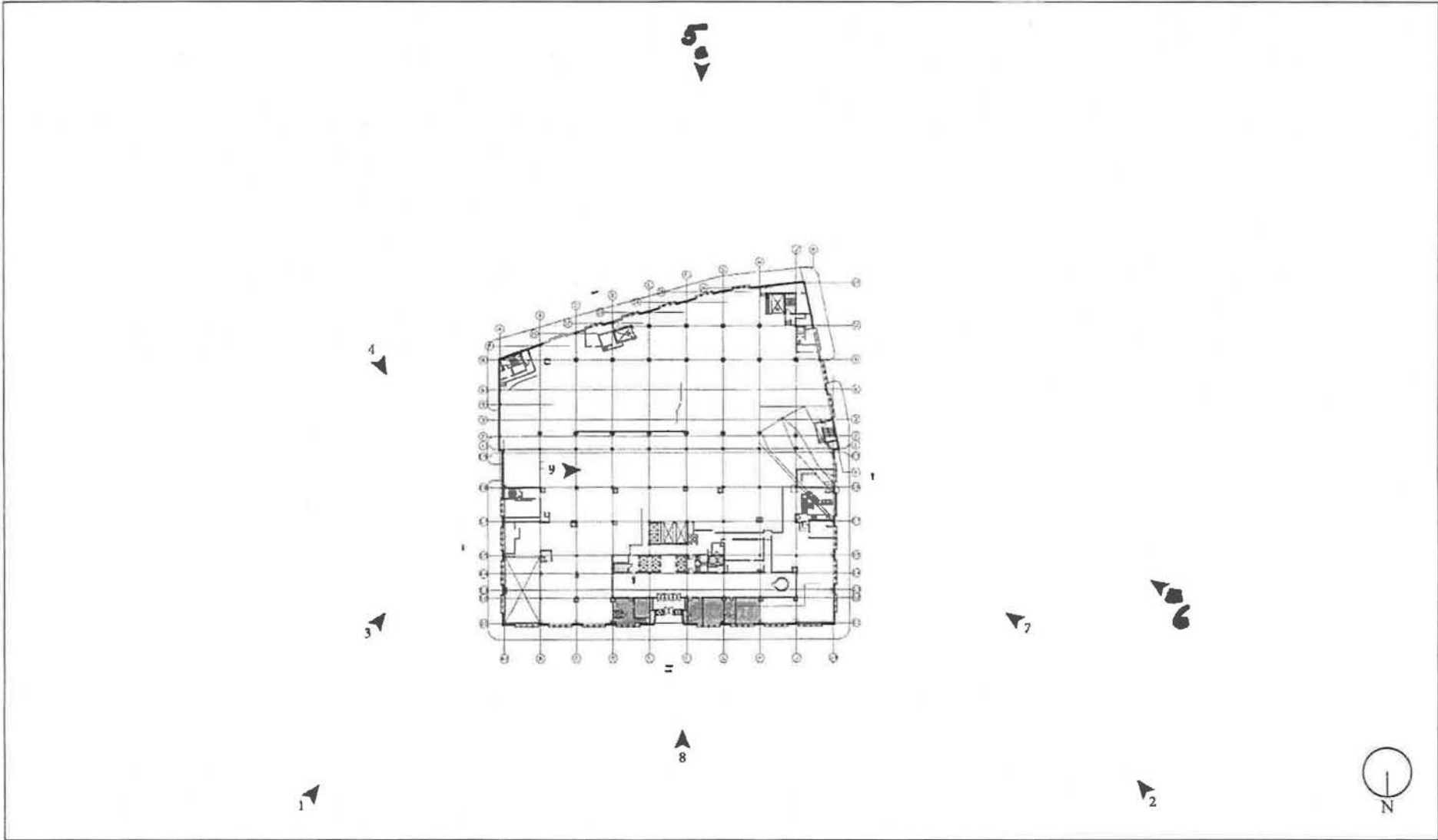
Figure 7: Historic post card, circa 1934 (image courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society)

United States Post Office and Custom House
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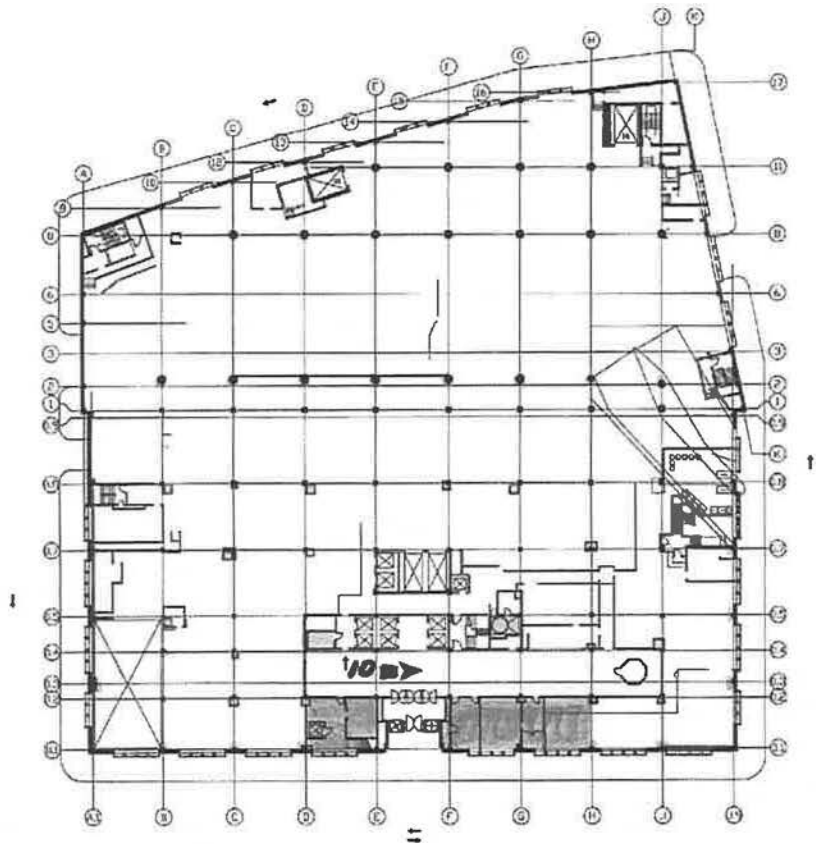
Figure 8: View from Kellogg and Jackson, circa 1952 (image courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society)

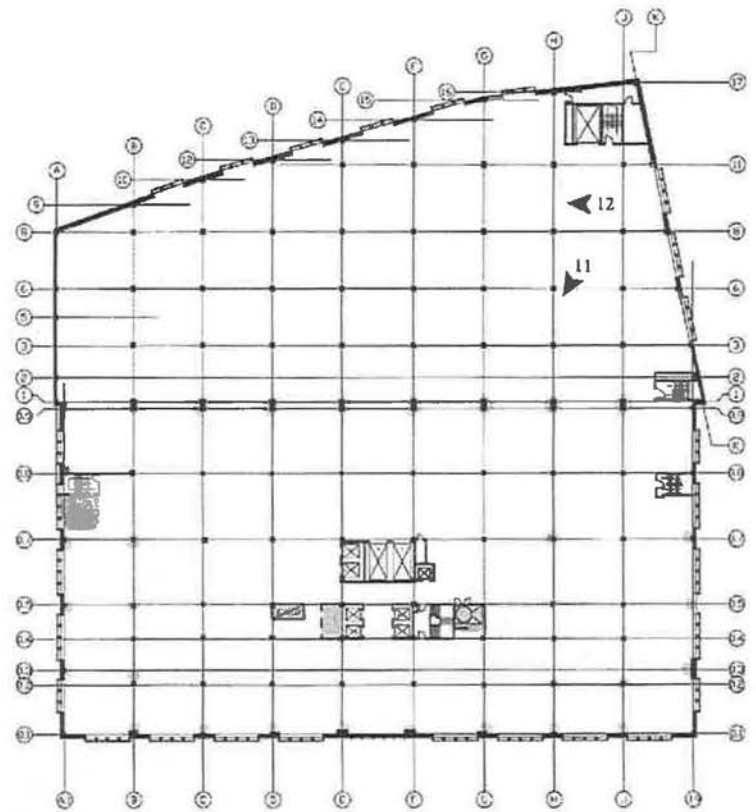


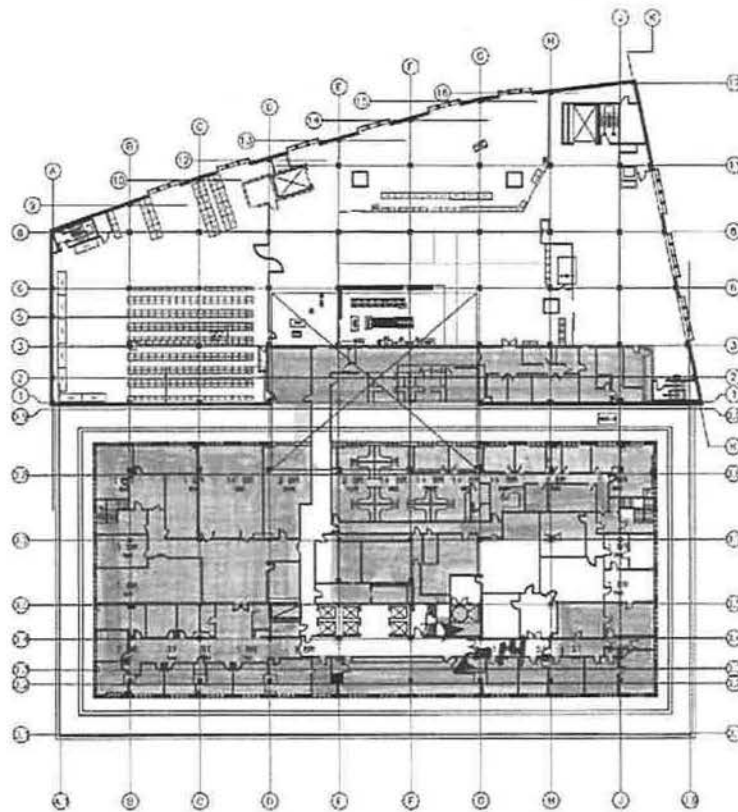
MacRostie Historic Advisors
Bringing strategy, equity, and experience
to historic building development

United States Post Office & Custom House
180 Kellogg Boulevard East
St. Paul, Minnesota, 55101

National Park Service
National Register Nomination - Photokey
Exterior



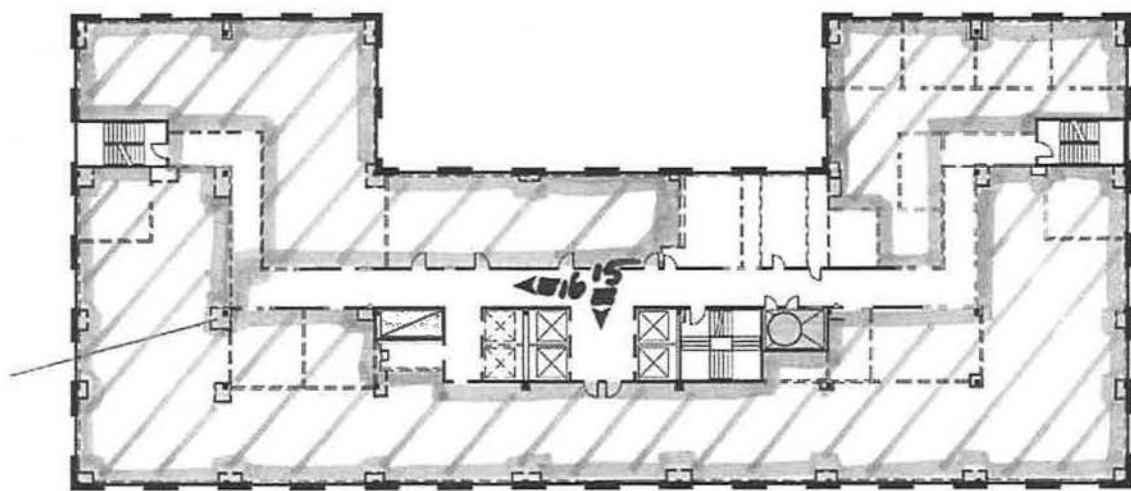




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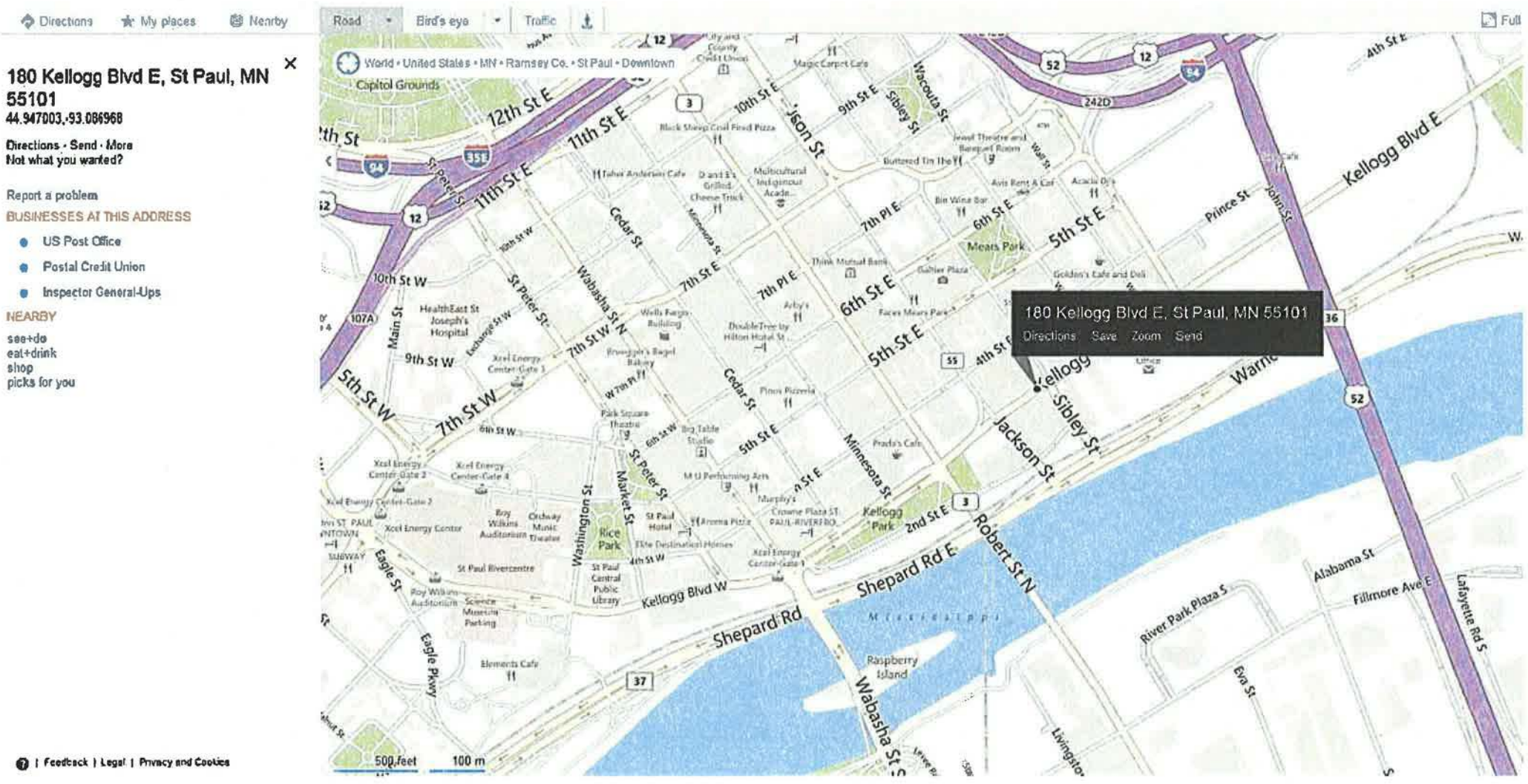
National Park Service
 National Register Nomination - Photokey
 Sixth Floor Plan



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to historic building development

United States Post Office & Custom House
180 Kellogg Boulevard East
St. Paul, Minnesota, 55101

National Park Service
National Register Nomination - Photokey
Typical Upper Floor Plan - Floors 7-13



United States Post Office and Custom House
180 Kellogg Blvd East, St. Paul
Ramsey County, Minnesota















180

180

UNITED STATES
POST OFFICE
AND
CUSTOM HOUSE

UNITED STATES
POST OFFICE
AND
CUSTOM HOUSE







EXIT

EXIT

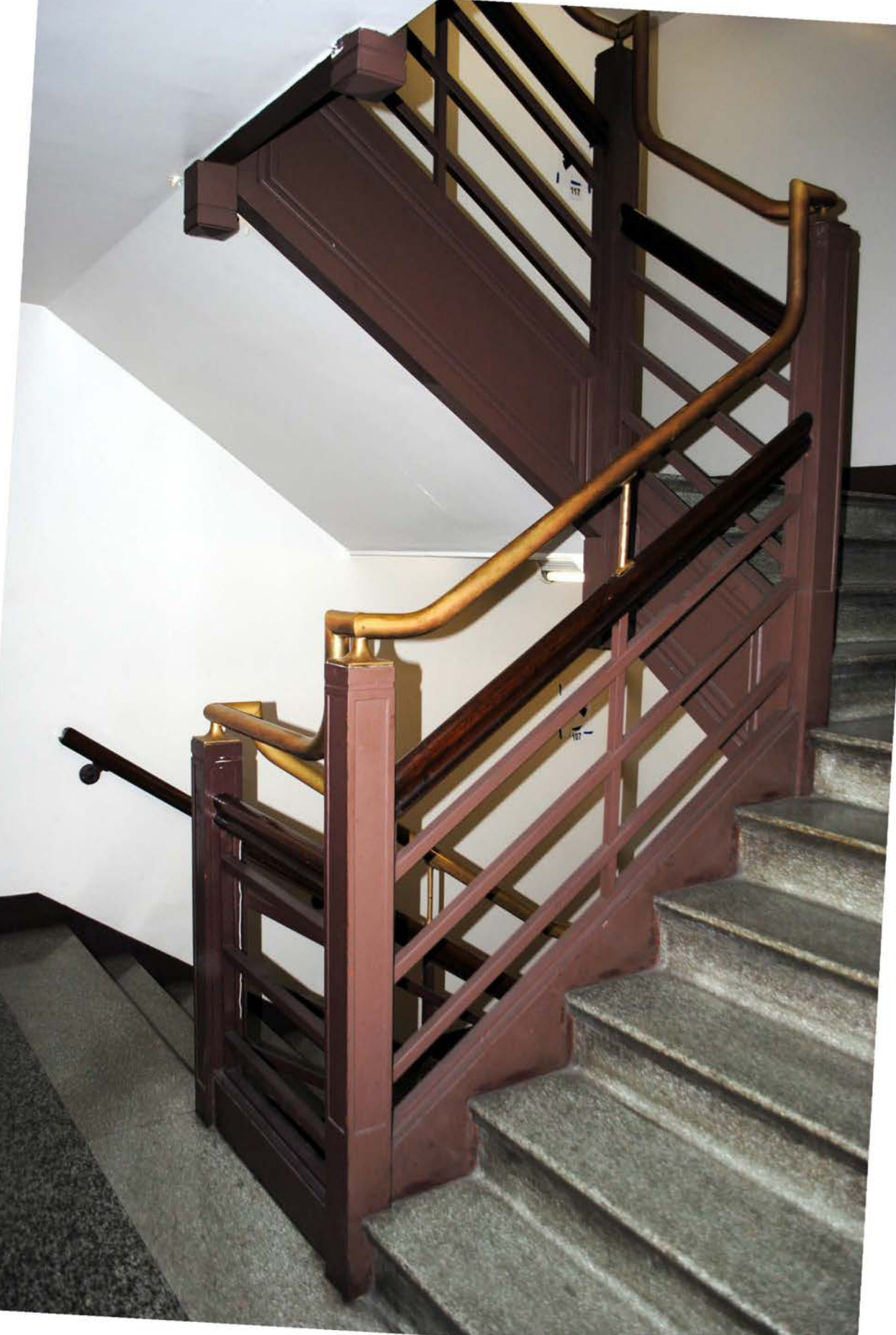
NO
SMOKING

DO NOT
ENTER
EXIT

THE WALLS OF
THE WORLD













UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY United States Post Office and Custom House
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MINNESOTA, Ramsey

DATE RECEIVED: 4/04/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/25/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/12/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/21/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000218

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 5.19.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

1400 City Hall Annex
25 E. Fourth Street
St Paul, Minnesota 55102

Telephone: 651-266-9078
Facsimile: 651-228-3220
Web: www.

August 8, 2013

Barbara Mitchell Howard
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Minnesota Historical Society
345 Kellogg Blvd. W.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

RE: Certified Local Government Comment on the nomination of:
**United States Post Office and Custom House, 180 Kellogg Boulevard East, St. Paul,
Ramsey County** to the National Register of Historic Places.

Dear Ms. Mitchell Howard:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the National Register nomination for the United States Post Office and Custom House. Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commissioner, Steve Trimble, meets the Federal Standards for History. Mr. Trimble's brief biography is included and he has reviewed the National Register nomination for the property and provided feedback.

The Commissioner agrees that the property meets Criteria A (broad patterns of history) under government for the period of significance from 1934 to 1964. In addition, Commissioner Trimble has noted a few items that may need consideration. For example:

- Consider including more information about the impact of the introduction of the parcel post system and how it affected the need for more room, since it was key to the need for a new building and many people may not understand its impact.
- Although Criterion C was not included as part of the nomination, a more detailed description of the art deco style, architect and important features that remain should have been included.

The Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) allowed for public comment during their February 13, 2014 Business Meeting. The HPC supports listing the United States Post Office and Custom House to the National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Amy Spong
Historic Preservation Specialist

cc: Mayor Christopher B. Coleman
Ward 7 Councilmember Dave Thune
File



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Mayor Christopher B. Coleman

390 City Hall
15 West Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Telephone: 651-266-8510
Facsimile: 651-228-8521

March 3, 2014

Barbara Mitchell Howard
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Minnesota Historical Society
345 Kellogg Blvd. W.
St. Paul, MN 55102

MAR 07 2014

RE: Certified Local Government Comment on the nomination of:
United States Post Office and Custom House, 180 East Kellogg Boulevard, St. Paul, Ramsey County to the National Register of Historic Places.

Dear Ms. Mitchell Howard,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the National Register nomination for the United States Post Office and Custom House located at 180 East Kellogg Boulevard. While the building is a tangible reminder of the enormous expansion and push for modernization that transformed the country's postal system in the twentieth century, it is also part of a collection of several downtown Art Deco style buildings.

The property was first identified as being eligible for the National Register of Historic Places during a cultural resources survey required under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. This nomination is demonstrative of several years of planning for increased economic activity and transit oriented development while integrating preservation considerations and preserving Saint Paul's downtown character.

I concur with the findings of the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission and support the nomination of the United States Post Office and Custom House to the National Register of Historic Places under government. I look forward to exploring ways this nomination may lead to increased awareness of this historic landmark and to the building's sensitive rehabilitation through the use of historic tax credits.

Sincerely,

Christopher B. Coleman
Mayor

cc: Ward 2 Councilmember Dave Thune
Richard Dana, HPC Chair
HPC file

Minnesota Historical Society
State Historic Preservation Office
345 Kellogg Blvd West, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102
651/259-3451



TO: Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Denis P. Gardner

DATE: March 31, 2014

NAME OF PROPERTY: United States Post Office and Custom House

COUNTY AND STATE: Ramsey County, Minnesota

SUBJECT: National Register:
 Nomination
 Multiple Property Documentation Form
 Request for determination of eligibility
 Request for removal (Reference No.)
 Nomination resubmission
 Boundary increase/decrease (Reference No.)
 Additional documentation (Reference No.)

DOCUMENTATION:

- Original National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
 - Multiple Property Documentation Form
 - Continuation Sheets
 - Removal Documentation
 - Photographs
 - CD w/ image files
 - Original USGS Map
 - Sketch map(s)
 - Correspondence
 - Owner Objection
- The enclosed owner objections
Do Do not constitute a majority of property owners

STAFF COMMENTS:
(The enclosed map is a Bing Map)