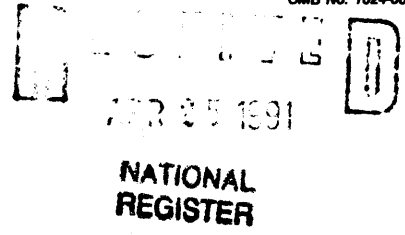


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Kelso Main Post Office

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 304 Academy Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Kelso

N/A vicinity

state Washington code WA county Cowlitz code 015 zip code 98626

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

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>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic U.S. Post Offices In Washington,
1893 - 1941

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] 1-11-90
Signature of certifying official Date

U.S. Postal Service
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

[Signature] 12/15/89
Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

[Signature] 8/7/91

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Neo-Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Brick

roof Tar compositionother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Kelso Main Post Office is one story in height and rests upon a raised basement. The footings and basement walls are reinforced concrete. Structural steel supports the brick walls of the main floor. Both the exposed basement walls and main floor walls are faced with red brick. Symmetrical and strongly horizontal, the front facade is divided into three segments--a slightly recessed five-bay central section with single-bay wings flanking each side. Though all seven bays are round-arched, only the five central bays have arched sash. The roof is flat built-up tar composition.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The front facade (north) is symmetrical and divided into seven semi-circular-arched bays within three facade segments. The five-bay central segment is recessed slightly relative to the single-bay wings. Also, its parapet extends slightly above the flanking wings. Red brick, in common bond, faces the above-grade portion of the basement walls and the main floor walls. A brick soldier-course water table divides the basement and main floors.

The five bays of the central section are configured identically to each other. All are slightly recessed and defined by semi-circular arches formed by gauged brick stretchers. The centered entry consists of double aluminum-framed glass doors (originals replaced). A Tuscan order architrave of wood is set within the brick bay and surrounds the doors. Above the entablature is an intricate fan window set in a thick wooden frame. Six granite steps and approach landing provide access to the entry. Flanking the stairs is a graceful and gently curving wrought-iron balustrade. Wrought-iron standards support lanterns at the ends of the balustrade. Flanking each side of the entry bay are two window bays. The sash is double-hung wood with eight-over-eight-lights. Within the arch is a six-light fan. Sandstone sills define the bottoms of the windows. Plain brick panels are beneath the windows.

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Each wing contains a single semi-circular-arched window bay containing eight-over-eight-light, double-hung, wood sash windows. The bays are configured identically to the central section except that the fan window has been omitted--brick fills the arch segment above the sash.

The west facade is flat with five equally-spaced semi-circular-arched bays. The detailing of the wall and of the window bays is the same as described (the windows are identical to those of the end wings). Since the grade slopes to the west and south, a basement entry is in this facade. A concrete retaining wall with stairs at the south end forms an entry well. Within the brick-faced basement wall is a double aluminum-framed glass door that is flanked on each side by two paired six-light, wood sash windows. The entry and window bays are framed by a flat brick arches and are aligned beneath the main floor bays.

The east facade contains the mail platform. The west end of the platform is open while the east end is enclosed by a brick wall. A flat metal roof supported by round steel pillars projects (below the parapet line) to the north over the concrete platform. The exposed portion of the building facade is brick-faced and contains four double-hung, two-over-four, wood sash windows (six-light) and three loading doors.

The rear (south) facade is flat and divided into five equally-spaced window bays. The windows of the main floor are eight-over-eight-light, double-hung, wood sash framed by a flat arch and sandstone sills. The basement windows are identical to those of the west facade basement. A below-grade entry is at the north corner of the basement.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

pg 25

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Art
Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1936-1941

Significant Dates

Site acq.-1934
Const.-1936

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Simon, Louis A., Supervising Architect/Federal Government

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

The Kelso MPO is an unaltered example of a small town single-purpose post office. The building's design--based on standardized government plans--is modern; yet it retains distinctive Classical details. Architecturally the building is locally significant, and with its location across the street from the Neo-Classical Cowlitz County Courthouse, it is a major contributor to the governmental context of the city. The building is the city's first and only federally-constructed post office and it came, through the efforts of local citizens and their elected representatives in Washington, D.C., during the Depression. The building, and the mural it houses, represent the aid by the federal government to communities distressed by economic disaster. The mural was completed by David McCosh in 1938 and is a legacy of the New Deal arts programs.

ARCHITECTURE

The design of the Kelso MPO is modern with a flat facade and nominal architectural ornamentation. The building's plans are based on Office of Supervising Architect's standardized drawings and are typical of numerous small town post offices completed across the nation during the Depression era. This design, in its specific treatment of the front facade, is unique in the Northwest. The modern influence is evident in its flat and nominally-detailed facades. Of note is the lack of a terminating cornice. Indeed, it seems that another story was intended, then truncated without detailing the new elevations. The arched bays and Tuscan order entry entablature are rooted in the Beaux-Arts tradition of the first two decades of the century and the early years of the Depression. It was during the mid-1930s that the International movement and the Starved Classical began to predomi-

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Longview Daily News; various articles 1934 - 1936.
2. Original Site & Floor Plans; 1935.
3. Construction Progress Photographs; 22 June 1935 - 18 October 1934.
4. "Facts and Approximate Dates Relative to the History of the Kelso Post Office." Cowlitz County Historical Quarterly. Vol X, No. 4, February 1969.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

USPS Facilities Service Center
San Bruno, CA 94099-0330

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.34

UTM References

A

1	0	5	0	7	0	6	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Quadrangle Name: Kelso

Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 2, 4 & 4, Block 17, Kelso Old Town. The site is on the Southeast corner of Academy Street and Third Street. Beginning at the Northwest corner, thence E150', S100'. W150', N100' to point of beginning

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

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

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title H.J. "Jim" Kolva, Project Manager; Steve Franks, Research Assistant

organization Institute for Urban & Local Studies date March 1989

street & number West 705 First Avenue telephone (509) 458-6219

city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99204

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nate federal architecture. This building exemplifies the later stages of the transitional period. As a distinctive architectural entity and as an example of the federal design and its transition, the building is locally significant under Criterion C.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The Kelso MPO and its mural are legacies of the Depression era; they represent the use of public building and arts programs to aid local economies through a period of national economic emergency. As the city's first federally-constructed post office, the building was important as a symbol of the federal government and of that government's recognition of Kelso's regional importance. Kelso had been able to capture the Cowlitz County seat in the early-1920s and had boomed to a population of over 6,000 by 1930. In spite of this, Kelso was overshadowed by Longview, its barely-a-decade-old neighbor to the west which exploded from a paper dream when Kelso got its county seat to a modern thriving city of over 10,000 in 1930. Furthermore, Longview received an architectural gem for its federal post office in 1934. Thus, the citizens of Kelso lamented that federal appropriations had been set aside, then cut by economy measures, and finally forgotten; while they did not wish to "hog" appropriations that some other city deserved to share, they believed Kelso needed and deserved an adequate building from Uncle Sam. Congressman Martin F. Smith was finally able to get a building for his constituents; one that was much appreciated by the local citizens. For its association with the federal governments public buildings and arts programs, the building is locally significant under Criterion A.

ART

A mural entitled "Incidents in the Lives of Lewis and Clark" (6 feet by 15 feet) is on the north wall of the lobby, above the postmaster's door. It was painted by David McCosh in 1938 for \$1,165. The mural, in vivid colors, depicts various early western scenes including Northwest Coast Indian fishermen, the Lewis and Clark camp site, a farmer examining his plow, and a group of people receiving mail. The backdrop is the rugged forest and shorelines of the Northwest.

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David McCosh, was born in 1903 in Cedar rapids, Iowa where he also attended Coe College. He studied painting and graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago in 1927. McCosh received a traveling scholarship from the Institute in 1928. During the summer of 1930 he painted under a Tiffany Foundation Fellowship on Long Island, New York. McCosh taught drawing, painting, and lithography at the University of Oregon from 1934 until his retirement in 1970. He also taught at Stone City Art Colony in Iowa, the Art Institute of Chicago, Montana State University, and San Jose State University. McCosh died in 1980.

McCosh is listed in Who's Who in American Art and has been placed by some art critics in the same classification as middle western artists Grant Wood and John Steuart Curry. His works have been exhibited nationally in one-man and group shows. He is represented by the Whitney Museum of American Art as well as other public and private collections. He completed a mural for the Century of Progress in the 1932 Chicago World's Fair, two murals for the Bureau of National Parks in the Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., and a mural for the Beresford, South Dakota Post Office.

The Kelso MPO was one of eighteen in the state of Washington to receive a mural under the auspices of the Federal Works Agency Section of Fine Arts. Thus, it is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with the New Deal arts programs. The building is also significant under Criterion C in that the mural, as an integral part, represents a significant type, period, and style of artistic expression.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Kelso is on the east side of the Cowlitz River across from the City of Longview. This city of approximately 10,700 people (1987 estimate) is within the industrial and employment base of the entire Longview-Kelso area. It provides both residential "bedroom" areas as well as commercial activities for the more heavily industrialized Longview.

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Kelso was founded in 1847 when Peter Crawford, a Scotsman, staked his first claim. Crawford platted the settlement, which he named after his hometown in Scotland, in the 1880s. The first post office was established on December 11, 1886, with Franz H. Kleber as postmaster. In 1890, 354 people resided in Kelso, and in 1892, Kelso was incorporated. Kelso grew from its position on the main route between Portland, Oregon and the Puget Sound country. Farming, logging, and fishing supported the local economy. Its population increased to 694 in 1900 and then boomed to 2,039 in 1910. Its growth then leveled, and by 1920 Kelso's population had grown to only 2,228. In February 1921, when the Long-Bell Lumber Company took its option for a mill site across the Cowlitz River, Kelso boosters could see a bright future. When they found that a new city was proposed in conjunction with what would become the world's largest lumber mill, there was an attempt to consolidate. Kelso was spurned, but was able to wrest the county seat from Kalama in 1922. The Cowlitz County Courthouse was constructed in 1923. Even though the new planned city of Longview was built across the river, Kelso prospered and grew rapidly through the 1920s. By 1930, Kelso had 6,260 residents (compared to 10,652 in Longview). Growth again leveled in the 1930s; Kelso's population increased only to 6,749 in 1940 (compared with 12,385 in Longview). While Kelso again grew only slightly in 1950 (7,345), during the same period Longview grew to 20,339. Kelso's growth since then has remained slight but steady, growing from 8,379 in 1960 to 10,296 in 1970 to 11,129 in 1980 (while Longview has grown to a 1980 population of 31,052).

Many of Kelso's prominent buildings were constructed in its 1920s growth period. In addition to the County Courthouse were the Kelso High School (three-story brick, Neo-Classical, 1922), the Chinook Hotel (three-story stucco and brick, 1923), the Columbia Hotel (four-story brick, 1924), the Masonic Building (three-story, brick, 1924), the Kelso Assembly of God Church (stucco, Spanish Colonial, 1925), Washington Grade School (two-story, brick, Georgian Revival, 1927), and the Courthouse Annex (modern, 1939). These buildings are among those listed as local landmarks.

The Kelso MPO is in the city's civic center. Adjacent to the east of the MPO is the one-story brick library (mod-

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ern, unremarkable). Adjacent to the south is a single-family residence and to its south, the American Legion Building. A commercial building is east of the Legion Building. The County Courthouse (three-story brick, Neo-Classical, 1923) is across Academy Street north of the MPO. A single-family house and vacant lot are across 3rd Street west of the MPO.

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

"Kelso To Get New Postoffice" headlined Kelso's Daily Tribune and Kelsonian on February 27, 1931. The paper reported that \$115,000 for a new Kelso post office was being requested in an annual report submitted to the House that day. It was noted that: "For some time past Kelso citizens under the leadership of the Kelso Club and through the various organizations, have been seeking to have this city included on the list of places to secure a federal building" and that "Some time ago a survey of Kelso was made and the various possible sites were inspected. A full list of these have been sent to Washington.... Owing to the business situation it is expected that the government will hurry things along as much as possible to have the actual construction work started." News of Kelso's post office was also reported in the Longview Daily News. On the 27th it reported that the allocation of \$115,000 was being requested in a summary of allotments of \$504 million of public building funds forwarded to Congress by Secretary Mellon and Postmaster General Brown. The request also included Centralia (\$110,000), Aberdeen (\$250,000), and Montesano (\$85,000), which were among the 1,624 projects contemplated under the large program. New buildings were proposed in 1,085 communities currently without federal buildings.

The following day the Kelsonian reported that following yesterday's news (which had caused "considerable stir") "the Kelso Club had sent off and had sent a number of telegrams urging the congressional delegation and particularly Senator Wesley L. Jones and Congressman Albert Johnson the need of hurrying the work here."

Other news of the day reported by the Kelsonian included the news that the Supreme Court had unanimously upheld the validity of the prohibition amendment (February 24 article)

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and that the Director of the Veterans Bureau in Washington, D.C. had testified that veterans were in need of employment more than cash bonuses, which were being considered (January 31). The Director recommended that the government assist the widows and orphans of ex-servicemen and care for the sick, but "leave the able-bodied ex-service men to take their place along with the other citizens of the country in working out their salvation during these distressing times." Locally, it was reported that the northwest's logging industry was improving (March 30th), but the paper also began a six story series about the City of Kelso's financial condition, noting "expenditures are in excess of available revenues, that property values for taxation purposes are decreasing, and that the amount of uncollected and uncollectable taxes are piling up at an alarming rate" (April 13). On a more cheerful note, a banner headline of May 2 announced that Kelso's 5th annual "Farmer's Day" had set a new attendance record, "with every section of Cowlitz county represented."

Three years later, in 1934, Kelso was still without a new post office building. On June 25, 1934 the Kelsonian reported that the post office was moving from Ash Street to the Yale Hotel building on 3rd Avenue and that Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau was "pushing" for approval of over 300 federal building projects, among them Kelso's ("long waiting for final action to authorize construction" the paper noted).

(A note found in the post office construction files (date and author unknown) states the frustration of at least one member of the community over the delay in obtaining the new post office:

Not long ago an appropriation from the Government, of \$113,000.00 was set aside for the site and building of a Federal Post Office building here. This was subjected later to the economy cuts. A Federal inspector was sent here and remained here for some time negotiating with land owners for a site suitable for the project. This was finally decided upon and everything seemed to be satisfactory. For some reason or other the actual building was not ordered. It was a decided blow to the community to have this promise from the government of a much needed building and then have it revoked. This

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is real need for it. The circumstances are ample to warrant it, not to mention the relief it would give to laborers, builders and so on. Everyone would profit, even the Federal Government itself and the Post Office Department.

Many cities have obtained Federal Buildings for Post Offices that were not so greatly in need of such buildings, and in so many instances they were far in excess of their actual needs and requirements as to size and equipment. They have actually taken money that belonged to other cities in dire need of such buildings. Kelso does not need anything like that, nor does any city, and the citizens here are not asking for it.

To be conservative, \$60,000.00 will buy the ground and build the building that will amply take care of the needs here, both present and future for many years to come. The citizens do not wish to "hog" appropriations that some other city might deserve to share. Kelso does need and deserves an adequate building with proper equipment to handle the work required as stated above.

Nothing in the statements here have been exaggerated in the least and it is hoped that the Federal Government will see fit to begin the construction at once of the moderate Post Office quarters the citizens of Kelso so rightfully deserve, both for their benefit and for the good of the service.)

On June 30, 1934 it was reported that bids were being requested for the post office site, to be opened in the Kelso post office on July 21. The article concluded by noting that "This is the second time that bids on a post office site have been sought here, previous bids being rejected as considered too high and there was also a petition against the proposed location." The Kelsonian also reported that day that T. H. Van Noy was Kelso's new postmaster, replacing A. L. Maurer, who was retiring after serving since 1923. (The paper observed that Van Noy was "a native of North Carolina, were authentic democrats grow," while Maurer had "imbeded his republicanism in him so deeply that he has continued steadfast in adherence to the principles and policies of that party.")

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An article of July 6 noted that site bids were being requested that day; the paper wrote that while site bids had been called for before;

no formal decision was made as the ground favored by the inspector resulted in a formal protest being filed at Washington from parties interested in other locations. This time the money for the new federal building here has been allotted and bids on the building will soon be called.

On July 21 it was reported that eleven bids had been offered for the site, ranging from \$2,000 to \$8,500. The article described the sites and noted that protests from "south end Kelso residents" had resulted in the rejection of the earlier bids. On July 26 it was announced that postal inspector C. W. Linebaugh was in Kelso inspecting the sites. Also that day the paper (which featured the banner headline: "Nazis Continue Battle in Austria") reported that the Pacific Highway through Kelso and some city streets would be improved with federal funds.

In August, Linebaugh was still inspecting the sites and the Chamber of Commerce was requesting that the building has "a room of sufficient size and arrangements" for holding federal court sessions (August 1) and it was announced that the federal government was planning to improve Kelso's airport (August 8).

"Select Site For Local Postoffice" read a banner headline of September 5. Congressman Martin F. Smith had announced that a site at the corner of Academy Street and Third Avenue across from Cowlitz County Courthouse had been selected. The site, one of twenty-eight offered the paper reported, cost \$7,250. The total allocation for the project, including the site, was \$106,000 and work was expected to be underway not later than December 1.

Construction would not begin, however, until the following Spring. On May 2, 1935 it was reported that the construction contract had been awarded to the Hoffman Construction Company of Portland, with its bid of \$51,600. On May 26th it was reported that excavation would begin the following day. On August 11th a sketch of the post office as

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it would appear when completed was featured on the front page of the Kelsonian, along with the news that part of the steel framework had been erected and the laying of brick was scheduled to start that week. The building was to be completed not later than January 16. Plans were also underway for a pool for Kelso; it was expected that government aid would provide the labor if local efforts provided the materials.

"Cornerstone Ceremony To Be Saturday" was the news of Tuesday, August 20. The Kelso Masonic Lodge was in charge of arrangements. It was also reported that construction had been "halted for a time when workers went on a strike a few weeks ago, but this was soon settled and work has progressed steadily ever since." On Sunday, August 25 the paper reported that the cornerstone had been laid with an "elaborate ceremony." A "memorial box" holding the names of government officials and the membership of Kelso fraternal and civic organizations was placed in the cornerstone. In addition, "corn was scattered for earthly blessings, wine for strength, and oil for peace and joy" and a letter from Congressman Martin Smith was received congratulating the citizens of Kelso for their cooperation in building the post office.

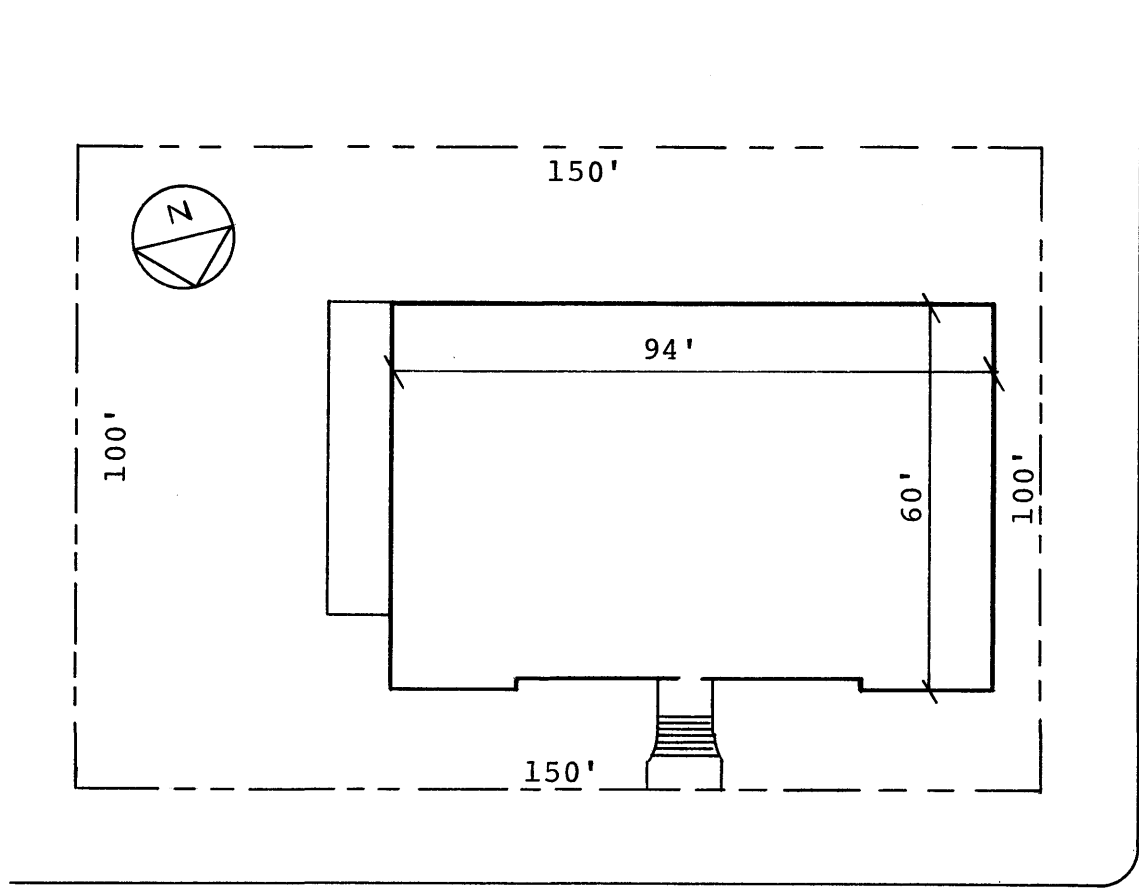
At the end of 1935 it was reported that the WPA would put 200 men to work on Cowlitz County flood control jobs (November 27) and that the WPA-assisted local pool would soon be finished (December 12). Postal receipts at this time were also increasing, "Serving as another indicator of further recovery" (December 24). On December 31 it was reported that equipment would be moved to the new post office on New Year's Day so it would be ready for business the following day. An article of January 2, 1936 reported that the new building was in use that day, the move having been completed the previous day. It was noted that the building was "virtually completed December 1" but that fixtures had not arrived until too late for installation to handle the Christmas business.

JOB 25

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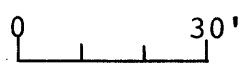
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Academy Street

Third Street



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Continuation Sheet**

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

1. Kelso MPO
2. Kelso, Washington
3. Jim Kolva
4. January 1984
5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center, San Bruno, CA.

Photo No. 1 (negative #16)

6. View to southwest

Photo No. 2 (negative #19)

6. View to south

Photo No. 3 (negative #14)

6. View to southeast

Photo No. 4 (negative #18)

6. Lobby mural