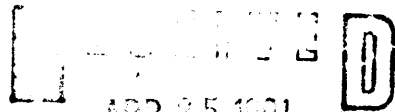


1047

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 Longview Main Post Office
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1603 Larch Street N/A not for publication
city, town Longview N/A vicinity
state Washington code WA county Cowlitz code 015 zip code 98632

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings...
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		<u>0</u> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

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 of certifying official Jacob E. Thom Date 12/15/89
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official [Signature] Date 1-11-90
State or Federal agency and bureau U.S. Postal Service

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. [Signature] 5/30/91
 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] 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)Moderne

Other: Art Deco

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

Sandstone

roof Tile

other Tar composition

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Longview Main Post Office is a two-story brick and sandstone building on a raised basement. The foundation, basement, structural walls, and floor slabs are reinforced concrete. The front facade is symmetrically-arranged and divided into five flat-arched bays--a centered entry flanked on each side by two window bays. The flat pilasters dividing the bays support a massive entablature which extends to flanking sandstone buttresses. Quarter-round fluted columns slightly project the buttresses forward of the central section. The buttresses are, in turn, flanked by red brick walls. A green tile-clad gable roof covers the front of the building and a flat built-up tar composition roof covers the rear. The building was extended to the rear in 1968. The materials and detailing of the addition are consistent with the original building.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The front facade (north) is dominated by a monumental dressed-sandstone entryway which contains five bays. Two window bays, with five horizontally-divided sections, flank each side of the main entry. Flat sandstone pilasters, which rise from the broad quarry-tile entry landing to a massive sandstone entablature, divide and flank the bays. At the ends of the bays are quarter-round fluted columns, upon which are poised bas-relief eagles (sandstone). These columns join the plane formed by the bays to slightly projecting stone buttresses which anchor the ends of the entry facade. Accenting the sandstone entry are red brick walls which extend to the build corners. A sandstone belt course molding (architrave) extends from the entry section across the brick to the corner (at the same level as the top of the window bays). The entablature is flat with "United States Post Office" carved into the sandstone. The gable roof (flat tiles) with sandstone coping along the ends is partially visible from the front.

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Granite comprises the entry stairs and edging along the quarry-tile entry landing. Columnar sandstone bases support cast-iron flag poles which flank the stairs. A low sandstone wall extends from the bases to the main facade. A concrete-walled ramp extends from the landing westward. Cast aluminum and fluted glass lamps are affixed to the flat sandstone pilasters which divide the bays. The main entry consists of double aluminum-framed glass doors. Narrow sidelights fronted by decorative aluminum grilles flank the doors. A decorative aluminum door head separates the doors and the three-part aluminum sash windows above. Decorative grilles flank the front the sidelights. In addition, an aluminum bas-relief panel depicting a locomotive is set in front of the upper window section. The flanking window bays each contain bas-relief grilles in their upper sections (five sections with the same detailing as the entry bay). Of the same size, these panels depict an airplane, a ship, a lumber mill, and another timber-processing operation.

The original east and west facades of the building were identical. A 1968 remodeling project altered the rear portion of the west facade by the relocation of the mailing platform to this area. The character of the original east facade was maintained in the rear extension. The original facade is symmetrical and divided into eight window bays flanked by red brick walls at each corner. The windows are the same size as those of the front facade. Flat sandstone pilasters, identical to the front, divide and flank the bays.

The pilasters rise from the sandstone facing of the basement wall and support a sandstone belt course (architrave) which is extended from the front. Above the belt course is a red brick parapet topped with sandstone coping. The windows are framed in aluminum with an aluminum-painted wood spandrel which divides the upper and lower sections. The spandrels and aluminum grilles at the bottoms of the windows are in an Art Deco motif.

The east facade of the addition is consistent with the original building but it is slightly lower in height. Flat sandstone pilasters divide three equally-spaced window bays. The red brick corner walls frame the pilaster-flanked bays.

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The belt course of the original building extends across the addition. Sandstone faces the basement wall and is used for coping on the brick parapet. Although the brick bond is identical to the original, the color of the addition is slightly different. The aluminum window sash are configured similarly to those of the original facade, but lack the span-drel. The detailing of the aluminum grilles in the lower portions of the windows varies slightly from the originals.

The west facade varies from the east in that the mailing platform extends partially into the original facade (southern end) and the brick addition is without windows. The architrave of the original facade extends to the addition as a belt course to the corner. The lower portion of one of the windows has also been bricked-in.

The rear facade consists of three paired window bays separated by red brick with red brick corners. The windows are identical to those of the east facade of the addition.

The lobby is spacious and elaborately decorated. The lobby floors consist of diamond patterned red- and white-veined marble framed by white-veined black marble strips and edging. The black marble is used for wall base strips with the red marble providing horizontal accent strips on the fluted walnut pilasters. Flat walnut panels with vertically inset gold-painted decorative panels rise from the top of the counter windows to the barrel vaulted ceiling. The ceiling is covered with gold leaf paint, with floral borders at the wall junctures. Plaster is used for the end walls and plaster United States seals adorn each end. Aluminum is used for window frames and the frame of the entry vestibule. The ceiling light fixtures are cast aluminum. The decorative theme is Art Deco.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Architecture
Politics/Government
Community Planning

Period of Significance
1934-1941

Significant Dates
Site acq.-1930
Const.-1934
Addn.-1968

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Bebb (Charles H.) & Gould (Carl) & Graham, John Sr., Seattle; Wetmore James A., OSA/Federal Government

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

The Longview MPO, a small combined post office and federal office building, is outstanding in design execution and detail. An early example of Starved Classicism, it is the first post office in the state to use Art Deco as a decorative motif. The building was designed by Charles Bebb, Carl Gould, and John Graham, Sr., prominent Seattle architects who designed a large share of the major buildings in Seattle during the early 1900s to 1930s. Although its funding was allocated prior to the stock market crash of 1929, the building was not completed until 1934. Thus, it is a legacy of the federal government's Depression era public works programs as well as being the city's first and only federal post office. Further, the building is in an area that was specifically planned to be the civic center of the community. Though the building has received an addition, its design integrity is good.

ARCHITECTURE

The Longview MPO is one of only three federally-constructed post offices in the state designed by a private architect. According to its architects, the building design was "modified classic." It was intended to be consistent with the red brick and terra-cotta buildings of traditional American design already on the city's civic park. It is strongly reflective of the Colonial Revival public library on the north end of the park. The building's Classical elements, however, were modernized and simplified and an Art Deco flavor was added to the Starved Classical form. This is the first example of the Starved Classical mode in a post office in Washington. Unlike its later counterparts, the building retains a richness of detail that is rooted in the first two decades of the century. The dominant and

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Longview Daily News; various articles 1930 - 1934.
2. Original Building Plans; 1933.
3. Construction Progress Photographs; 1 September 1932 - 1 April 1934.
4. McClelland, John Jr. Longview: The Remarkable Beginnings Of A Modern Western City. Portland, OR: Binfords & Mort, 1949.
5. Neuschwanger, Michael. "Civic, Cultural & Commercial Resources of Longview." (National Register of Historic Places Nomination), May 1985.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

USPS Facilities Service Center
San Bruno, CA 94099

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.38

UTM References

A 1 0 5 0 4 8 1 0 5 1 0 9 1 8 0
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C
Quadrangle Name: Kelso

D

Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

All of Block 125, Longview Addition #11. The site is on the Southwest corner of Larch Street and 16th Avenue. Beginning at the northeast corner, thence S200', W300', N200', E300' 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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monumental entry facade, with its heavy, monolithic sandstone entablature and flanking buttresses, evokes a feeling of solidity and stability. Yet the decorative elements of the entry facade add intricacy and visual interest to its otherwise massive appearance. The aluminum framing and grillwork provide a delicate contrast to the bulky sandstone. Five bas-relief panels near the tops of the windows depict the lumber industry and the three major modes of transportation. Although the three modes of transportation are common decorative elements in Depression era post offices, the specific design and detailing of these panels are not duplicated in the West. The light fixtures (affixed to the sandstone pilasters) of cast aluminum and fluted glass also provide elegance to the building. Because of the place of this building in the continuum of post office design in the state and its quality and sophistication of design, the building is significant on a statewide level under Criterion C.

The rear addition, which was completed in 1968, is sensitive to the intent of the original design. Although the window detailing is reduced in ornamentation, the proportion, scale, and use of materials is identical to the original building.

Charles Bebb, Carl Gould, and John Graham, Sr. were prominent Seattle architects at the time of the Longview post office design. Bebb was born in England and graduated from King's College. Gould was born in New York and attended Harvard and the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Graham was also born in England and educated at the Isle of Man. Many of the buildings erected in downtown Seattle during the 1920s and 1930s were of his design. Buildings in Seattle designed by these architects include the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital (1934), the Exchange Building (1930), Bon Marche (1929), J.C. Penney's (1930), Seattle Art Museum (1932), and numerous other commercial buildings. Many of the buildings designed by these architects, particularly Graham, were based on the classical school, blended with Art Deco flavor.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

The post office is also an important element of the civic center of R. A. Long's planned city. Prior to the economic slowdown created by the Depression, Long had

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envisioned this area, surrounding an oval-shaped park, to be the center of the civic activity of the city. The Monticello Hotel (1923) and the public library (1926) were in place, with other buildings envisioned, prior to the economic collapse of 1929. It was planned that this center would be reserved for public buildings, all faced with red brick and terra-cotta trim in classic colonial style. With this guide in mind, the architects of the post office designed the building. Newspaper accounts of the period indicate that the design would harmonize with the existing buildings. It can be noted that the post office is quite similar in scale and proportion to the Colonial Revival library which occupies the north end of the central park. The post office somewhat mirrors the library with its slate-tiled gable roof with red brick, stone-capped gable ends. Although modern intrusions have somewhat detracted from the original design plan of the scheme, the post office, Monticello Hotel, and Public Library are well-preserved legacies of that plan.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The building is locally-significant under Criterion A because of its association with the massive public works programs of the Depression and the New Deal. The construction of the building, the city's first and only federally-constructed post office, was a major event in the young city's development. The planned city of Longview was barely five years old when local interests, working through elected officials in Washington D.C., and particularly Congressman Albert Johnson, read of their success on Christmas day 1928: Longview was being considered for a federal building. The Longview Company was working to facilitate the project by donating a parcel of land in its planned civic center. In June 1930 the post office appropriation was finally made and the original allocation was substantially increased. In October, however, local businessmen objected to the site: they felt it was too far from the commercial center. However, when told by the federal site agent that local dissention could scuttle the project, a petition containing signatures of three hundred businessmen called for acceptance of the original site. Apparently, the argument that it was important to move forward with the project and to put people back to work had been successful. On the other hand, a federal government agent's statement at the time that a federal building was a

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indication of a city's permanency and stability may have brought local pride to bear. In any event, the city would have its local symbol of the federal government and of the recognition by the government.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Longview is approximately 45 miles north of the Portland, Oregon/Vancouver, Washington metropolitan area, along the east side of the Columbia River. The neighboring town of Kelso (the Cowlitz county seat) is across the Cowlitz River to the east. Longview is the largest city in Cowlitz County, with a 1987 population estimated at 29,520. Wood products and its position as a regional commercial center provide the economic base of the city.

The origin and development of Longview is unique in Washington State. The town was created in the early 1920s by Robert A. Long of the Long-Bell Lumber Company, whose headquarters were in Kansas City, Missouri. Long, who was seeking new supplies of timber, selected the area at the confluence of the Columbia and Cowlitz Rivers as the site of the Long-Bell Lumber Company's new west coast operations. Thus, Longview, begun in 1922 and known as "The Planned City" and "The Vision City," became Washington's only new planned city.

The Long-Bell Lumber Company's new sawmills "out west" were planned to become the biggest in the world; as a result planners, developers, and designers were hired to plan for a city that would reach 50,000 people by 1930. Before construction of the new city even began, strict restrictions were adopted for property use and each land use was placed in its own nucleus, separated by expansion space and linked by wide streets. J. C. Nichols, developer of Kansas City's famed Country Club Plaza (the world's first automobile-oriented shopping center) was instrumental in starting the project. Robert Long was also deeply involved in the development of the city, to which he personally gave \$1,500,000 in gifts (including R. A. Long High School and the Longview Public Library). Development of Longview, however, did not proceed as smoothly as its planning. While Long-Bell construction was completed by 1927, by 1930 the City's population was only 10,562 (it grew to 12,385 in 1940 and to 20,339 in 1950). Longview's growth has been steady, but far short

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of its original developers' and planners' initial expectations. It grew from 23,349 in 1960 to 28,373 in 1970; in 1980 it had a population of 31,052.

The Longview MPO is on the southwest corner of Larch Street and 16th Avenue, in an area that was identified by R. A. Long as the civic center of the community. The MPO occupies the southern portion of that civic center, across Larch Street from the central civic park. The modern city hall and an office building are northeast of the MPO. Opposite the north end of the park is the city library building. The historic Monticello Hotel is opposite the west side of the park. The remainder of the immediately surrounding and adjacent buildings are modern and not architecturally or historically significant.

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

On January 1, 1930 the Longview Daily News reported that new federal buildings in Longview, Hoquiam, and Pullman were on the preferential list pending appropriations. Other post offices contemplated for Washington state were for Port Angeles, Chehalis, and Pasco. The article also stated that the Longview facility had been included in a bill during the last session of Congress which allocated \$95,000, but that \$200,000 was now being requested. To aid in this increased allocation, the Longview Company made available a donation of a parcel at the south end of Jefferson Square, south of the library, valued at \$50,000.

An April 26th article reported "New Hope for U.S. Building Here Is Seen" and that a measure submitted to the House included \$210,000 for a new federal building. A supplemental estimate totaling \$28,643,540 was submitted to the House for the purpose of permitting the Secretary of Treasury to enter contracts under the \$315 million authorization for public buildings. On June 11th progress of the bill was reported-- "\$210,000 for Local Federal Building Included in Second Deficiency Appropriations Bill." On October 21st it was reported that an objection was made to the building site. A Chamber of Commerce meeting attended by 50 people discussed other potential sites. One of the concerns was that the site was too far removed from the commercial center. On the following

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day, a Mr. Newman, representing the federal government, stated that it was best to pull together since dissention had caused delay in other cities:

The idea of the president is to expedite this building program, to get labor and mechanics at work and to start buying the material, much of which will be obtained locally if building is begun here. The project means circulation of money, and after it is built, one of the show places of the city. A federal building is generally accepted as an indication of permanency and stability.

On October 23rd a petition containing 300 signatures of local businessmen called for the acceptance of the offer of the original site. The acceptance of the post office site was made official in a December 16th article. A 200-foot by 200-foot site at 16th and Larch at the south end of Jefferson Square was selected. The building would be in keeping with the other buildings on the square (Monticello Hotel and public library).

A February 27th, 1931 Daily News article reported that Secretary Mellon and Postmaster General Brown forwarded to Congress a summary of allotments totaling \$504 million for new building projects. The enlarged program contemplated 1,624 projects including 1,085 in places now without federal buildings. Other contemplated buildings in Washington included Kelso, Aberdeen, Centralia, and Montesano. On July 17th it was reported that work on the new building would begin soon. Congressman Albert Johnson (of Hoquiam) announced that outside architects might be hired. Graham, Bebb, and Gould of Seattle, who had previous federal experience (the Seattle Federal Building), were suggested. The selection of Graham, Bebb, and Gould was announced in the July 22nd issue. The article indicated that H. L. Copeland, pioneer local architect, would be their local representative. A September 5th article reported that R. A. Long envisioned Longview as a large city of 50,000 to 70,000 people in the next two to three decades. Completion of the plans was announced in a December 15th article and the Chamber of Commerce encouraged the architects to speed up their work so construction would aid Longview's unemployed.

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On March 22, 1931 a sketch of the proposed post office was featured in the paper. "An architect's drawing reveals a substantial, attractive building contemplated, one which will be in harmony with the two already built [the hotel and library]." According to the architects' description the design was modified classic.

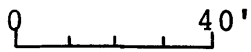
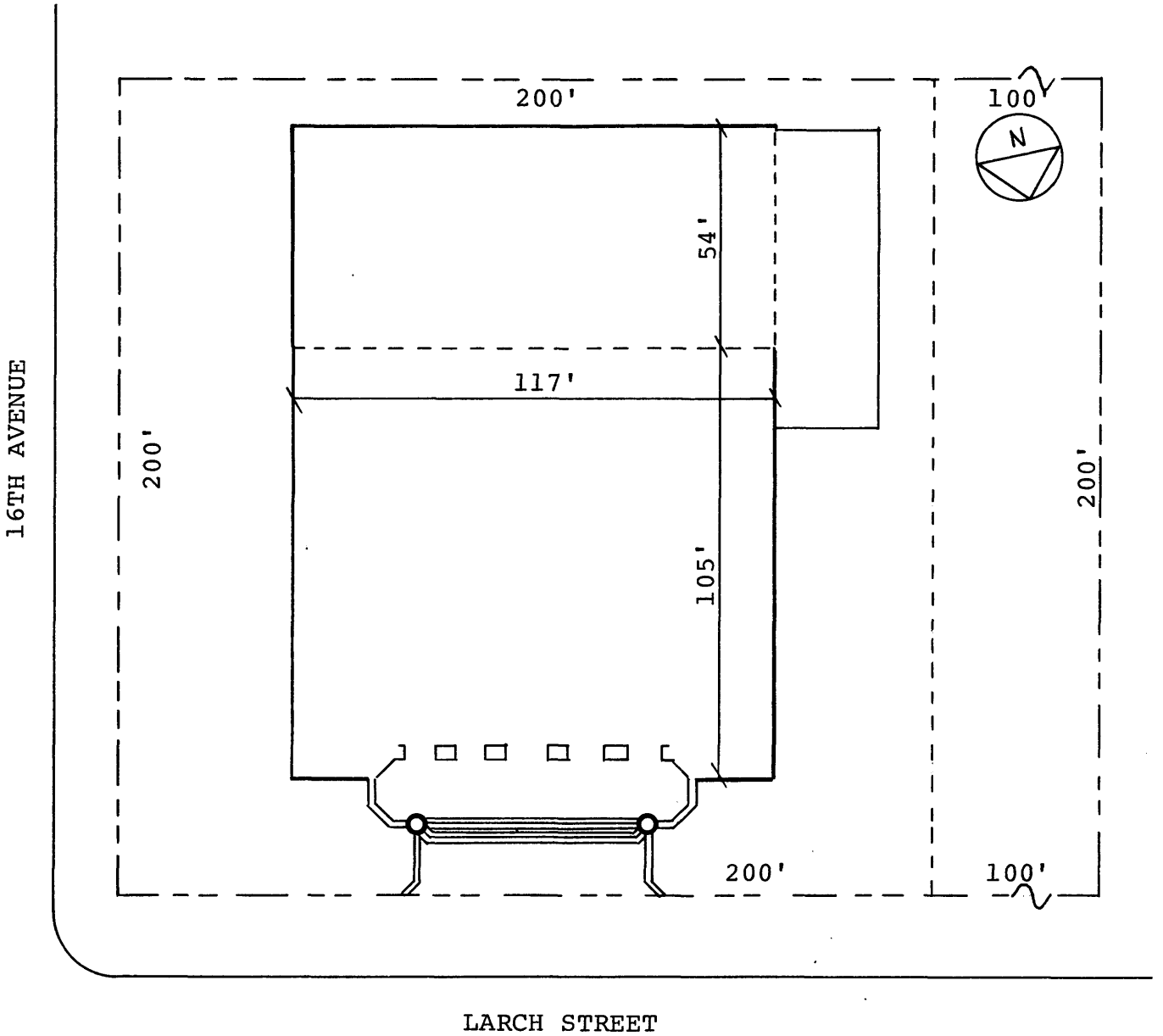
On June 27, 1932, A. M. Lundberg Co. of St. Louis was selected to construct the building with a low bid of \$169,000. The article also reported that it was the purpose of the federal government to utilize these projects in the unemployment relief program and that local labor would be used as far as practical. Work started in August with the driving of timber support piles. Work was delayed in the construction as a result of the bankruptcy of the Lundberg Company. The Maryland Casualty Company (bankruptcy receiver) selected the L. H. Hoffman Company of Portland to complete the project. Progress was reported in a May 30th, 1933 article. on September 23rd the cornerstone was finally laid in a ceremony presided over by Congressman Martin F. Smith.

Finally, on April 15, 1934, the post office moved into its new home. Several articles in the April 21st issue reported the years of work involved in obtaining the appropriation and final construction of the building.

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

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

Photo No. 1 (negative #11)

6. View to southwest

Photo No. 2 (negative #16)

6. View to south

Photo No. 3 (negative #19)

6. View to southeast

Photo No. 4 (negative #17)

6. Detail, front facade