

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

SENT TO D.C.  
4-5-2000

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name United States Post Office

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 200 South State Street  not for publication

city or town Belvidere  vicinity

state Illinois code IL county Boone code 007 zip code 61008

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William L. White, SHA 4-3-00  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is: Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

- 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:)

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

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

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

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

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Granite

walls Brick

Granite

roof Synthetic/Rubber

other Terra Cotta

Limestone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.
[X] 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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1911

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Taylor, James Knox

Supervising Architect U.S. Treasury

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository:

Name of Property

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1,6	3,4,8,1,4,8	4,6,7,9,8,4,0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jan Grove-Property Manager for John T. Wolf  
Barbara Volk- Former City of Belvidere Historic Preservation Chairperson and  
Present Member of City of Belvidere Planning Commission.  
 organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 7/26/99

street & number 1855 N. State Street/P.O. Box 560 telephone 815/544-3406

city or town Belvidere state IL zip code 61008

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

The Belvidere National Bank & Trust as Trustee of Trust #1870 Wolf Bros LLC  
 name John T. Wolf, Attorney-in-Fact

street & number 1855 N. State Street, P.O. Box 560 telephone 815/544-3406

city or town Belvidere state IL zip code 61008

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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U.S. Post Office  
Belvidere, IL

#### Exterior Description

The United States Post Office in Belvidere, Illinois, is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of State and Meadow streets. The building is located in the heart of Belvidere's central business district. The building stands slightly raised above the street level, and it is separated from the street by a concrete sidewalk and a grassy area on the west, and a concrete sidewalk on the north. The remainder of the city lot includes a driveway immediately south of the building, and a paved parking lot to the east. Granite steps from the sidewalk access the corner front entrance of the building, as well as granite steps entering the building from the parking lot.

The one-story, yellow brick and granite building is constructed with concrete floors and a steel structural system. It is rectangular in shape with a rounded corner entrance bay at the northwest corner. The entrance is reached via a flight of stone steps which flair out at the bottom. The west and north facades facing State Street and Meadow Street are primarily composed of a series of tall, large, paired double-hung windows, (14' X 8') with transoms above set in the brick walls with a prominent cornice and balustrade at the roof line. The building's dimensions are 83.8 feet wide by 71.8 feet deep, and has an area of 14,000 square feet, sitting on a lot 132 feet by 124 feet.

The structure rests on a raised ashlar coursed granite foundation which has rectangular fixed windows protected with iron bars painted white. The building has a rounded corner entrance bay that is accentuated by a Greek Revival styled entrance including a terra cotta segmental pediment with a cartouche. The corner bay is flanked by two sets of brick pilasters and paired over wooden double-hung windows with circular windows above. The pilasters mimic columns in Greek and Roman designs. The height of the building is forty feet from the ground to the top of the limestone balustrade. A flat roof of reinforced concrete is covered in rubber roofing membrane and is approximately four feet below the top of the parapet.

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The west facade, facing State Street, contains four window units, fourteen feet tall and eight feet wide. Each window unit is divided by a center vertical mullion and two horizontal mullions approximately four feet from the top of the unit. The upper portions are fixed square panes, the bottom contains two double hung windows. Each window unit sits on a projecting limestone sill and is capped by brick and a projecting white ornamental keystone of terra cotta. Two brick pilasters with recessed panels flank each side of the central three window units. The north facade, facing Meadow Street, is a mirror image of the west facade, less the last window unit on its south end.

The south facade composition contains 5 window openings similar to the west side. Looking from west to east on the south side, the first two openings contain window units exactly like the west facade. The next opening is filled by a recessed brick panel. The fourth panel has been partially obscured by a 6' wide (attached side), by 12' long loading dock addition. The loading dock is protected from the weather by a concrete and tar canopy. The last opening is another window unit like the west facade.

The east facade differs in appearance from the other three facades of the Post Office building. Centered is an opening headed by a cornice ledge under the main building cornice and filled with 3 bays of window units. Each unit is composed similar to the west facade: 2 horizontal mullions towards the top but with 3, not 2, vertical mullions. The top portion is 3 fixed glass panes; the bottom being 3 double hung congruent windows. The center bay is flanked by 2 white terra cotta fluted pilasters. Directly below this bay of windows is an outside entrance to the basement level of the post office from the parking lot. There are granite steps encompassed by an iron hand rail. Centered on either side of the main opening are window openings with limestone ledges and ornamental white keystones, similar to the west facade. The south opening contains a typical window unit of 2 top fixed panes and 2 lower double hung windows. The north panel has a recessed brick with 2 windows. The upper vertical rectangular window is a two paned 1 ft. X 2 ft. fixed sash window located in the interior stairwell that allows access to the 2nd floor. The window also sits on a projecting limestone sill with an ornamental keystone over the center.

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Directly below this window, in the same vertical alignment, is a two paned rectangular window similar to above except it measures 1 ft. X 3 ft. and is located where a private toilet room exists for the female workers. On all sides of the building along the roof line the notches trimming the building's top, under the parapet wall, are called "modillions." Also visible from the east facade parking lot are the two 8 ft. X 8 ft. overhead doors of the loading dock and a single steel door with multi paned glass panel at the top half of the door. This door is another outside entrance leading into the loading dock area and can be reached by concrete steps with iron hand rails on both sides.

#### Interior Description

The main entrance door leads to the vestibule which contains a 9 ft. revolving glass and wood door. The present entry door is a newer metal clad & glass storm system and has been retrofitted to replace the original two wooden doors. Upon exiting the revolving door in the vestibule you enter the rotunda, a circular entry room, with 9 ft. doors set within curved oak wood frames. Swinging double doors lead south into the lobby, the other door leads east into the assistant postmaster's office. The doorway leading to the assistant's office is crowned with wooden entablature. The rotunda is topped by an interior dome approximately 28 ft. in height and is encircled with marble wainscoting, oak window trim, and decorated plaster panels. The rotunda has a floor of patterned terrazzo. The rotunda ceiling is plaster with an ornamental plaster dentil at the perimeter.

Upon entering the door leading into the assistant postmaster's office you enter a 4 ft hallway with a door off to the left encasing a spiral staircase that leads to the roof. This staircase was used daily to attain roof access and fly the American flag on the roof of the building. This operation was ceased in 1977 due to the many accidents caused by ice slippage during the winter months. At the end of the hall entry is the door leading into the assistant postmaster's office. The room measures 13.5 ft X 17.5 ft. with windows on the north wall. There is a closet on the southwest wall and a door leading out to

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the workroom on the south wall. On the east wall there is a door leading into a vault/ safe area that is 10 ft long X 4.5 ft wide and a door leading out into a 10 ft. long hallway to the postmaster's office.

Off the hallway on the left side is a door leading into a private toilet area with a terrazo floor. The postmaster's office measures approximately 14 ft X 17.2 ft with windows on the north wall. There is a door off the southwest corner leading to an enclosed stairway that takes you directly up to the lookout area elevated over the work room. There is also another door on the south wall leading into the work room. The floors are hardwood and each office has oak wood chair rails. Oak picture rails and crown molding are along the plaster ceilings.

Swinging double doors lead into the public lobby that extends south from the rotunda. The lobby of the Post Office is 20 feet in width, extending unbroken for 42 feet along the west wall of the lobby. Patrons entered the Post Office lobby to purchase stamps, mail parcels, and buy money orders from the two windows on the east side of the lobby. Next to the windows were slots for depositing outgoing letters and a door leading into the workroom area. Surrounding the lobby is marble wainscoting, oak trim around all windows, and a ceiling approximately twenty four feet high. The ceiling is plaster with ornamental plaster dentil detail at the perimeter.

The lobby originally had four service windows. The original service windows covered with bars and flanked by frosted glass panes were replaced with post office boxes which were removed in October of 1997 when the building no longer was used as the U.S. Post Office. Two of the original service windows remain on the east wall of the lobby and are topped with hugh pivot windows and transoms. Hand cranks rotated the pivot windows on center hinges. The 20 foot high paneled ceilings are bordered with notches, or "dentils" and raised molding. The main lobby floor finish is terrazzo panels within a heavily veined marble trim. Original postal boxes appear to have been built at the southeast end of the lobby, but were removed when the post office vacated the building in 1997. Brass plates remain where gas light fixtures used to hang in the rotunda and lobby. At the south end of the



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Lobby is where the other two original service windows were located. They too have been removed and the created opening exists at the present time. This opening is topped with three of the same hugh pivot windows and transoms that exist on the east wall. This original service area with the two original pass through counters served the "M.O. and Reg. Div." room that measures approximaely 32 ft. long X 13 ft, wide. The area was used for money orders and postal savings bonds. The room also served as a meeting room for the postal administration. On the east end is a door leading to the elevated lookout in the workroom area. The door is flanked on each side by a vault containing four postal safes, each one workable and remain there today.

The workroom, which makes up much of the building's eastern half, has a 24 foot high ceiling with three bays of 14 ft. X 8 ft. vertical windows in the center of the east wall flanked by two 14 ft. X 8 ft. vertical windows on the southeast. The window systems are original double hung single pane conterweight and chain system. The ceiling is plaster with a plaster cove edge treatment. A narrow hall, hanging from the middle of the ceiling runs the length of the room. The hall is a "lookout gallery" where postal inspectors could peer through grated windows at the employees. This suspended post master observation catwalk is surrounded by a plaster and stud enclosure. The assistant postmaster's office and the postmaster's office doors on the north end open into the workroom area. Access to the workroom floor was attained through three other entrances also. A service door situated between the window unit and the lock box section off the east wall of the lobby, another door off the ramp on the south side of the building, and an outside door on the east side of the building next into the loading dock. Plaster covered studs can be found around the office, lobby and workroom areas. Plaster covered poured concrete walls are around all the three closet vaults. A strongly veined white marble wainscot can be found in main lobby and offices. A painted V-groove tongue and groove wood wainscot can be found in the large workroom area. The trim is painted and also has clear finished hardwoods. The work room has a 12 X 12 vinyl tile over existing wood floor. At the northeast corner of the workroom is a door opening to a stairway for access to the second floor, and midway down the south workroom wall is a door opening to a stairway with access to the basement level.

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Entering the basement level from the stairway you enter a storage room that measures 25'3" X 13'7 1/2". The basement is half above grade and has concrete floors, walls and ceilings. The basement floor is unfinished raw concrete. On the east wall is a 4' X 6' window. The basement window system has been replaced with glass block behind original wrought iron bars. On the north wall is a doorway leading into the boiler room that measures 44' X 7" X 70'. The east wall of the boiler room has the outside entrance to granite block steps leading up to the parking lot level. The east wall also has two 4' X 6" glass block window units. The west wall is unbroken except for three 4' X 6' glass block window units. The northeast wall section has the original wooden double doors with rounded tops and three rows of brick forming a lintel over the doorway leading into the fuel room area that measures approximately 16'7" X 21. The east wall of the fuel room area has an alcove approximately 7'6" wide where the mail circuit wagons used to drive into and now the opening has been bricked over. To the west of the fuel room is the northwest corner of the basement. This area is directly below the rotunda and assistant postmaster's office above. On the north wall is the origin of the original winding iron staircase that leads from the basement to the roof where the worker used to climb every day to hang the American flag. Adjacent to the iron staircase on the north wall is another 4' X 6' glass block window unit.

The stairway leading from the workroom floor in the northeast corner goes up to a partial 2nd story of the building where the postal carriers locker room and toilet area is located. The locker room measures approximately 23' 5" long X 17'3" wide with plaster walls and hardwood floors. In the southwest corner of the room there has been a wood partition wall erected measuring 9'8" X approximately 8'11" to enclose the doorway entrance allowing access to the lookout gallery that is suspended above the workroom floor. The carrier's toilet area is approximately 13' 5" long X 17'3" wide with terrazzo floors.

The property is in excellent condition and reflects a high degree of maintenance. Projects completed include the following: In 1959 a rear dock was added to the east facade next to the back entrance. This addition was necessary as the amount of incoming and outgoing mail was increasing, and the size

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Of postal vehicles was increasing to handle this added volume. The loading dock addition remains today. A gas furnace replaced the old coal furnace in the late 1960's. In 1982 central air-conditioning was added; also tuck pointing, new storm windows, painting of exterior and interior, and a new roof and tile were completed.

#### Statement of Significance

The United States Post Office in Belvidere, Illinois, meets Criterion C for Architecture as a locally significant example of the Classical Revival style of architecture which was popular in the United States during the late 1890's and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Constructed in 1911 by the federal government under the direction of Supervising Architect of the Treasury, James Knox Taylor, the brick and stone Post Office is one of Belvidere's most elaborate Classical Revival buildings.

The revival of academic classicism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was an outgrowth of earlier Renaissance-Inspired Second Empire and Renaissance Revival styles. The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition also served as a catalyst in popularizing the use of specific classical building models. By the late 1890's, more and more architects were classically trained in Europe at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Classical order and symmetry and monumental design inspired countless civic, institutional, and commercial buildings across the country. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the style was often an application of classical features onto a basic building form. In the case of the Belvidere Post Office the Classical Revival design is a combination of classical forms - - the round temple form of entrance, and simplified classical motifs - - a unifying cornice and balustrade, classical pilasters, classical-inspired window openings, and prominent keystones.

The 1911 Belvidere U.S. Post Office reflects the common elements of Classical Revival style. The exterior of the building makes use of a free mix of classical and Renaissance-inspired forms; symmetrically composed facades; a monumentally - scaled classical order; finely finished stonework; three dimensional sculptural stone details, and a prominent interior dome reminiscent of ancient

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Public buildings. The finely finished interior public spaces of the building served to lead the patron from the circular entrance rotunda into the long lobby. The public space finishings of veined marble wainscoting and terrazzo floors clearly contrasted with the darker wooden finishes (oak moldings and hardwood floors) and the more functional open arrangement with the workroom where mail and money orders were processed. The period of significance is 1911, when the building was completed and ready for occupancy on October 11, 1911.

The first settlers of Belvidere were Oliver Robbins and his brothers. They came in the early summer of 1835, and yet people moved into this area so rapidly that by October of 1835, 37 men, women, and children were living in this region. The new state road, from Chicago to Galena was completed to Galena in June of 1836, which resulted in heavy traffic. In the summer and fall, four horse coaches were used and winter and spring, four horse sleighs were in demand to deliver mail. In December of 1836, the Belvidere residents petitioned the P.O.D. for a post office.

The first post office to be established in Boone County was at Belvidere on February 15, 1837, with Seth S. Whitman as postmaster. At this time, Boone County was a part of Winnebago County. On May 4, 1837, Boone County was separated from Winnebago County and Belvidere was established as the county seat. Belvidere was located in the western part of the county on Squaw Prairie. After the county was named for the great American frontiersman, Daniel Boone, it was divided into eight townships each having their own post office. Belvidere, being the county seat was one of the eight townships. The stage route ran through Belvidere from Chicago to Galena which is now U.S. Route 20. Seth Whitman, was one of Belvidere's most prominent early citizens. Whitman lived on what is now known as East Lincoln Avenue, on the east side of the Kishwaukee River and the post office was located in his residence.

Records indicate that during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the post office moved to North State Street either between Lincoln and Hurlbut Avenue or just south of those streets, and it was located in at least five different locations prior to moving to a room in the Derthick Opera House next to the river. The mail came three times a week, by the Frink & Walker stage line. The last move before the Post Office

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found its final home was to a lower room in the city hall building in 1884. Rural free delivery was established December 24, 1888, in Boone County. Consequently this brought about the closure of many post offices. In 1900, city delivery was established in Belvidere.

On February 15, 1905, an article in a Rockford newspaper included a list of cities to have Federal buildings slated for a \$55,000.00 structure, and Belvidere was on the list. In December of 1905, a bill of prime importance to the people of this city, and which was introduced in the House of Representatives on the first day of the present session of Congress, Monday, December 4, 1905, by Congressman Charles E. Fuller, is that providing for an appropriation of a sum not to exceed \$100,000 for the purchase of a site and the erection of a public building in Belvidere. The bill was referred to the committee on public buildings and grounds and ordered printed.

As may be expected there were several differing opinions as to the best site for the city post office to be located. The argument and public sentiment being strongly in favor of a site that was centrally located between the railroad track and the river with a corner lot preferred. The National Sewing Machine factory was by far the most flourishing and important industry in Boone County, and the second largest sewing machine factory in the world. It was only natural that the sites offered nearest to the sewing machine factory and railroad company, which carried the mail to and from cities, would be favored locations. Eight different site locations were submitted to the Treasury Department for consideration and local debate raged over what was and what was not desirable for the post office. The matter was put to rest when over 1000 signatures out of 1400 voters in Belvidere told the government they wanted a spot on State Street between the Kishwaukee river bridge and the Chicago and North Western railroad track. According to the records of the Belvidere Daily Republican newspaper publication on July 2, 1906, it was reported that Congressman Fuller restored the \$65,000 appropriated to Belvidere for the Federal building and on December 12, 1906, Mr. James A. Wetmore, special agent of the Treasury department arrived in Belvidere for the purpose of viewing the various sites offered to the Government by the local citizens for the post office location. The building site chosen belonged to a Mrs. H. M. Woodruff, located on the corner of State and Meadow Streets in Belvidere, Illinois. Being centrally located in town, and adjacent to the sewing machine

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company and railroad company were the deciding factors for Mr. Wetmore's final decision. On December 31, 1907, Mrs. Woodruff received a check from the United States government for \$13,000.00.

Finally, on July 6, 1909, an article in the Belvidere Daily Republican newspaper announced that the government was ready for bids for the new public building. "After a long and weary wait there is something doing to start the actual construction of Belvidere's projected government building for which Congressman Fuller secured an appropriation two years ago." The author then described the reasons for the delay, which was caused, in part, the title. The Government was very strict in such matters and time was lost because of a missing deed which was afterwards easily straightened out. Then there was the delay in the approval of the abstract owing to the prolonged illness of the Government's expert in this department. When the public building bill was first passed, Belvidere was near the top of the list. There was a rule in the Treasury Department that when unexpected delays set back work in a particular building project the case goes to the bottom of the entire list and must lie there and wait its regular turn. That is what happened to Belvidere. It went to the tail end of the list and no amount of argument could bring it back into its former place in the list.

The contract was awarded to E. Maffioli, a Rockford contractor, in the amount of \$65,000. Giacomo Maffioli started in business in Rockford in 1876 as a fruit dealer and through strict attention to business accumulated a competency as a general contractor. Mr. & Mrs. Maffioli were the first Italian residents of the city of Rockford, Illinois. James Knox Taylor (1857-1929) designed the 1911 Post Office in his capacity as Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury. Taylor's name appears on the original site plans and building elevations. A.N. Eason served as Construction Superintendent for the Treasury Department. The scheduled completion date was set as September 1, 1911, with occupancy beginning October 11, 1911.

Frank T. Moran was local postmaster and publisher of the Belvidere Daily Republican when the new post office was dedicated on October 11, 1911. An article which covered the entire front page of the Belvidere Daily Republican on October 11, 1911, said that onlookers crowded the open space to the south of the Federal building, filled the terrace of Dr. Whitman's lawn, overflowed the sidewalk, and

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into the street, where scores of automobiles and carriages were drawn up as near to the curb as they could get. The building was dedicated with a ceremony that included singers, speeches, and local school children marching onto its lawn to the beat of a drum. Within a hollow portion of the cornerstone was placed a photograph of U.S. Congressman Charles E. Fuller, (R-12), a Belvidere resident who ultimately secured nearly \$80,000 in federal funding to construct the post office.

It was common for communities to receive a new post office building funded through the U.S. Government. This was true during the period when James Knox Taylor served as Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, 1897-1912. For Belvidere and most other cities, the new structures marked the first time that the community had a building erected exclusively for the purpose of being the post office. The new post offices reflected the general trend in the improvement of government services and community infrastructure.

Among other Illinois communities retaining post office buildings designed by James Knox Taylor are Dixon, and Joliet in northern Illinois, and Champaign and Mattoon in central Illinois. The Classical Revival post office buildings in Joliet, Mattoon and Champaign are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Post Office facility was part of extensive growth in Belvidere which produced other public buildings, utilities, streets, lights and a railway through town. Capital was largely raised locally. The community became the business center for the north central area of Illinois at the time.

Architecturally, Belvidere's historic post office reflects the designs promoted by the federal government at the turn of the century. National Register Bulletin 13, "How to Apply National Register Criteria to Post Offices", outlines this pattern of designing post offices:

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U.S. Post Office  
Belvidere, IL

From the establishment of the Office of Supervising Architect of the Treasury in the 1850's until the 1890's, Federal buildings style tended to follow the favorite style of the incumbent Supervising Architect. During the tenure of James Knox Taylor (1897-1912) as the Supervising Architect of the Treasury, the Federal Government promoted the concept that government buildings should be monumental and beautiful, and should represent the ideals of democracy and high standards of architectural sophistication in their communities. Taylor preferred styles derived from classical or early American traditions, and, believing that Federal buildings should be built to last, emphasized the use of high quality construction materials. Private architects worked on many of the larger projects, but the Office of the Supervising Architect produced most smaller buildings. In either case, the buildings were individually designed; Taylor firmly resisted suggestions that designs be standardized.

In 1997, when the U.S. Postal Service deemed that the building no longer met the growing population needs of Belvidere, the building was put up for sale. No government entities were interested in purchasing the building at which time the building was placed for sale to the general public. On December 22, 1998, BNB, as Trustee of Trust #1870 or Wolf Brothers Family LLC purchased the building from the Postal Service.

The design of the 1911 post office building was similar in several ways to the 1916 Belvidere High School design. The high school is an excellent local example of a Prairie School style building with Classical Revival features. The building was designed by Grant C. Miller, of Miller, Fullenwiden and Dowling. The high school references the Classical Revival style in its use of pavillions and symmetrical facade accented with pilasters.

Belvidere's Ida Public Library was also designed by Mr. Grant Miller when he was with Patton and Miller (ca. 1903-1912). Many of the designs from this firm appear to have been classically inspired. The Carnegie library built in 1913 illustrates the Classical Revival style of architecture along with the



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Belvidere, IL

Prairie School style of architecture introduced in the midwest by Frank Lloyd Wright, a prominent Chicago architect. Common to Carnegie libraries and the post office was the use of decorative brick work and terra cotta medallions on the facades. The window units of the Carnegie library were the same classical design as that of the post office. Each window unit is divided by vertical and horizontal mullions over fixed pane units on the top and double hung window units on the bottom, with each unit sitting on a projecting limestone sill. Brick pilasters with recessed panels flank each of the window units. The front door entrance to the library is flanked by two concrete pilasters that mimic columns in Greek and Roman designs again similar to the post office. The use of the Classical Revival style, and particularly for prominent public buildings, was commonplace from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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U.S. Post Office  
Belvidere, Il

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United States Department of the Interior  
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U.S. Post Office  
Belvidere, Il

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Belvidere Daily Republican, December 15, 1906

Belvidere Daily Republican, March 24, 1910, "A. N. Eason, Construction Superintendent"

#### **Additional assistance provided by:**

George Gibson, Executive Director, Boone County Historical Society

Marge Henrichs, Ida Public Library, Department Head Genealogy

Bill Luhman, Director, Growth Dimensions

Sam Whitney, employed at the Belvidere Post Office 1948-1979, postmaster 1970-1979

LaVerne Konsdorf, employed at the Belvidere Post Office 1948-1949, carrier supervisor

Robert Blietz, retired Belvidere letter carrier

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

## **National Register of Historic Places**

### **Continuation Sheet**

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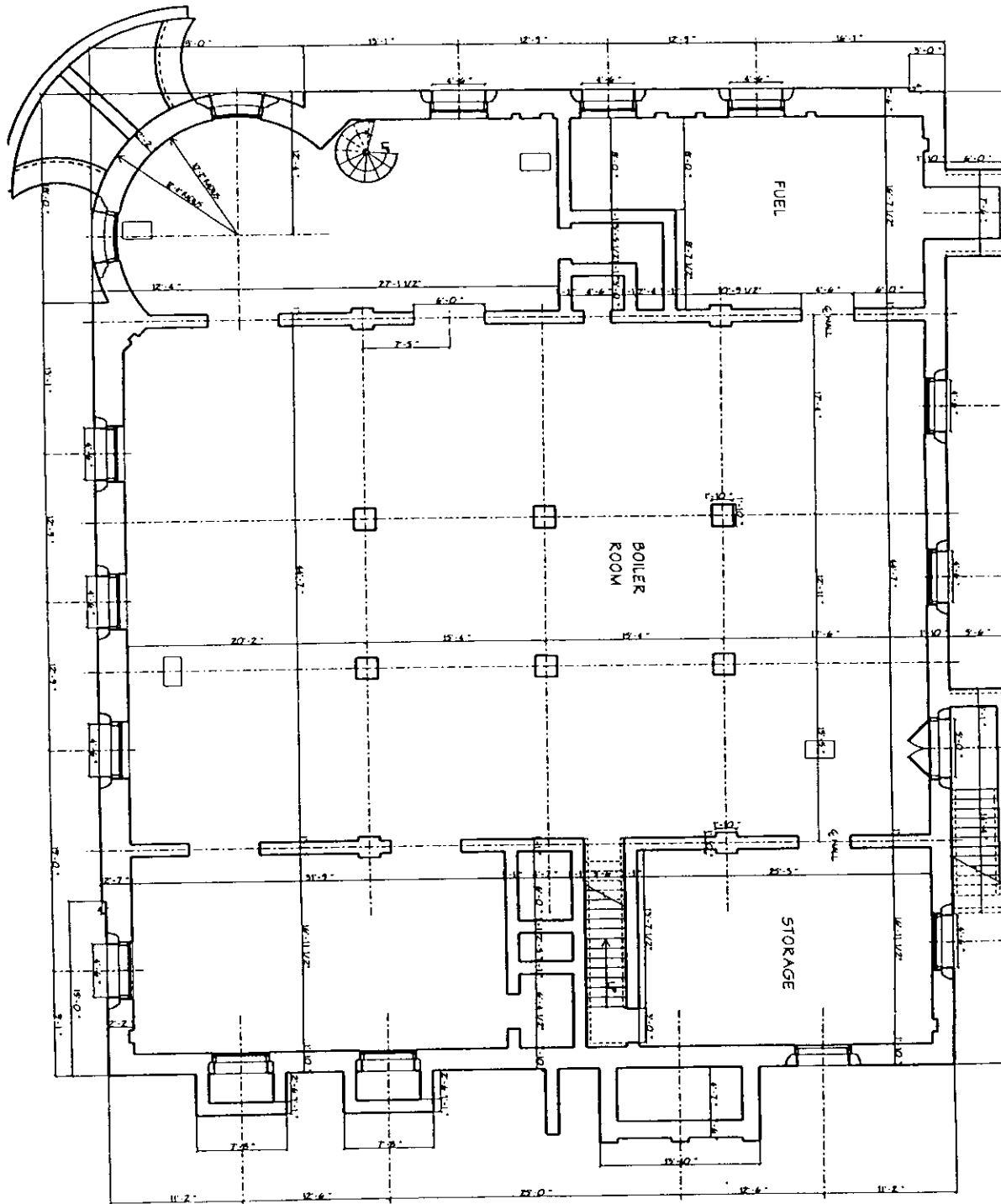
U.S. Post Office  
Belvidere, Il

#### **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Real Estate Legal Description – Lots numbered three (3) and four (4) in Block numbered ten (10) in Aaron Whitney's Addition to the Town of Belvidere, according to the plat recorded in the Recorder's Office of said Boone County in Book 6 of Deeds on page 271.

#### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

This is the lot historically associated with the United States Post Office in Belvidere, Illinois.

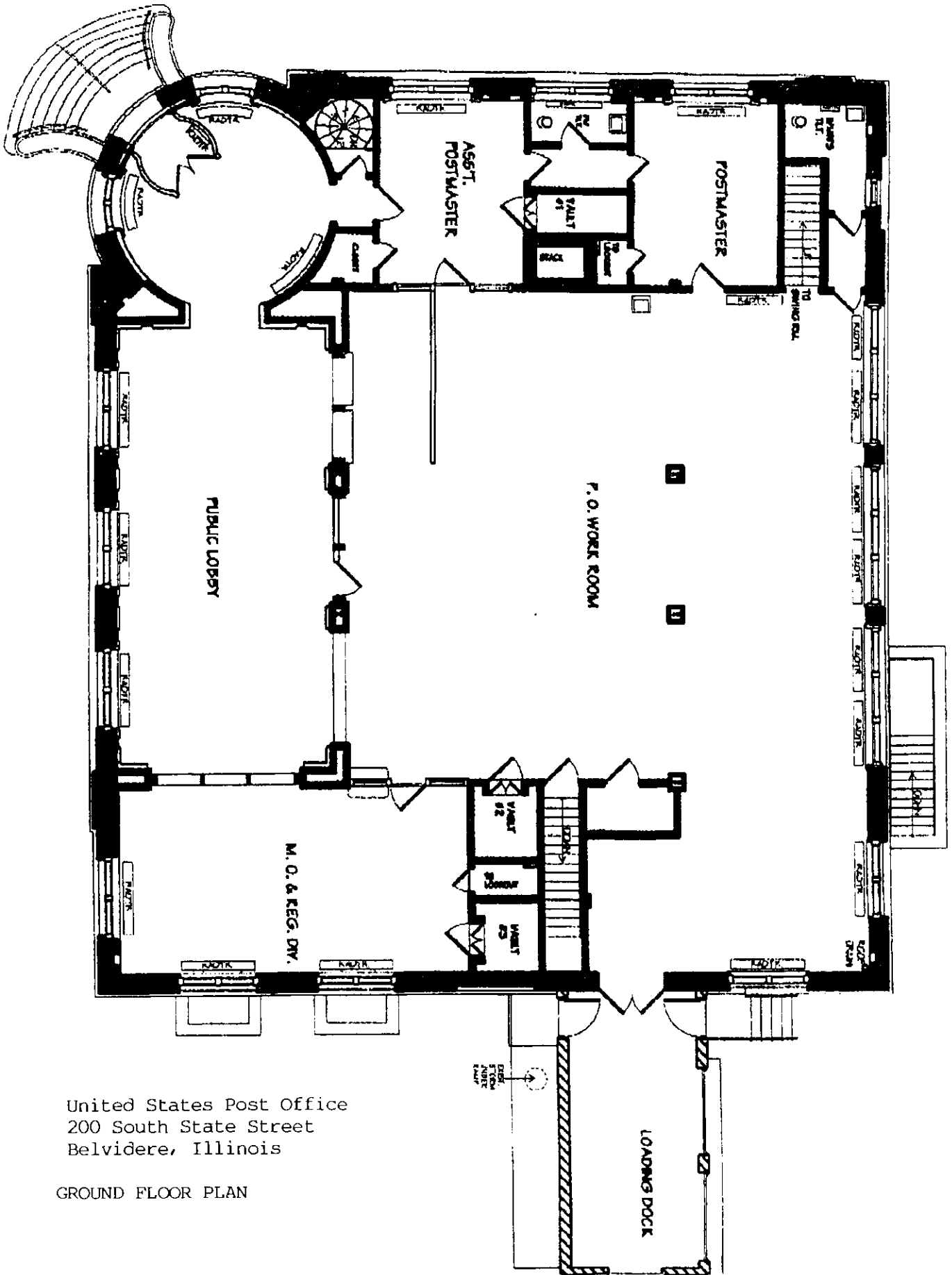


UNITED STATES POST OFFICE      BASEMENT LEVEL FLOOR PLAN  
 200 South State Street  
 Belvidere, IL 61008  
 Boone County

**BASEMENT PLAN**  
 5,740 sq. ft. Gross  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Scale: \_\_\_\_\_

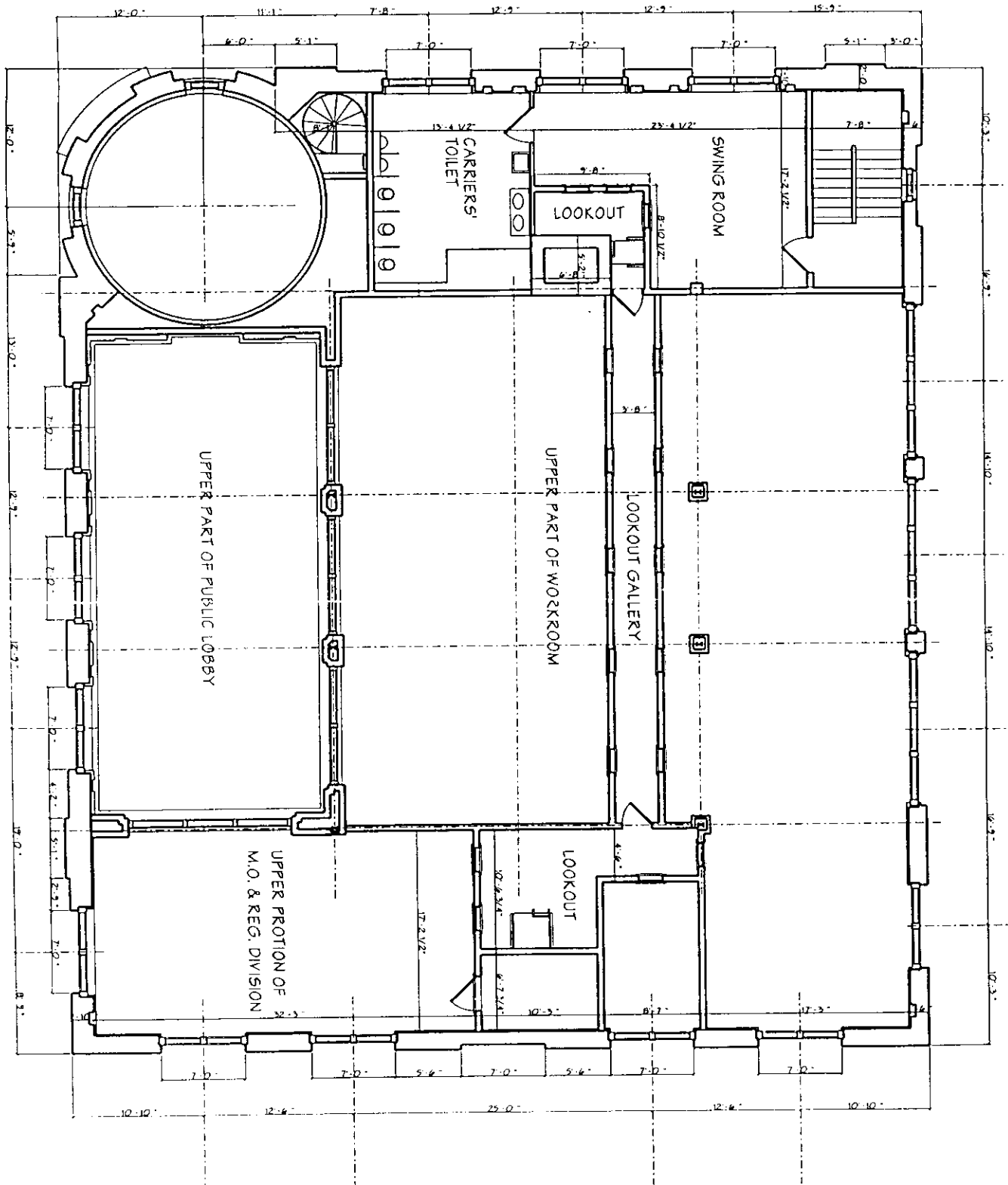
**RICHARD L. JOHNSON ARCHITECTS, P.C.**  
 ONE CHALK STREET    BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS 61008    815-338-0100

**EXISTING PLANS FOR  
 OLD POST OFFICE BUILDING  
 BELVIDERE      ILLINOIS**



United States Post Office  
 200 South State Street  
 Belvidere, Illinois

GROUND FLOOR PLAN



United States Post Office  
 200 South State Street  
 Belvidere, Illinois

**MEZZANINE FLOOR PLAN**

2000

Date: 6-7-77

Revisions:

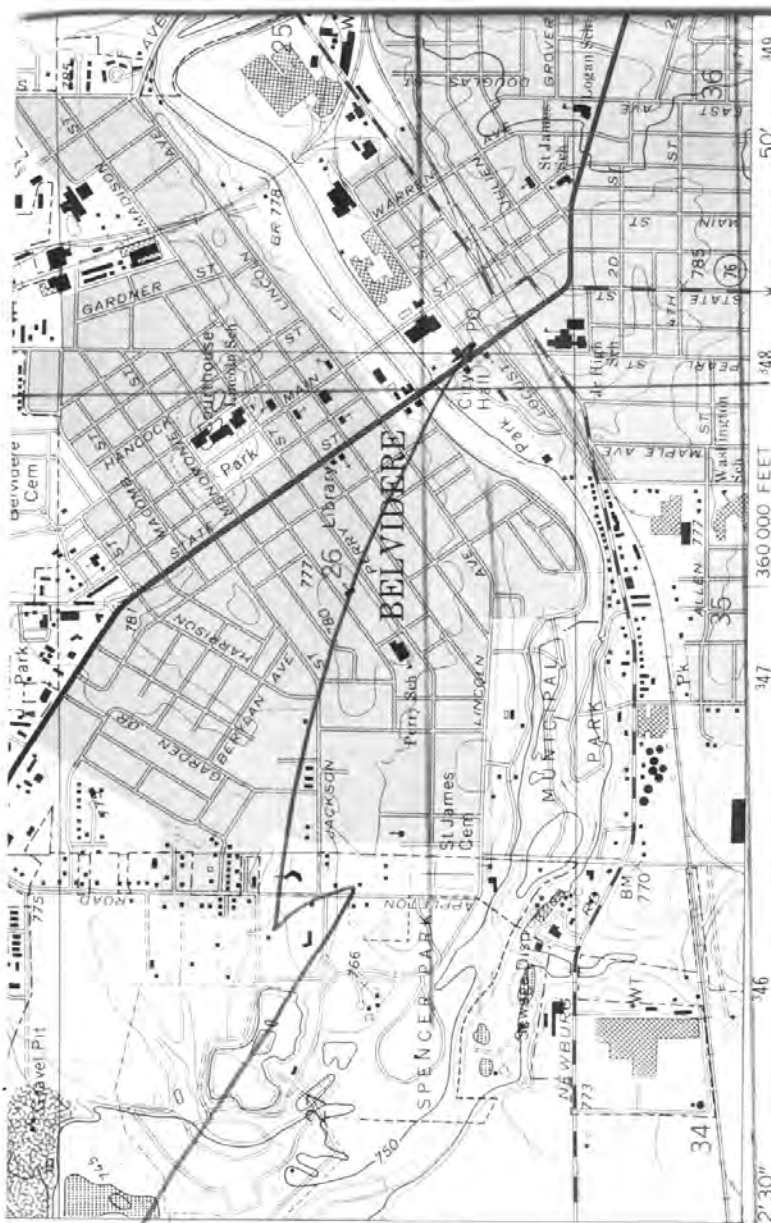


**RICHARD L. JOHNSON ASSOCIATES, INC.** ARCHITECTS - INTERIORS

ONE CHILES STREET - BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS 61610

**EXISTING PLANS FOR**  
**OLD POST OFFICE BUILDING**  
**BELVIDERE**  
**ILLINOIS**

United States Post Office  
 Belvidere  
 Boone Co., IL  
 Zone 16  
 E 348140  
 N 4679840



Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1970  
 Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Illinois coordinate system, east zone (transverse Mercator)  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 16, shown in blue 1927 North American Datum (NAD 27)  
 North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks  
 The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are given in USGS Bulletin 1875  
 Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
 Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
 Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

200 South State Street  
 Boone Co., IL  
 Belvidere, IL 61008

UTM GRID AND 1993 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

FOR SALE

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